

# Tresham Institute

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- *November 2001 inspection report*
- *April 2003 monitoring inspection report*



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS  
IN EDUCATION

# **Inspection report**

## **TRESHAM INSTITUTE**

**Dates of inspection: 12–16 November 2001**

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**Reference: HMI 405**

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**Basic information about the college**

Name of college:	Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education
Type of college:	Further Education
Principal:	Sian MacDonald
Address of college:	St Mary's Road Kettering Northants NN15 7BS
Telephone number:	01536 410 252
Fax number:	01536 522 500
Chair of governors:	Ed Baines
Unique reference number:	130771
Name of reporting inspector:	Annella Mochan HMI
Dates of inspection:	12-16 November 2001

## **Part A: Summary**

### **Information about the college**

Tresham College was established in 1978, from the merger of Corby Technical College and Kettering Technical College. The college then merged with Wellingborough College in 1992, to form Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education. In August 2000, Rutland College in Oakham merged with Tresham Institute. Tresham Institute currently operates from five main campuses in Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby and Oakham which cover a 30 mile radius. There is also a cyber café in Corby, an IT centre in Market Harborough and extensive community provision in about 50 centres. In the institute's main catchment area in Northamptonshire, there are 22 schools with sixth forms. The institute provides an extensive range of academic and vocational courses. In its mission statement the institute aims to 'reach existing and potential learners, improve the learning experience, increase achievement and achieve excellence and innovation in further and higher education (HE). In this way the institute seeks to make a difference to social inclusion and economic development for the local, regional, national and international communities it serves'.

### **How effective is the college?**

The institute provides satisfactory or good teaching and appropriate learning opportunities for most students. The data on students' retention and pass rates are, however, unreliable. Inspectors judged the quality of education and training to be good in two areas of learning, satisfactory in ten, and unsatisfactory in one. The management of work-based learning is inadequate and the majority of this provision is very weak.

### ***Key strengths***

- extensive range of courses to meet the needs of the community and employers
- good individual support for students
- effective community and school links
- range of activities to promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion.

### ***What should be improved***

- proportion of students who are retained and achieve their qualifications
  - quality of management information on students' achievements
  - curriculum management
  - construction provision
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- work-based learning
- dissemination of good practice
- levels of attendance.

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>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on some courses. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Support for individual students is good. There is insufficient use of information learning technology (ILT) and some teachers do not demand enough of students. The science laboratories are good.
Construction	<b>Very Poor.</b> Retention and pass rates are unsatisfactory and attendance is poor. There is much unsatisfactory teaching. Management of the curriculum and work-based learning is inadequate. There is good individual support for students. Practical facilities are good.
Engineering	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on many courses but retention rates are low. Courses are well structured and meet the needs of learners. Curriculum management is ineffective in some areas and the monitoring of work-based learning is inadequate. Students benefit from productive links with employers.
Business, management and professional	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high retention rates on most courses and high pass rates in accounting and management studies. The standard of full-time students' work is high. Good specialist facilities enhance students' learning. The management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory..
Information and communication technology (ICT)	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention rates are rising. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Students work well on their own and develop good information technology (IT) skills. General IT resources are good. Attendance is poor on computing courses.
Leisure and tourism	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on some courses. Retention rates are low at intermediate and advanced level. Teaching is satisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of students' performance and course reviews are inadequate.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high in hairdressing at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) levels 1 and 2, but poor on NVQ level 2 beauty therapy. Retention rates are low on two-year hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. Teaching is good in practical lessons and theory lessons. Salons are well equipped.

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on counselling courses. Retention and pass rates are low on many other courses. There is strong tutorial guidance and support. Students gain in confidence and work productively in small groups. Management of work-based learning is poor.
Childcare	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are low on some courses. Teaching is good and there is effective support for individual students. Students develop good personal skills.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are high. Teaching is good. Students' practical work in art and design is very good but their written work is poor. Specialist IT resources are good but some accommodation in performing arts is unsatisfactory.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates on many courses are high. Teaching and subject management is effective. Students' progress is well monitored. There is insufficient use of IT for teaching and learning.
English and access to HE	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on General Certificate of Education Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary-level (GCE A and AS-level) English subjects and access to HE humanities and social sciences. The standard of students' work is high. Some curriculum management is ineffective.
Foundation studies	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is good. Students' make good progress from the wide range of entry-level programmes. Some learning plans are unsatisfactory and the monitoring of students' progress is unsatisfactory. The life skills provision on the learning gateway programme is poor.

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

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategic planning is systematic. The management and co-ordination of the curriculum across the campuses vary in quality. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning. Managers have implemented measures to improve the poor academic performance of the institute. It is too early to judge the full effectiveness of these measures in raising retention and pass rates. The management of work-based learning is inadequate. The quality assurance framework is comprehensive. A quality assurance management team has recently been established to develop and implement procedures across the institute. Data on students' retention and pass rates are unreliable and staff have little confidence in centrally-produced data. Governors, managers and staff actively promote equality of opportunity.

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

The college has successful policies for social and educational inclusion. They are given a high priority and form a key plank of the mission statement. Successful strategies to promote equality of access and inclusive learning have encouraged a wide range of young people and adults from under-represented groups to return to learning. There have been particular successes with young people at entry level and with adults in community settings. These students enjoy good teaching and effective practical and pastoral support as part of an institution which values diversity. A high proportion of students progresses to further learning or employment. Just over 2% of the students are from a minority ethnic background, a figure that mirrors the proportion within the population of the institute's catchment area.

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

Pre-entry information, advice and guidance are good. However, some students have been placed on the wrong level of course. The induction programme helps students to settle quickly into their studies. The support for individual students is good. Students have access to a wide range of welfare and advice services, including professional counselling. Students with additional learning needs receive effective support from trained and experienced staff. Advice and guidance on careers are readily available and there is good support for students applying to HE. The quality and effectiveness of tutorials vary.

**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***

- teachers value students' views
  - students are treated with respect
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- teachers give good support outside lessons
  - informal atmosphere engenders good relationships between staff and students
  - teachers know their subject
  - wide range of teaching and learning resources
  - arrangements for part-time and adult students are suitably flexible
  - wide range of courses to choose from.

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

- access to computers
- some classrooms
- common-room facilities
- price and range of food in refectories
- car-parking facilities.

**Other information**

The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors must agree the plan and send copies of it to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

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## 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	60	30	10
19+ and WBL*	57	33	10
Learning 16–18	58	34	8
19+ and WBL*	53	39	8

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

\* *work-based learning*

### Achievement and standards

1. The institute's data on students' achievements for 2001 form the first set of combined data from the merger between Tresham Institute and Rutland College. It is therefore not possible to assess trends in performance for the merged institution. In most curriculum areas, the institute's 2001 data on students' achievements are inaccurate. Attendance was satisfactory overall but there was considerable variation between courses and levels of courses. It was high in leisure and tourism, at 86%, but low in construction, at 52%, and foundation programmes, at 65%. Attendance on level 1 courses was low, at 61% but higher on level 3 courses, at 81%. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses.

2. At Rutland College in 1999/2000, students' pass rates were significantly above the national average for sixth form colleges except for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 qualifications where they were about the national average. In the same period, the retention rate was around the national average for students of all ages with the exception of 16 to 18 year olds pursuing level 2 qualifications, where it was below. In 1999/2000, students attending Tresham Institute were less successful in achieving their qualifications. Students' pass rates were significantly below the national average for general further education (FE) colleges for students in all age groups, taking qualifications at level 1 to 3. The retention rate for students on qualifications at level 1 and 2 was at the national average, but at level 3 it was slightly below.

3. Prior to the merger in August 2000, levels of achievement of GCE A and AS-level students at Rutland College were significantly different from those of Tresham Institute. The average points score for students entered for two or more GCE A and AS levels at Rutland

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College in 1999 was in line with the national average, at 18.4. In 2000, it declined to 16.2. The average points score for Tresham Institute students in 1999 and 2000 was 10.2 and 9.3, respectively. These figures were significantly below the national average and the Northamptonshire Local Education Authority average.

### **16-18 year olds**

4. The institute's data for 2001 indicate that there has been an improvement in the pass rates in individual GCE A and AS-level subjects. Overall, the retention rate on level 3 courses is high, at just over 81%. In 2000/01, about 82% of students who completed their GCE A level passed the examination, and 45% gained high grades. The best results were in GCE A-level English, psychology, sociology and physics. Over the same period, students taking GCE AS levels were slightly less successful. In 2000/01, on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses, 75% of 16 to 18 year olds completed their studies, but only 40% obtained grades A\* to C.

5. The performance of 16 to 18 year olds taking General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses is generally good. However, only around a third of students achieve a high grade and the retention rate is poor at 65%. For students on GNVQ intermediate courses, the retention and pass rate is at the national average. Both retention and pass rates for students on GNVQ foundation courses are high. Overall, the performance of students aged 16 to 18 on courses leading to NVQ level 3 is good. The retention and pass rates for young people on courses leading to NVQ level 1 or 2 are at the national average.

### **Adult learners**

6. Students aged 19 and over completing GCE A and AS levels in 2001, were slightly less successful than students aged 16 to 18. According to the institute's data, about 75% passed their GCE A-level examination and 49% achieved high grades. Retention rates were low for students on GCE A levels: only 58% completed their course. Retention rates, at 74%, were higher at GCE AS level; 78% of students passed the examination and 56% achieved high grades. On GCSE courses the retention rate for adult students is low. However, the pass rate is high and 60% of adult students gain grades A\* to C. Retention and pass rates are high for the few students aged 19 and over who enrol on GNVQ intermediate and foundation courses.

7. The retention rate for adult students on NVQ level 1 to 3 qualifications is high. However, there is wide variation in the achievement of adult students enrolled on courses leading to NVQ awards. In 2001, pass rates were high in accounting but low in engineering and construction. In 2000 and 2001, the pass rate for adults on access to HE courses was high, but retention rates were low at around 60%. The majority of these students progress successfully to further studies, with many gaining a place at university.

8. The majority of adult learners who attend classes to improve their literacy and numeracy make good progress. The pass rate is good for the small number who enter for

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externally accredited awards. The retention rate for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high, and the majority of students progress to other courses at the institute. Students on community-based courses are generally successful in developing a wide range of skills.

9. There are a small number of students on work-based learning programmes in five of the thirteen areas of learning inspected. Students' achievements on most work-based learning programmes are unsatisfactory. A high proportion of foundation modern apprentices (FMAs) leave early without completing their training. Of the 158 who started training between 1998 and 2001, only 4 have completed the framework; 79 have left early without completing and 75 are still in training. Of the 147 advanced modern apprentices (AMAs) who started between 1998 and 2000, 19 have completed the framework, 49 left early without completing and 79 are still in training. Retention rates are particularly low in construction and health and social care. Of the 164 learners who started on the learning gateway programme in the period 1999 to 2001, 82 left before completing their programme, 13 left for employment, 25 transferred to other programmes and 4 entered main stream FE. Some 52 remain in learning. Many work-based learners make very slow progress towards achieving their qualification.

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

10. Inspectors graded teaching, learning and attainment in 257 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 59% of lessons. In about 4% of lessons it was excellent and in 10% it was unsatisfactory. There is little difference in the quality of teaching for 16 to 18 year olds and adults. Teaching was strong in business studies, visual and performing arts and media, hairdressing and beauty therapy, childcare, humanities and foundation programmes. At Rutland campus, the teaching of English was well planned. It stimulated students, which produced high standards of work. In contrast, at the Wellingborough and the Windmill campuses there was a high level of unsatisfactory teaching in English that failed to bring out the best in students. In five curriculum areas, the amount of unsatisfactory teaching was at least 10%. In construction, 31% of the teaching was unsatisfactory. In a significant proportion of lessons, there was low attendance or, less often, students arrived late, resulting in the teaching and learning being interrupted. Most teachers dealt positively with these disruptions but some failed to pay sufficient attention to students who were not on task or were not making contributions.

11. The majority of teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subject or occupational area although, in a minority of cases, teachers lack essential information and were unable to respond adequately to students' questions. In engineering, employers visit the college regularly to monitor training and this close contact benefits teachers and students. Overall, there are good relationships between teachers and students. In many theory and practical lessons, teachers provided a lot of support to individual students to help them with their problems, and to encourage effective learning. On childcare and foundation programmes, learning support assistants work effectively alongside students and teachers. In computing and IT, students working on their own, are encouraged to develop their practical skills and to conduct research.

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12. Teachers were generally well prepared for lessons and planned carefully to meet the needs of learners. Lesson plans have clear aims, objectives and assessment criteria that are shared with students and reviewed at the end of the lesson. Particularly strong and effective planning of group activities was evident in English lessons at the Rutland campus. In foundation studies, some good initial assessment included students' self-assessment. This led to the development of individual targets and goals for students' learning plans. This good practice in initial assessment, however, was not evident across the institute, nor throughout the curriculum area of foundation studies. On too many occasions initial assessment was ineffective and there was no differentiation of learning activities to reflect individual students' needs.

13. Teaching methods were suitably varied. In good lessons, teachers provided clear instructions so that students understood what was expected of them. Teachers demonstrated flexibility by adapting planned activities to address unexpected occurrences and used probing questions to elicit responses and clarify learning. In such an environment, students were able to engage in lively debate and discussion. Students questioned and clarified points to check their own learning, articulated problems and teased out possible solutions. In some of the less successful lessons, the teaching lacked pace and was dull, with only a narrow range of teaching methods and activities. Students sometimes spent too much time reading text aloud, copying notes or listening to rambling explanations from teachers about a particular topic. In such cases, students lost interest and were disruptive, or became passive and understanding was constrained. Teachers did not challenge sufficiently all students to think for themselves and supplied answers far too quickly. On occasions, teachers focused too much on the more extrovert and confident students.

14. The assessment of learners' competence in the workplace does not take place often enough. Monitoring of learners' progress is weak. Visits to some learners are too infrequent and learners are not always set clear, challenging targets. There is an over-reliance on institute-based assessment, even where the institute's facilities are not as good as those used by trainees at work. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are not used to plan learning. In engineering, on-the-job training is well planned and learners develop skills in a wide range of activities. Co-ordination between on and off-the-job training is good in engineering, where the institute has good links with employers, but it is poor in business. The quality of placements for many work-based learners is good. Learners on the learning gateway programme are not adequately prepared for work.

15. The effectiveness of arrangements for teaching and assessing key skills varies. Good teaching and effective learning were apparent where key skills formed part of the centrally organised programme. However, in many areas, including work-based learning, the development and assessment of key skills is neither integral to the work nor related to the vocational curriculum. On visual and performing arts and media courses and in construction, some teachers and students were diffident about the value of key skills. In childcare, key skills were not offered to part-time students.

16. Teachers are well qualified. Approximately 73% hold a recognised teaching qualification. However, only 27% of hourly paid part-time staff have teaching qualifications.

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Learning support assistants are used effectively to support students. Most staff involved in work-based learning have recognised assessor awards. However, there are too few work-based assessors to cover the provision across all curriculum areas. The institute has appropriate procedures for identifying staff development needs, based on appraisals and the outcomes of lesson observations. Staff have good opportunities for professional development. In some curriculum areas, staff are continually updating their expertise but this good practice is not followed consistently across the institute.

17. The external fabric of many of the buildings is poor. The institute has a comprehensive estates strategy and has steadily improved the quality of most teaching rooms. Refurbished classrooms provide good accommodation. They are clean and tidy and most have appropriate teaching aids such as whiteboards, overhead projectors and, in some cases, video projectors and interactive white boards. In vocational areas the specialist facilities are generally good. For example, in motor vehicle studies, students occupy a large industrial-standard workshop that is well equipped with vehicles, tools and electronic diagnostic equipment. The recreational facilities on some campuses are good and students make good use of them. Feedback from students indicates general dissatisfaction with common-room facilities and refectories. The institute acknowledges that people with mobility difficulties have problems in gaining access to some parts of buildings. There are crèche facilities on all campuses.

18. In most curriculum areas, learning resources are appropriate and well used. The learning resource centres on each campus are good. They contain an adequate range of bookstock and journals supplemented by CD-ROMs, videos and a variety of learning materials to enable students to work on their own. Investment in ICT has been high. Most students have good access to computers on a 'drop-in' basis in the learning resource centres. There were many examples of students successfully using the Internet to research information for assignments. There are well-equipped computer suites on all campuses for teaching ICT skills. Good use was made of ICT in specialist computing and ICT courses and in engineering for computer-aided design. However, this good practice is not replicated across the institute. There is insufficient use of ICT for teaching and learning in humanities, mathematics and sciences.

19. There is effective assessment and monitoring of students progress in many curriculum areas. In humanities, English, and access to HE, students have regular review meetings with tutors. Action plans are updated and performance targets set. Copies of reviews are sent to parents or guardians of students under 19. Homework for mathematics and science students is set regularly and marked thoroughly. Marked assignments on childcare, hairdressing and beauty therapy courses include useful comments from teachers to help students improve their work. In physics, marking is generous and in a few instances inaccurate. In engineering and construction, the review process is not effective and students do not have clear targets to which to work. The arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of students on work-based learning in construction, engineering and business are poor. The institute has an internal verification policy that was introduced in 1998 and an accreditation of prior learning policy introduced in 1999. These policies have not been

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updated in line with curriculum and awarding body changes. Internal verification procedures are not operating effectively in some curriculum areas.

20. There is an extensive range of academic and vocational qualifications for 16 to 18 year olds and adults. Substantial provision in the community is helping to widen participation. The institute is responsive to the needs of the local community and employers. Family literacy courses are run in local primary schools. There is good provision for refugees and international students. Initial assessment and accreditation of prior learning are not always operating effectively and some students end up studying on inappropriate courses at inappropriate levels. For example, on work-based learning in construction, students' GCSE results are not taken into account when selecting the level of course. On life-skills programmes, all students are required to take a basic skills course despite the fact that some have already achieved GCSE qualifications. Similarly, on NVQ hairdressing programmes, the majority of students are required to complete an NVQ level 1 when they have the skills and experience to start their studies at NVQ level 2.

21. There is good, comprehensive information and effective advice and guidance for prospective students. The full-time prospectus is attractive, easy to read and has good visual images that reflect the institute's commitment to equality of opportunity. Liaison with schools is effective. The schools link programme offers school pupils 'taster' days in over 20 subjects. In 2000/01, nearly 40% of pupils who attended taster days subsequently enrolled at the institute. The induction programme introduces students to their course and helps them to settle quickly into their studies. Most full-time, and a minority of part-time, students undertake initial assessment of their skills in literacy and numeracy to identify support needs. The time taken between the initial assessment and the provision of support is too long in some cases. Learning support tutors provide effective support in class or in separate sessions in the learning resource centres. Most of the students who are offered extra help accept the offer and benefit from the work that they undertake. At the Windmill Avenue campus, however, the take-up rate is poor.

22. Good, effective additional support is provided for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities taking mainstream courses. Student support assistants provide effective one-to-one help throughout the day. The well-established service for hearing impaired students is particularly successful. The service also offers deaf awareness courses to all staff to enable them to understand the issues and to help provide clear communication. Other staff have developed expertise in supporting blind students and teaching them to use screen-reading software. A new dyslexia service is working well and students speak warmly of the help that they receive. Awareness-raising sessions have helped improve teachers' to ensure the full participation of students with dyslexia in their classes.

23. There is good personal and pastoral support for students. Students speak highly of the extra help they get from their subject teachers and also the personal support provided by their tutors. The student advisers provide access to a good range of welfare and advice services, including professional counselling. Students have access to a good range of services for advice and guidance about careers. Many vocational and personal tutors provide careers and progression advice. An adviser from Careerpath or Connexions works at each

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campus to provide individual guidance interviews. A comprehensive careers library is maintained on each campus. Good support is provided for students wishing to progress to HE.

24. The institute has revised the tutorial provision post-merger. It has sought to spread good practice from the Rutland campus across the institute. Tutorials include regular individual progress reviews which many students find helpful. The group tutorial element works well for some activities, for example, when exploring options for progression to HE, but in too many instances students find them boring and unhelpful. There are considerable inconsistencies in the effectiveness of the implementation of the tutorial provision both across and within campuses. There is a good programme of enrichment activities but take-up is disappointing. Student mentors have been appointed recently and it is hoped that they will increase the interest and involvement in enrichment activities.

### **Leadership and management**

25. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The approach to strategic planning is systematic. Mission and vision statements have been agreed for the merged institution together with a detailed three-year strategic plan. A supporting, one-year operating statement sets out clear targets linked to each strategic aim. Governors were closely involved in the formulation of the new mission and vision statements; consultation on the draft plan was conducted with staff in a range of different forums. The annual business planning cycle includes a calendar of review meetings between senior managers and all major programme or service area teams. The reviews focus appropriately on the achievement of unit, recruitment and achievement targets as well as the use of staff. As part of the planning cycle, each academic school has produced a one-year business plan. Most plans are detailed although their quality varies. For example, the school of GCE A levels has no data on attendance or summary performance targets.

26. The recent merger has been successful in providing increased financial security for the Rutland campus and has already secured improvements to the accommodation. Some support has been provided by subject staff at Rutland, for example, in geography, towards improving performance at the sixth form centre in Kettering. However, the management and co-ordination of the curriculum is not consistent and in a number of key subject areas: English, humanities, IT, mathematics and science, there is insufficient sharing of good practice. In some vocational areas, there is insufficient co-ordination across the different campuses.

27. While achievements at the former Rutland College have been good, the achievement levels of the Tresham Institute have been unsatisfactory. On level 2 programmes, for example, the overall pass rates for those students completing their courses in 2000 are recorded as 47% for 16 to 18 year olds and 52% for adult learners. In each case, the figures represent a decline over the previous year. Similarly, at levels 1 and 3, pass rates have been significantly below sector averages during the period 1998/2000. Except in the case of its targets for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 programmes and students taking HE

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qualifications, the institute failed to achieve its performance targets for retention and pass rates during 1999/2000.

28. Measures have been taken to raise standards. A retention and pass rate plan has been approved by governors and the academic board. Attendance is being more closely monitored by tutors, and retention and pass rates are standing agenda items at quality development group meetings and meetings of the senior management team. The lesson observation scheme has been intensified and a 'total learning' campaign launched to promote more varied and appropriate methods of teaching and learning. Although the full impact of these measures for retention and pass rates remains to be seen, performance in all areas of learning, with the exception of construction, is now at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The data held by the curriculum teams, used in forming overall judgements, have been unreliable and provided no secure basis for assessing levels of achievement. Co-ordination and management of work-based learning is inadequate. The contributory grades for this area of provision are very low and there is little indication of improvement in levels of achievement.

29. The quality assurance framework is comprehensive and well documented. Quality development groups operate at course team level and quality boards are designed to operate at the new learning directorate level. A quality performance and standards committee is charged with the responsibility for monitoring quality assurance procedures and reporting to the academic board. A quality management team has recently been established to develop and implement the different quality assurance procedures including the 'total learning' campaign and the quality improvement plan arising from the self-assessment report. There has been appropriate discussion of issues relating to retention and pass rates. However, staff are insufficiently clear about the distinctive role of the other quality groups. The institution judges the quality of teaching to have risen since the introduction of some of the initiatives to improve the quality of provision. Grades awarded during the inspections show that teaching was satisfactory or better in 90% of the lessons observed.

30. The institute recognises, in its self-assessment report, the continued problems associated with data capture and reliability. These weaknesses were also identified in the last inspection report. The lack of confidence in centrally-held data has led to difficulties for curriculum managers in setting appropriate performance targets. There has been no single source of data for pass rates in 1998/99 and 1999/2000. Measures have been taken to address the issue of reliable data, including the introduction of new proprietary software.

31. Governors have attached importance to the institute's learning outcomes, through the work of its education and standards committee. For example, detailed reports have been received on progress towards meeting charter standards, students' responses to questionnaires, draft self-assessment reports and retention and pass rates in relation to college targets. However, the report on achievements for 1999/2000 was not discussed by the committee until February 2001. The corporation is representative of the diverse communities it serves. All governors' committees formally evaluate their work. Individual governors have links with the different campuses and curriculum areas in order to keep the corporation informed about the institute's provision.

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32. The institute enjoys a secure financial position. It has substantial reserves and a healthy cash position. The timeliness and the presentation of management accounts and their adequacy, however, are recognised problems, and a new finance director is addressing these issues. The institute has adopted a course-costing model for the curriculum to secure the efficient use of resources. Budgets are adjusted during the year to ensure a close match between targets and outcomes.

33. Three-year plans for equal opportunities and inclusive learning are appended to the strategic plan. They set out a wide range of standards and the mechanisms for meeting them. An equality assurance committee, with student and governor representation, reports formally to the corporation twice a year. Equal opportunities issues form part of the student induction programme and additional awareness raising events for staff and students are organised at the different campuses. The college is addressing an acknowledged weakness that there has been insufficient collection of data on equal opportunities to inform its strategy.

## **Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas**

### **Science and mathematics**

Overall, provision in this area is **Satisfactory (grade 3)**

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates in GCE A-level physics and AS-level human biology, geology and environmental science
- high level of support for individual students
- well-resourced science laboratories
- wide range of courses.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rates in GCE AS-level mathematics, physics and biology and GCSE science
- some insufficiently demanding teaching
- insufficient use of ILT for learning
- insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning between campuses.

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

34. The college offers a wide range of science and mathematics courses. Most courses are aimed at 16 to 18 year olds studying GCE A and AS levels, or GCSEs. Students can choose from GCE A and AS-level science options in physics, chemistry and biology as well as environmental science and geology. In addition, physics, chemistry, biology and human biology are offered at GCSE. The college has managed to maintain minority subjects, such as science for public understanding. The programmes available offer a wide choice of academic science options that enable students to broaden their studies. Timetable clashes, however, sometimes exclude particular combinations. Science options are also available on the access to HE programme. Mathematics options include GCE A and AS level, GCSE and numeracy. The institute caters for a significant number of adults on GCSE mathematics and numeracy courses.

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

35. Pass rates are above the national average for general FE colleges in GCE A-level physics. The proportion of physics students gaining A to C grades is particularly high. Pass rates are also high in GCE AS-level human biology, geology and environmental science. In

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GCE AS-level chemistry most students achieve A to C grades. The pass rate is low in GCE AS-level mathematics, physics and biology. Retention rates on GCE-A level biology and chemistry are above the national average. In GCSE biology the retention rate is high but the proportion of students achieving grades A\* to C is low, in common with the other GCSE sciences. In GCSE mathematics, a high proportion of students achieve grades A\* to C.

36. The quality of students' work in lessons is generally satisfactory. On GCE A and AS-level courses, science practical work is carried out effectively and students' skills in the use of scientific equipment are well developed. In GCE AS-level biology, students are competent in using microscopes. Mathematics students demonstrate a sound grasp of the techniques relevant to their level of study, and most of their calculations are accurate. There is a strong emphasis in mathematics on routine problem solving, with individuals working on their own. Although students develop the skills required to answer straightforward examination questions, the work is insufficiently demanding for many. Students are punctual for lessons and attendance at the lessons observed was high, at 85%.

### *Quality of education and training*

37. Most teaching is good or better. Although the content of lessons is well planned, some plans do not say enough about learning outcomes, and objectives are not made clear to students at the start of lessons. Subject teachers' support for students is good. Students have ready access to teachers who give freely of their time in helping them. Although there is support for students for whom English is a second language, it is not always sufficiently focused on their academic studies. Students are given well-organised course handbooks which help them in their learning. They enjoy a good rapport with teachers. In the best lessons, teachers moved things along briskly and varied activities to keep students' interest. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher's talks were punctuated by a sequence of tasks aimed at building up the students' understanding of special trigonometric ratios. In some lessons, however, the work was poorly organised or not demanding and students were bored. The more able students were not always provided with additional material to work on while other members of the class caught up.

38. Students do not make enough use of ILT in the classroom. In one lesson, an experiment to verify Newton's law involved the use of a computer, but many other potential uses are not exploited. There are too few computers to conduct experiments involving data capture and analysis. The mathematics and science intranet sites are poorly publicised and not well used. Students had difficulty in accessing IT resources at the Rutland campus. Most laboratories have been refurbished. They provide bright, modern and spacious facilities. Science laboratories are well resourced. There is enough equipment for students to work individually or in pairs. It is maintained effectively by skilled technicians who give students a great deal of help. Some mathematics rooms are attractive and have good displays. The library has an appropriately wide range of texts.

39. Homework is set and marked regularly and students are well informed about the progress they are making. Teachers' marking in mathematics and science was rigorous and accurate, and the teachers provide helpful written comments to show students how to improve

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their work. In a few cases, the marking was inaccurate or the grades generous. There are regular reviews of students' performance and parents receive information on students' progress. Value added data are used to set targets for GCE A and AS level and students' progress in reaching these targets is monitored carefully.

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

40. Individual courses are well managed. There are comprehensive course portfolios that contain detailed information on individual students' achievements. However, line management responsibilities between campuses are not clear and co-ordination of teaching and learning across the curriculum area is weak. There is little sharing of good practice between campuses. Each course has a scheme of work. Some of these schemes, however, have little to say about teaching methods. Teachers are observed teaching on an annual basis. All staff are involved in self-assessment. However, some of the aspects of provision identified in the report as strengths were identified as weaknesses by inspectors. Management information on retention and pass rates is not reliable and is not being used effectively to improve provision and benefit students.



## **Construction**

Overall provision in this area is **Very Poor (grade 5)**

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **Very Poor (grade 5)**

### *Strengths*

- well-resourced practical areas
- good pastoral support for work-based learners.

### *Weaknesses*

- very low retention and pass rates
- poor attendance
- poor teaching on many courses
- inadequate curriculum management
- ineffective workplace assessment.

### *Scope of provision*

41. The institute provides construction courses from level 1 to 3 in brickwork, wood trades, painting and decorating, plumbing and electrical installation. Courses are offered on two campuses, Corby and Wellingborough. Approximately 40% of enrolments are in electrical installation. There has been a slight decline in enrolments on most courses compared with last year. Some 40% of the learners are on modern apprenticeship programmes. The institute manages approximately half this work and the remaining apprentices are managed through agencies sub-contracted to the institute. All learners on modern apprenticeships have employed status. The institute provides short courses and assessment for adults in electrical testing and gas safety.

### *Achievement and standards*

42. Retention and pass rates for students of all ages are unsatisfactory. Most are well below the national averages for construction courses. Over the last three years, no student from the 80 enrolled on the NVQ level 2 painting and decorating have achieved an award. Pass rates for NVQs in plumbing, bricklaying and the wood trades are substantially below the national average. Some pass rates are only in single figures. For example, in 2000/01, only 7% of those completing the NVQ level 2 in wood occupations achieved a qualification. There has been some improvement in pass rates in electrical installation but they are still well below national average. Retention rates on many courses leading to an NVQ qualification in wood trades, bricklaying, painting and decorating and plumbing have been below the national

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average for the last three years. In 1999/2000, only 17% of the 35 that started the NVQ level 1 in wood occupations completed the course. Retention rates on electrical installation courses are substantially higher than on construction courses. From 1999/2000 to 2000/01 the retention rate for the NVQ level 2 in installing electrical systems and equipment improved from 66% to 81%. The institute started work-based learning in 1998/99. The retention and pass rates on these programmes are also low.

43. Those students who do pass often take a long time to achieve their qualification. For example, a bricklaying modern apprentice studying for NVQ level 3 is currently in his fifth year. His employer continues to support him but is increasingly frustrated by the length of time it is taking. Work-based learners' gathering of evidence for portfolios is poor. Portfolios sometimes contain photographs but learners have scant understanding of how evidence can be collected and used for assessment. Their work diaries contain little relevant information. Students' attendance during the inspection was very low, at 52%. One area of construction has an average attendance of less than a third of those on register. Attendance was high in only one of the lessons inspected, an NVQ level 3 plumbing lesson.

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

44. Teaching in 31% of the lessons inspected was unsatisfactory or poor. Teachers are failing to meet the learning needs of many students. Several lessons were badly planned and organised. Some lessons moved too slowly and the learning tasks were not sufficiently demanding to sustain students' interest. In many theory lessons, students work on their own, without a teacher present. In one case, a group of work-based learners who were sent to a resource room, were poorly prepared, unsupervised, and spent their time in social activities. Little or no learning was taking place. The students were concerned about the lack of help and the slow progress they were making towards their NVQ. In another example of poor practice, a member of staff, covering for a sick colleague, had responsibility for students in three different workshops and one resource room at the same time. Students were, therefore, unsupervised for long periods.

45. Vocational advisers from the institute visit and review learners' progress in the workplace every six months, and there are also interim reviews. Advisers, although aware of the slow progress of learners, fail to set appropriately demanding targets for achievement. Their understanding of how evidence may be gathered in the work place is unsatisfactory. They fail to ensure that learners use evidence from the work place for assessment. Assessments are missed and learners' progress is slow. The institute, in recognising the problem, has recently appointed a work-based assessor. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of this appointment. Not all those who work with students have the necessary training and assessment qualifications to do so. In some workshop sessions, there is no one who is qualified to assess students' work. Staff do not understand the requirements for key skills. For example, some learners with particular qualifications receive exemptions from key skills, while others with the same qualifications do not.

46. The vocational advisers provide pastoral support for learners on work-based programmes. The quality of this support is good. Learners welcome the way advisers help to

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address and resolve any issue with their course or employer. Learners have access to a wide range of support including good personal and welfare services. Reviews of learners' progress are insufficiently thorough: teachers do not explain clearly the actions needed to improve learners' performance, nor do they subsequently check that these actions have taken place. All full-time 16 to 18 year olds studying construction are part of the Curriculum 2000 provision at the institute. Additional studies, however, are limited to single units of other construction crafts.

47. Most staff are appropriately qualified. Accommodation for practical activities is good. Workshops are well maintained and staff have a high regard for health and safety. In one practical session, a group of students working on the national examination board in occupational safety and health course used the workshop to carry out a mock assessment. The workshops have a good range of hand and power tools that are of a professional standard. Classrooms are generally well maintained although many rooms devoted to construction do not have displays and fail to create a feeling of subject identity. The libraries on both campuses have a good range of construction books and trade literature on construction.

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

48. Curriculum managers have failed to raise levels of achievement and improve the quality of teaching and training. There are regular course team meetings but they give little time to the discussion of low retention and pass rates. Performance targets are not set at course team or at curriculum level. The self-assessment process is unsatisfactory. Weaknesses and their impact on students have been underestimated.

## **Engineering**

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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **Unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on many courses
- good use of ICT in electronics and motor vehicle courses
- well-equipped workshops
- well-structured programmes which meet the needs of individual learners
- productive links with employers.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on most programmes
- inadequate arrangements for student assessment
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- some ineffective curriculum management.

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

49. There is a wide range of full-time, part-time and work-based provision in engineering, motor vehicle maintenance and footwear manufacture, at the Corby and Wellingborough campuses. Courses are available during the day and in the evening and lead to qualifications which include NVQ, AVCE, national certificate, and City and Guilds certificates. Many students progress from level 2 to level 3 courses, and some go on to study on higher national programmes at the institute. Modern apprentices attend the institute to acquire the background knowledge and key skills required to complete their frameworks.

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

50. Pass rates on many courses are above the national average. Some have steadily risen over the last three years. For example, the NVQ level 2 engineering pass rate has risen from 63% in 1998/99, to 92% in 2000/01, which is well above the national average. In the last three years, the pass rate in NVQ level 2 footwear manufacture has been consistently high, at just over 90%. The NVQ level 2 welding has risen from 40% in 1998/99 to 72% in 2000/01. Advanced modern apprentices in engineering achieve pass rates above the national average, though the number of starters is small. Despite the high pass rates on many courses, retention

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rates are often low and some are significantly below the national averages. For example, AVCE engineering had a pass rate of 100% in 2000/01, but only 57% of those who started actually completed the course. In 1999/2000, on NVQ level 2 engineering, the retention rate was 28%. In 2000/01, it had risen to 70%.

51. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory or better. Students make good use of ICT. In electronics, first-year full-time students verify the results of theoretical work on Ohm's law by carrying out practical work using an industrial-standard circuit package. Motor vehicle students' presentations are based on evidence from a variety of sources including CD-ROMs, the Internet and research from books.

### *Quality of education and training*

52. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. The standard of teaching for adult students is higher than for students aged 16 to 18. There is some unsatisfactory teaching on level 2 and level 3. In theory lessons, motor vehicle maintenance teachers make good use of ICT in theoretical work. In practical workshops, teachers mirror the best practice in industry by making good use of computer-based motor vehicle diagnosis systems to show students how to find engine faults. Teaching in practical sessions is well planned, and resources are good. Students follow well structured programmes of study which match their individual learning needs and satisfy the needs of their employers and the industry. Programmes start with a six-month course to establish general engineering competence before the students move on to the more specialist parts of the learning programme.

53. Assessment practices in work-based learning are poor. On most programmes target setting is inadequate and students fail to meet completion dates. Work-based learners receive unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring of performance is poor. Most assessment is of portfolio evidence only. Assessors are scheduled to visit learners in the workplace every month, but some learners have not been visited for over five months. Students are unsure of their progress and are unsatisfied with the level of guidance given. Assessors seldom observe learners completing practical tasks. Some learners are in their fourth year of a modern apprenticeship programme and have yet to have any NVQ units assessed. Some students are not aware of the key skills requirements for successful completion of their individual learning plan. Institute staff fail to deal promptly with problems identified by learners and work-place supervisors.

54. All engineering teachers have relevant and extensive industrial experience. The resources used in the institute and in the work placements are industry standard and they are used effectively during training sessions to develop a wide range of engineering skills. In the institute's technology centre, many of the workshops have been refurbished to a high standard. The resources for motor vehicle maintenance and auto-computer-aided design are good and up to date. In manufacturing, welding and footwear there are well-equipped workshops and a good range of machinery. The welding workshops are spacious.

55. Relations with engineering and footwear employers are good. Employers support the institute well. An effective employer forum meets three times a year. Matters discussed

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at the forum influence the provision. Employers provide sponsorship and job opportunities for full-time students. They also frequently provide equipment. In footwear manufacture, for example, an employer has supplied specialist equipment and materials.

56. Quality assurance of assessment is insufficiently rigorous. Schedules and plans for the monitoring of assessment are prepared but they are not always followed or achieved. There is little monitoring of the conduct of assessment, particularly in work-based training. Internal verifiers are not firm enough in drawing attention to the quality of written and verbal feedback. They do not provide enough formal feedback to staff to enable staff to improve and develop their skills.

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

57. The roles and responsibilities of staff and teams in the engineering department are clearly defined. Self-assessment reports and operational plans have been developed. However, managers are not dealing adequately with the weaknesses in teaching and learning and are not tackling low completion rates. Procedures for monitoring the quality of work-based learning are inadequate. Managers have access to on-line management information to help them in their day-to-day work, but they find it difficult to reconcile locally held information with information held centrally.

**Business, management and professional**

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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **Very Poor (grade 5)**

***Strengths***

- high retention rates on most courses
- high pass rates in accounting and management studies
- broad range of courses to meet the needs of the community
- effective linking of theory to current industry practice
- high standard of work produced by full-time students
- good resource and business centres.

***Weaknesses***

- insufficient checks on students' learning in lessons
- ineffective use of classroom teaching aids
- lack of ICT resources on management and professional courses
- ineffective management of work-based learning
- no arrangements for sharing good practice as a means of raising standards.

***Scope of provision***

58. There is a broad range of courses in business administration, management and professional studies for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. These range from short vocational evening courses to full-time academic courses at all levels. Timetables are flexible, enabling students to follow differing patterns of attendance, which suit their personal and work circumstances. Many course timetables are designed specifically to meet the needs of local employers. The provision meets the needs of the wider community effectively. At the time of the inspection, there were 21 learners on modern apprenticeships in business administration and accounts.

***Achievement and standards***

59. Retention rates are good for students in all age groups. The retention rate is above the national average on most courses. On the certificate in management studies, the retention rate over the last three years has averaged over 90%. Retention rates on the GNVQ advanced

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business course are above the national average. Pass rates for the mainly adult provision in accounting and management studies are substantially above the national average. In 2000/01 the pass rate on the certificate in management studies course was outstanding. All students who completed the course achieved the award. On many other courses, the pass rates for students of all ages are similar to national averages.

60. All students are improving their personal and social skills while working towards their qualifications. Most are progressing well towards their learning goals in business administration, management and professional courses, and in business administration they are developing effective practical office skills. Full-time students, mostly 16 to 18 year olds, produce written work of a high standard. Their portfolios of work are presented in a professional manner, appropriately detailed and well indexed. The students have good research and analytical skills, which they use well in preparing materials for their portfolios. The standard of work produced by part-time adult students is mainly satisfactory.

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

61. All teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers have relevant qualifications. They use their experience and knowledge of business effectively in linking the teaching of theory to the work place and current industrial practice. Students themselves are also encouraged to make connections between their own work experience and the classroom theory. When students bring a problem from their work place to the attention of the teacher, the teacher is able to help and to provide explanations that carry authority and credibility.

62. There are insufficient checks on students' learning. Not all students respond to teachers questions and many of the less confident students do not contribute to group discussions. This makes it difficult for teachers to assess students' understanding of what has been taught. Teachers do not plan or use whiteboards and overhead projectors effectively. The equipment is frequently badly positioned and, in many instances, students are unable to read the information. Assessment for students is mainly satisfactory. For work-based learners, however, there is not enough assessment in the work place. In accounting, all evidence is simulated even when workplace evidence is available. Key skills on work-based learning programmes are developed using evidence generated in the classroom, rather than through activities in the workplace.

63. The IT resource centres are well equipped. Applications are of industry standard. The business centre is a realistic working office in which students can learn effectively. It provides a wide range of office activities and services and is used by college staff and by other students. On management and professional courses, teachers and students make insufficient use of ICT.

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

64. The management of courses is satisfactory. Although courses are offered on five main campuses, they tend to operate independently of each other. Where there is good practice it is not shared between the teaching teams. For example, there is little, if any,



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arrangement to exchange ideas on effective teaching methods and to share learning materials between the different teams. Managers lack understanding of the requirements of work-based learning. Some employers are also unclear about their role in work-based learning. There is confusion among institute managers over responsibility for internal verification of the NVQ administration courses. For example, one learner's portfolio was held for six months awaiting internal verification which never happened. On the accounts course, the feedback given by the internal verifiers is aimed at the NVQ candidate rather than the assessor.

**Information and communication technology (ICT)**

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

***Strengths***

- good development of students' IT skills
- high standard of teaching at the Rutland campus
- broad range of provision to meet the needs of students and the community
- good IT resources for general computing courses.

***Weaknesses***

- poor attendance on computing courses
- lack of specialist IT facilities for national diploma courses
- inappropriate use of accommodation
- failure to cater for the learning needs of all students in practical lessons for 16 to 18 year olds.

***Scope of provision***

65. The institute offers an extensive range of full-time and part-time IT and computing courses from short specialist course to higher level programmes for 16 to 18 year olds and adults. The courses meet the need of the different communities that the institute serves. The provision for full-time students in IT includes GCE A-level computing, GCE AS-level ICT and computing, GNVQ/AVCE advanced and GNVQ intermediate, and an introduction to business technology course. Most part-time provision is for IT skills from level 1 to 3. There are good opportunities for progression and many students move on to higher-level qualifications. IT workshops offer students with varying work patterns or personal commitments the flexibility to attend at times which suit them best. Short intensive courses for adults are structured to provide the necessary IT skills for employment.

***Achievement and standards***

66. Retention rates are rising on courses for students of all ages. Retention rates on GNVQ intermediate IT have risen from 74% in 1999/2000 to 82% in 2000/01. On word processing stage 1, rates rose from 88% in 1999/2000 to 94% in 2000/01. Computer learning and information technology courses have seen a rise in retention rates of 15% over the last three years. Retention rates have declined on the GNVQ advanced IT and, in 2001 they were significantly below the national average. Most pass rates on ICT courses are similar to the national average. In 1999/2000, the pass rate on the GCE A-level computing was outstanding

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at 100% but it declined in 2000/01 to around the national average. The GNVQ intermediate IT pass rate rose from 58% in 1999/2000 to 63%, which is just below the national average. During the inspection, average attendance of full-time computer students was low, at 57% which is significantly below the average level of attendance for other courses.

67. Most students work well on their own and develop good skills in IT. The standard of portfolio work is high. Intermediate and advanced full-time students have developed good research skills and produce imaginative assignment work. Part-time adult students attending a short course produced presentation slides which were creative and of a high standard. AVCE and national diploma students are developing highly effective skills with a variety of software packages and are using the applications to produce good systems and solutions to business problems. They are adept at using the Internet for research to complete their assignments. The best students are able to analyse and interpret and to make use of Internet material to produce appropriately critical written work. They are also able to produce computer programmes and web pages which are of industry standard. One group is working with a local company to produce a web site. On a return-to-work programme for adults, the students acquired good IT skills which increased their confidence. Students work well on their own and provide good support for one another. They have a positive attitude to their course and to their assignment work.

### *Quality of education and training*

68. Overall, 64% of the teaching was good or better. At the Rutland campus, it was very good. Staff at this campus vary their methods of teaching to take account of the preferred methods of working and learning needs of individual students. Lessons are well planned and designed to stretch students' ability. Teachers make good use of their expertise in helping learners during lessons. They give students the confidence to produce good solutions to problems and to test the boundaries of particular software applications. Most teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and, in the better lessons, students were highly motivated. Good lessons were well planned and there was effective use of resources. In a national diploma class, students were e-mailed the lesson plan the day before so that they could prepare for the lesson by carrying out any necessary research. Teachers have participated in appropriate staff development to update their knowledge and skills, and new teachers are expected to work towards a teaching qualification.

69. In a number of lessons, other than those at the Rutland campus, teachers fail to check students' understanding effectively. In many lessons the work set, the resources and the teaching methods used failed to take sufficient account of students' differing learning needs. The tracking of students' progress is thorough but, in some cases, it is not formally recorded. The provision of IT key skills at the Rutland campus has been problematic. Students joining key skills classes after the main start date have made it difficult for teachers to cope adequately with the range of knowledge and differing levels of skill within the class.

70. All the campuses are connected to the institute network and students have access to the on-line materials developed by staff. Specialist computer rooms are well equipped. They enable students to use industry standard software and to access the intranet and the Internet.

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Development centres on all campuses provide IT facilities and learning resources for students to use outside timetabled lessons. The national diploma curriculum requires students to use high-specification, multi-media facilities for their lessons but these are not readily available within the curriculum area.

***Leadership and management***

71. This area of learning was recently re-organised. The new management team has identified problems with lateness, absence, retention and pass rates and has initiated strategies to address these issues. Quality development groups have recently been established to review aspects of the curriculum and to improve the sharing of good practice between course teams and across campuses. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives. There are weaknesses in the scheduling and use of classrooms. For instance, classes are sometimes taught in an inappropriate large open-plan. The data on retention and pass rates are unreliable and cannot be used effectively to inform management decisions and to set targets for improvement.

## **Leisure and tourism**

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

### *Strengths*

- good pass rates on the advanced GNVQ and for additional qualifications
- well-planned and effective educational visits
- wide range and effective use of learning resources.

### *Weaknesses*

- low retention rate on intermediate and advanced GNVQ
- teaching which is insufficiently demanding of students
- insufficient monitoring of student performance
- inadequate arrangements for course review and evaluation.

### *Scope of provision*

72. Leisure and tourism courses operate mainly from the Windmill Avenue campus in Kettering with a small number of students catered for at the Rutland campus. The institute offers leisure and tourism courses at GNVQ foundation and intermediate level and the AVCE in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism. A good range of qualifications are available to students in addition to their main course of study. However, not all of these qualifications are available on both campuses. For example, the award in coaching studies is not available at Rutland. Enrichment activities are an important part of the leisure and tourism curriculum.

### *Achievement and standards*

73. In 2000/01, the pass rate on the GNVQ advanced in leisure and tourism rose significantly to above the national average. Over the last three years, however, retention rates have fallen each year and in 2001, were below the national average. All students who completed the GNVQ intermediate in 2001 achieved an award but the retention rate was unacceptably low at 39%. In 2001, the retention and pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course were high at 93% and 80% respectively. Levels of achievement of students pursuing qualifications additional to their main course of study are high. Students successfully develop a range of skills that improve their employment prospects and match employers' needs. During the inspection, average attendance was high, at 86%.

***Quality of education and training***

74. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory. In the good lessons, teachers provided clear objectives for students, work was well organised and interesting and there were effective reviews of students' learning. Teachers have produced some good resource packs for leisure studies programmes. In many of the lessons observed, however, the work was insufficiently demanding, particularly for the more able students. There was no attempt to differentiate learning activities to meet the needs of individual students. For example, the more able students who completed tasks were left with nothing to do while others caught up. Teachers allowed too little time for students to express their views and did not do enough to find out what individuals had learned. The programme of external visits and use of visiting speakers from industry was well managed. It was helping to improve students' understanding of the course and its vocational context. For example, visits from the staff of a travel agency, a leisure centre and the careers service had a significant impact in broadening students' knowledge and understanding of the leisure and tourism industry. Students value the programme of external visits highly.

75. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Assignments are at an appropriate level for the award. Internal verification and standards moderation fully meet awarding body requirements. The quality of teachers' feedback to students varies. Some teachers mark work carefully, provide a detailed analysis of students' strengths and weaknesses, and indicate the improvements required to achieve higher grades. Too often, however, the feedback was too vague or not extensive. The monitoring of students' performance is insufficiently rigorous. The outcomes of assessment are not used constructively to help students progress. There is no target setting based on the outcomes.

76. Staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. Students consider their teachers to be approachable and helpful. The quality of resources for teaching and learning vary across the two campuses. There are good learning packs for leisure programmes in the Windmill Avenue learning resource centre. The book stock at Windmill Avenue is good but there is a narrower range of books at the Rutland campus. Whilst access to IT is good, there are no strategies for making ICT an integral part of teaching and learning other than in the basic use of the Internet for research. There are indoor and outdoor sports facilities at both campuses and a small fitness room at Windmill Avenue that is well used by students and staff. There is a travel office at Windmill Avenue but not at the Rutland campus.

77. Students spoke highly of the induction they had received and the information provided about their course and their career opportunities. Students who had missed induction were sometimes not followed up. Consequently, some felt they had not been properly informed about some aspects of their studies, such as the enrichment activities available. All students undertake basic and key skills diagnostic assessments and the outcomes are reported to tutors. There were delays in students receiving the additional support they required, but students were complimentary about the support they were given by their teachers.

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*Leadership and management*

78. Course teams meet regularly but the outcomes of meetings are often not recorded. The arrangements for course review and evaluation are insufficiently thorough. Much of the data on retention and pass rates are unreliable. The self-assessment report did not identify some of the weaknesses in the leisure and tourism curriculum area.

## **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**

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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on NVQ level 1 and 2 hairdressing
- well-planned and well-organised courses
- good tuition in practical and theoretical work
- high standards of practical work
- well-equipped modern salons.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on two-year hairdressing and beauty therapy courses
- low pass rate on NVQ level 2 beauty therapy
- inappropriate level of course for some learners
- some poor attendance.

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

79. The institute offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing at NVQ level 1 to 3, and NVQ level 2 and 3 in beauty therapy. The range of complementary therapy and related courses, includes holistic therapies, aromatherapy, reflexology, body massage, anatomy and physiology, and Indian head massage. Most courses start in September but there are flexible arrangements to allow students to enrol throughout the year. The salons are closed at weekends and during the holiday periods.

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

80. The pass rates are high on hairdressing programmes. On NVQ level 1 hairdressing, the pass rate has risen dramatically from 21% in 1998/99, to 100% in 2000/01. The pass rate at NVQ level 2 has steadily increased from 75% in 1998/99, to 88% in 2000/01, which is above the national average. The retention rates on anatomy and physiology are high. On two-year hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes retention rates are low. In 2001, just over half the students originally enrolled were retained in hairdressing, and about 60% in beauty therapy. Students display high standards in their practical work. In some cases the work is above the level required for the award. Students demonstrate good social skills and care for their clients in the hairdressing and beauty salons. Beauty therapy students have work placements that further develop their personal and technical skills. Average attendance

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was poor for 16 to 18 year olds, at 67%. It was slightly better for students aged 19 and over, at 72%.

81. Assessments are well planned. Most assignments are detailed and well written and fully cover the assessment requirements. Students frequently include diagrams and images to supplement the text. Portfolios of students' work are well presented and well organised. Most teachers provide constructive written feedback on students' work. In hairdressing workshops, guest speakers give demonstrations of leading manufacturers' products. The speakers bring up-to-date commercial techniques and new skills to the students. In beauty therapy, students organise a 'pamper day' at a local hotel to gain realistic commercial experience. The beauty therapy assessor attends this event to assess students in the workplace. Hairdressing assessments are carried out during practical lessons. Beauty therapy students are assessed in the salons and also when on work placement.

### *Quality of education and training*

82. Teachers are appropriately qualified and make good use of staff development to update their skills. In beauty therapy, staff development has led to more effective integration of key skills with other aspects of work. On hairdressing courses, however, the teaching and assessment of key skills are not related to the vocational area. Courses are well planned and well organised. Schemes of work are detailed. Lesson plans are good. They identify teaching resources, learning activities and methods of monitoring students' learning. Teachers use appropriate teaching methods and introduce students to a suitable variety of learning activities. Most teaching in theory and practical lessons is good. In practical lessons, teachers monitor students carefully to ensure that they are all involved in meaningful learning activities. There is also effective individual teaching in practical lessons. Salons are lively and busy. Lessons held in them are well managed. Teachers check regularly to ensure that students are learning and fully understand the tasks that they are required to carry out. Teachers carefully explain technical terms in language that is appropriate for the students. Students demonstrate a good grasp and understanding of this technical language and respond to questions confidently. Teachers provide positive and encouraging feedback to students. In tutorial sessions, students are kept aware of their progress through regular reviews and action planning.

83. Initial assessment and accreditation of prior learning and experience are not always working effectively. In hairdressing, some students have been placed on an inappropriate level of course, based on their prior achievements. For example, students that have good life skills and experience have been enrolled on an NVQ level 1 programme.

84. The salons are modern and well equipped. The main hairdressing salon has recently been refurbished and forms a realistic working environment. Hairdressing and beauty therapy have their own reception areas and dispensaries. Students work with good products and are provided with good equipment. There is a wide range of up-to-date textbooks and CD-ROMs. Learning and project packages with information from trade journals and magazines encourage students to work on their own.

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*Leadership and management*

85. Overall management of the area is good. Staff work well together to provide students with opportunities for effective learning. Teachers share good practice across the hairdressing and beauty therapy curriculum area. Regular staff meetings are held and these are well documented. Part-time staff are not always able to attend meetings, and are subsequently updated on proceedings. Internal verification works well across the curriculum area.

## Health and social care

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

### *Strengths*

- high pass rates on counselling courses
- strong tutorial guidance and support
- productive group work in lessons
- good teaching from full-time staff.

### *Weaknesses*

- low retention and pass rates on a number of courses
- undemanding work in some lessons
- ineffective curriculum planning
- low levels of achievement in key skills.

### *Scope of provision*

86. The college offers courses extending from foundation level to level 4 for 16 to 18 year olds and those aged 19 and over. Neither the GNVQ foundation level in health and social care nor the higher national certificate or diploma (HNC/HND) in care practice recruited enough students to run this year. Full-time provision is small, comprising the AVCE in health and social care and the GNVQ intermediate. Part-time provision includes counselling courses ranging from introduction to advanced certificate level; NVQ level 2 and 3 in care; and a national certificate in caring. The latter did not recruit this year and there are only four students on the second year of the course. Counselling provision is thriving, enhanced this year by the introduction of the diploma in therapeutic counselling. The provision is based at the St. Mary's Road campus where all full-time and most part-time courses are taught. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 learners on work-based learning in the care sector.

### *Achievement and standards*

87. Retention and pass rates on counselling courses have risen consistently over the past three years. Starting from a high base they culminated in 100% pass rates in 2000/01 for all counselling courses. Over 160 students were enrolled, most of whom were retained. Three years ago, the GNVQ intermediate health and social care course had very poor retention and pass rates. In 2000/01, they were in line with the national average. Achievement data for the other provision in this area of learning, including the precursor of the AVCE course, are

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unreliable. It is clear, however, that retention and pass rates are well below the national average on these courses. Students on the NVQ level 2 programmes have been very slow to complete. None of the learners on the work-based learning provision had achieved the qualification for which they were aiming and progress towards this end was extremely varied. Most full-time students fail to see the value of key skills. Levels of attendance for key skills sessions have been poor and achievements low.

88. Standards of assessed work are satisfactory. The best work demonstrates the development of students' research and analytic skills. The ability to evaluate is not so well developed. Some of the journals produced by students on counselling courses show considerable personal development. Of particular note is the increased confidence and personal development of students whose previous educational experience had not been successful. Beginning at intermediate level, they now believe in themselves sufficiently to apply for a place at university. Some students gave presentations on complex theoretical perspectives or reported on the progress made with a group project in which they were involved.

### *Quality of education and training*

89. Full-time teachers teach well. Lessons are well organised. Teachers share with students what is to be covered in the lesson. They explain clearly how each aspect links with the next in order to create an effective topic. Teachers draw on students' personal and vocational experiences, showing students the relevance of what they are studying. They continually check that students understand the key messages. Teachers introduce students to a variety of activities, maintaining their interest and concentration. Methods of work include work in small groups and practising skills. Students on a counselling course learned a new way of understanding another person's view of the world by using a phenomenological approach. This made a great impact on them. AVCE students work well in groups. All contribute and produce outcomes of a good standard. In a session on loss and separation, they were asked to describe their feelings at having lost an object. Feedback from the groups was often perceptive and provided the content for exploring further the impact of loss or separation.

90. In a few lessons, the teacher did not make clear to students the rationale for the exercise they were asked to undertake. This made it difficult for students to engage themselves as fully as they might have. In one lesson, students who had completed their task and were left with nothing to do became bored and restless. The quality and amount of on-the-job training for work-based learners varies enormously. In some placements, the minimum is done to satisfy requirements.

91. Schemes of work present what is to be covered, but there is no indication of learning objectives. Many schemes make no reference to learning activities or to resources. Staff are concerned about students' workload. They have struggled to prevent additional studies distracting students from their main studies and to allow enough time for enrichment activities. Forms of assessment are generally appropriate but lack of organisation has led to a bunching of assessment deadlines. The purpose of a few assignments is not fully clear.

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Marking is generally accurate and teachers provide helpful and constructive feedback. Occasionally, the return of work takes too long. There are relatively few industrial visits or external speakers from the professions included in timetabled lessons. Work experience is a valuable part of the curriculum. Strategies to make key skills an integral part of the core curriculum are at an early stage of development.

92. Guidance and support are a strong feature of the courses. Students value the well-planned tutorials, which include individual action planning and target setting. Regular assessment of progress ensures that students know how well they are doing and what is needed to improve. Resources are adequate for the courses and have been improved by the additions of a computer suite and a resource room where students can work on their own. Numerous changes of assessors for work-based learners have seriously hampered their progress.

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

93. Management of the programme area is sound and efficient. There are regular meetings of staff with sound agenda. Communication within the programme area is good. Staff understand quality assurance arrangements and the views of all participants are considered. Self-assessment is honest but based on achievement data which are not always reliable. Management of work-based learning is poor.

## Childcare

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

### *Strengths*

- good teaching
- good progress of students in relation to their prior achievement
- effective support for individual students
- good range of short courses which meet the needs of the community
- effective development of personal skills.

### *Weaknesses*

- low retention and pass rates on some courses
- deficiencies in the planning of part-time NVQ courses.

### *Scope of provision*

94. There is a broad range of courses in childcare. Many are offered on a full-time and part-time basis. Courses include certificates and diplomas of the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE), the national diploma and certificate in early years, and a range of NVQ awards. The CACHE foundation in childcare was introduced in September. Short course which meet the needs of the community include the introduction to childminding practice, introduction to pre-school practice, mid-day supervisors certificate, equality and inclusion in childcare, play and child development and safeguarding children and managing behaviour. Approximately 3% of students on childcare courses are male.

### *Achievement and standards*

95. Retention rates on the CACHE diploma in nursery nursing and the national diploma compare favourably with national averages but the pass rates on these two courses are below the national average. The retention and pass rates on the CACHE certificate in childcare and education are low. Retention rates on the national certificate have declined and the pass rate is below the national average. Full-time students achieve well on short courses such as medic first aid and the welcome health award, which they take in addition to their main qualification. Students also have the opportunity to work towards qualifications in key skills. A high proportion of NVQ students do not complete their portfolios and gain their qualification. A few students subsequently finish the work and gain the award. Many students who enrol on full-time courses at level 2 and 3 have low levels of achievement on entering the institute, compared with the national average for entry to these programmes. On

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the CACHE diploma in nursery nursing and the national diploma in childhood studies, students make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals, which is, at least in part, because of the effective learning support available to students. Learning support for individuals and small groups is available in the learning support centre and there is a high rate of take up by full-time students. Teachers provide a lot of in-class support for individual students. Students appreciate the help and encouragement they receive from their teachers. Assistants are available to provide in-class support for part-time students where the need has been identified.

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

96. Most of the teaching is good or better. Comprehensive schemes of work reflect the learning objectives required by the awarding bodies. Teachers are clear about the standards required and the learning objectives for each lesson. There are well-developed teaching resources to support learning and some of these are designed to take account of students' differing learning needs. Students' preferred methods of working are carefully considered and teachers employ a good range of teaching methods. Students work collaboratively and on their own. Teachers set tasks that enable them to develop their personal and decision making skills, and to research, analyse and evaluate. In a practical level 2 workshop, students were expected to decide on their task, identify the learning objective, allocate responsibilities within small groups, evaluate their progress at the end of the lesson and, in the light of this, set targets for their work during the next session. Students are expected to, and do, take responsibility for managing their time in class and for helping other students. The students are well motivated and enthusiastic about learning. In one class in which students were learning about a new government initiative on early years, the students themselves requested a visit to the local organisation.

97. There is much good teaching which is shared across the curriculum area. Teachers make regular checks on students' learning both during and at the end of lessons. Most teachers are skilful at consolidating learning by asking students questions. However, there were a few lessons in which students took little interest in their work and were reluctant to speak. Discussions of cultural differences and respect for them, are an integral part of all the childcare courses. Equal opportunities are actively promoted in lessons. Teachers have considerable knowledge and experience of industry and use real life examples to enliven their teaching. Good use is made of students' work experiences particularly part-time students who are in full-time employment. All full-time students on the childcare courses spend part of each week on work placement, organised and assessed by the placement co-ordinator.

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

98. The curriculum is generally well managed. Communication across the curriculum area is good and staff work well together as a team. Elements of the part-time NVQ courses, however, are not well planned and fail to match the needs of learners. Curriculum managers have strong links with the local Early Years Development and Care Partnership and with other local sector colleges. Managers are responsive to the needs of the local community and offer training course to match those needs.

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## **Visual and performing arts and media**

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

### *Strengths*

- high retention and pass rates
- effective development of students' vocational skills
- good teaching
- good range of vocational and GCE A and AS-level courses
- effective use of professional artists, designers and performers
- good specialist IT
- well-planned programmes.

### *Weaknesses*

- poor standard of students' written work in art and design
- some inappropriate marking of students' work in art and design and photography
- unsatisfactory accommodation in performing arts
- insufficient technician support in media.

### *Scope of provision*

99. The institute offers a good range of full-time and part-time provision in art and design, graphic design, media studies, dance, performing arts and photography. Courses are provided for students aged 16 to 18 and for those aged 19 and over. They are available during the day and the evening and lead to awards which include HNC, national certificate and diploma, AVCE, GNVQ intermediate, GCE A and AS-level and GCSE. Courses are available at a range of times to suit the different needs of learners.

### *Achievement and standards*

100. The pass rates on most courses are significantly above the national average. The pass rate for the diploma in foundation art and design has remained at a high level for the last three years and, for two of those years, the pass rate has been 100%. The national diploma in graphic design has seen a consistent rise in pass rates from 80% in 1998/99 to 100% in 2000/01. Although there are some high pass rates at GCE AS level, there are also some that are low. In 2000/01, for example, no student passed the GCE AS-level photography or GCE AS-level graphic design courses. Most retention rates are good. The diploma in foundation

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art and design has seen retention rates increase significantly, from 68% to 97% in 2000/01. GCE A-level media studies also rose from below the national average to 87% in 2000/01. Some retention rates have declined. For example, the retention rate on the City and Guilds photography course declined from a high of 95% to 80% in 2001.

101. Students are able to work on their own using materials and processes, and make significant progress in acquiring and applying their knowledge. They show considerable perseverance and are determined to succeed. Students help each other, work productively in groups and express their ideas well. Most use technical language effectively. The activities they undertake are suitably demanding and in most lessons, they produce work of a high standard. Manuals of work on performing arts and media courses are good. Practical work is a real strength. The majority of students are confident about what they have learned and they demonstrate skills and techniques appropriate to or above the expected level of the award for which they are studying. Their subject knowledge is good. Critical evaluation of their own work and that of others is encouraged and is built into the structure of many of the lessons. The quality of art and design students' work is often very good, demonstrating careful attention to accuracy and detail. In contrast, however, the quality of much of their written work is below the standard required.

### *Quality of education and training*

102. Teaching was good or better in 77% of the lessons observed. Schemes of work are well-designed and lesson plans are thorough. Students have a clear view of the purpose of most lessons. Teachers are sensitive to the learning needs of students and skilful in catering for these needs. Most lessons make clear reference to course specifications so that students are kept aware of what is required. Teachers keep students informed of their progress and the extent to which they are achieving their learning targets. Teachers' marking of students' work in art and design and photography is sometimes unclear and teachers sometimes fail to give students sufficient guidance on how they might improve their performance.

103. At best, the teaching is inspiring, pushing students to the limit. In lessons on drawing an artefact, students were taken through a sequence of drawings on different scales, using a range of techniques and processes. The teaching was excellent and clearly evoked students' curiosity as they acquired new skills. In a lively class on radio presentation, the students compiled inventive material for a forthcoming launch of the institute's radio station, demonstrating a highly effective command of professional skills and techniques. Teachers are good at encouraging students to express their own ideas and concepts and this prepares them well for a career in art and design, performing arts or media.

104. Students are well supported by tutors and teachers. Their progress is monitored effectively and recorded thoroughly.

105. Most teachers have recent and relevant professional experience as artists, designers and performers. The part-time staff bring well-focused and up-to-date industrial and professional skills to classrooms and studios.

106. The accommodation and resources for performing arts and media at the Rutland site are inadequate to meet the learning needs of students and course specifications. In media studies there are not enough technicians to support students and teachers. Accommodation and resources at the Kettering site are mainly satisfactory. A well-equipped computer suite provides appropriate computer software and hardware for art and design.

***Leadership and management***

107. The curriculum area is well managed and the quality of management contributes to the high standards of teaching and the high pass and retention rates. Teaching and learning is monitored on a regular basis. Work is prepared thoroughly and resources used effectively. Course leaders take care over schemes of work. Targets are set for pass and retention rates but because of the unreliability of data, the process is not always fully effective.

## Humanities

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

### *Strengths*

- high pass rates on many GCE A and AS-level subjects
- much purposeful and effective teaching
- detailed and effective monitoring of students' progress
- wide range of subjects
- effective management of subjects.

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching within and across campuses
- failure to make IT an integral part of work across the curriculum.

### *Scope of provision*

108. Students are provided with a broad and interesting choice of subjects in humanities. GCE A and AS-level humanities subjects are offered at the Rutland and Windmill Avenue campuses. Most students are 16 to 18 year olds who attend full time. Evening classes for adults are provided where there is sufficient demand. The institute offers a wide range of subjects at GCE A/AS level. They include geography, history, law, psychology, sociology, government and politics, philosophy and ethics. A narrow range of GCSEs is provided at both campuses. The number of students studying psychology at GCE A/AS level has steadily increased and it now forms a substantial part of the humanities provision. History, sociology, law and geography have shown a moderate growth. Government and politics and philosophy and ethics are retained despite the small numbers of students applying for each of these subjects.

### *Achievement and standards*

109. Most GCE A/AS-level pass rates are above the national average and, in some subjects, they are high. GCE A-level geography, psychology, sociology and social sciences all have pass rates well above the national averages. GCE A-level retention rates are at or above the national averages. All humanities GCE AS levels have high pass and retention rates. Students develop good research and analytical skills. In a GCE A-level psychology class, students presented their own research on evolutionary explanations of human behaviour. The detailed preparation and planning resulted in lively, interesting and well-informed presentations that contributed to students' knowledge of the topic and provided

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them with good subject materials. Students' written work is of a high standard and folders and files are well organised. Attendance during the inspection was high at 85%.

### *Quality of education and training*

110. Most teaching is well planned and effective. Learning objectives are made clear at the beginning of lessons and learning is frequently checked. In a GCE A-level law lesson, students benefited from a skilful and informed discussion on the intricacies of the law on the duress of threats. Students were interested and enthusiastic and showed it by asking relevant questions, providing good answers to the teacher's questions and making effective contributions of their own. Lessons are well managed. Students engage in a suitable range of activities. In the best lessons, students are interested in the topic, work hard, and learn effectively. Learning materials are well designed and effective. Students in a GCE A-level geography lesson used handouts and worksheets to study the impact of mass tourism on the environment and the quality of these materials played a large part in sustaining students' interest and supporting the fluent and well-informed question and answer session that followed. Learning materials for GCE A and AS-level psychology are excellent.

111. Students value their teachers subject knowledge and the individual support which teachers provide. In most lessons, teaching and learning are clearly linked to assessment and final examination requirements. In a few lessons, teachers were less successful in sustaining students' interest because they spent too much time talking to the class and expecting students to listen. There is not enough sharing of good practice in teaching and good learning materials across the various subjects.

112. Teachers set work at an appropriate level. Marking is detailed and helpful. Specially designed forms are used to provide students with detailed feedback on their mark, including advice to students on ways of improving their grades. Students' progress is monitored effectively at regular review meetings. The marking of work and the termly reviews are particularly helpful in giving students a picture of their progress and enabling them to plan their work. All students have a weekly tutorial. Tutors co-ordinate the subject reviews and send parents a copy of the summary report. There are consultation evenings for parents at both campuses. GCE A-level students receive timely advice and information on applications for HE. A high proportion of students progress to HE. Most students value tutorials and the support that they receive from tutors.

113. Learning resource centres on both campuses have adequate holdings of books for humanities subjects. The specialist humanities rooms at Rutland also contain texts and journals. Psychology students are taught in new accommodation at Rutland that provides a pleasant base for the subject and houses good subject materials. A few of the other rooms at Rutland are less suitable, suffering from poor heating and inadequate soundproofing. At Windmill Avenue, teaching rooms lack a subject identity and house few learning resources. Both learning resource centres offer IT facilities for students. Students find difficulty in gaining access to IT facilities at the Rutland campus and there are no computers in subject rooms on either campus. Opportunities for learning, using IT, are not routinely identified in schemes of work. Furthermore, there is insufficient use of IT as an integral part of teaching

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and learning. Students' work shows little use of IT, although appropriate websites are sometimes used in researching humanities topics.

***Leadership and management***

114. Subjects are well managed. Course planning is good and there are effective schemes of work. Assessment strategies are detailed. Staff conduct a comprehensive and thorough analysis of students' performance which includes measurement of the value added to their performance whilst at college. There is a regular cycle of staff meetings at both campuses, and a joint quality and curriculum board has been established to strengthen communication between the campuses and improve planning.

**English and access to HE**

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

***Strengths***

- some well-planned and stimulating teaching at the Rutland campus
- high standard of students' work
- high pass rates on GCE A-level English subjects and access to HE humanities and social sciences courses
- good use of learning resources in lessons.

***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory teaching on some campuses
- poor attendance and punctuality
- some ineffective curriculum management
- insufficient action taken, where necessary, to improve the quality of teaching.

***Scope of provision***

115. An appropriate range of courses is offered across the five main campuses. GCE A and AS-level provision is offered mainly at the Rutland and Windmill Avenue campuses. GCE A and AS-level subjects cater more for the needs of 16 to 18 year olds and are offered mainly during the day. GCSE English language is offered at all five campuses during the day or in the evening. Access to HE in humanities and social sciences courses are provided at Wellingborough and Kettering.

***Achievement and standards***

116. The standard of students' work at the Rutland campus is high. Assignments show a high level of critical analysis. Creative writing is dynamic. Students are positively encouraged to consider and challenge established theory. Students work hard in lessons and are confident in putting forward ideas and arguments in discussion. In GCE A and AS-level literature lessons, students show great sensitivity to language and are able to talk critically about poetry. They are encouraged to write their own poetry and to take part in competitions. Some 28 students had poems published in '2001: a Poetry Odyssey'. Written work from some GCSE students shows flair and originality. Students on the access to HE course are encouraged to express their own ideas drawing on their personal experiences. Their ideas are then aligned to various aspects of research and theory. This approach is particularly useful in helping students to grasp difficult concepts. The standard of students' work at the Windmill

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campus is less than satisfactory. In some assignments there is little critical analysis and the technical competence of some students is weak. A number of students lack the confidence to speak in class. Attendance was low during the week of the inspection and punctuality was poor.

117. Retention and pass rates for students studying at the Rutland campus are generally high. Value added data are used to inform individual students' reviews and to monitor group performance. Pass rates are also high on the access to HE in humanities and social sciences courses. Retention and pass rates for students attending the Windmill Avenue campus are generally poor. GCSE English is offered as an open-learning course but few of the students gain the qualification.

### *Quality of education and training*

118. Most teaching was satisfactory or better, and there was some good, lively teaching at the Rutland Campus. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching was at the Windmill Avenue campus and in GCSE provision on all campuses, excluding the Rutland campus. The better lessons are well planned and show a good awareness of individual students' needs. Schemes of work are thorough. Lesson plans are well thought out and contain references to a variety of appropriate and occasionally imaginative forms of learning. There is a working atmosphere in many lessons. Teachers have a friendly and purposeful relationship with their students and provide extra support outside lessons. Teachers at the Rutland campus focus on developing the individual student's critical thinking and ability to work effectively on their own. Students discuss ideas in pairs and in small groups reporting to the whole group on key points. Ideas are then further developed through discussion. The standard of debate is often high and many students show themselves to be alert and perceptive. In a GCE A-level literature lesson, the teacher prepared floppy disks for the students, flagging appropriate web sites for each group's research activity. Students, working collaboratively, then researched the topics, producing detailed and exciting presentations. Evidence was also being gathered for key skills qualifications. At the Windmill Avenue campus, an evening class began with the students and teacher telling stories about personal gory experiences. The descriptions were then used to enhance the students' understanding of a narrative extract.

119. In weaker lessons, teachers failed to explain to students what the purpose of the lesson was and a number of the lessons were unstructured and unfocused. A disproportionate amount of time was spent with students reading texts aloud, often struggling with the language. This approach failed to further their understanding of the texts and interfered with the progress of others. In some lessons, teachers' analysis of text amounted to a rambling consideration of particular extracts and a repetition of points. The pace of work in some lessons was too slow and committed learners lacked stimulation. In the weakest lessons, teachers talk too much and fail to bring the best out of their students.

120. Students' work is generally marked in detail, often making reference to awarding bodies' criteria. Where the marking is good, teachers provide specific pointers for improvement. Teachers provide detailed comments on some assignments, indicating targets

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for improvement. Teachers wrote brief comments at the end of the assessment and gave few or no suggestions as to how students could improve.

121. Students on all campuses value the extra learning support received from the central services. Some GCSE students, however, did not receive the individual learning support required. On the Rutland site, students' learning is enhanced by visits to the theatre or external conferences. Students said they would like a more extensive enrichment programme. Access to HE students value the flexible timetable enabling them to combine learning with parenting. Access students visit several universities in the early part of their course as part of the attempt to stimulate their interest in HE.

122. Learning resources at the Rutland campus are good. Students have access to, and use, the Internet to research topics. Classrooms are exciting places to visit with interesting displays which students appreciate. There is an appropriate range of materials to support learning on other campuses. However, there are no displays of work to encourage students to succeed.

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

123. Management of subjects is good at the Rutland campus and on access to HE in humanities and social sciences courses. Elsewhere, subject management is poor. Significant weaknesses in teaching and learning are not addressed. Individual target setting to improve students' performances does not occur in GCE A and AS-level and GCSE English on the Windmill Avenue campus. Last year, there were no appraisals for teachers at Rutland or Windmill Avenue. There is good practice on the Rutland campus but few opportunities have been created to spread this good practice. The data on students achievements are inaccurate. This impedes managers' attempts to monitor retention and pass rates.



**Foundation studies**

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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **Very Poor (grade 5)**

***Strengths***

- high proportion of full-time entry-level students progressing to more advanced courses
- good teaching on most programmes
- effective staff development
- effective use of support assistants
- productive partnerships with external agencies
- wide range of entry-level programmes.

***Weaknesses***

- some ineffective learning plans
- very poor life skills provision on the learning gateway programme
- unsystematic monitoring of students' progress
- insufficient sharing of good practice to try to improve the quality of learning.

***Scope of provision***

124. Foundation studies in this area covers basic skills in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, for 16 to 18 year olds and those aged 19 and over. There is also a range of programmes for students with learning disabilities and/or disabilities and the life skills element of the learning gateway programme. Provision at entry level and below is provided both at the institute and in the community. Currently, there are 43 full-time and 78 part-time students aged 16 to 18, and an additional 52 learners on the work-based life skills programme. There are nearly 12,000 enrolled on part-time courses and 52 adults on full-time programmes at entry level. This area also provides cross-college learning support and additional support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

***Achievement and standards***

125. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well on the full-time entry programmes and develop a range of additional skills. Learning activities build on the successful attainment of targets. Confidence increases and students develop team-work skills which are important for study and for personal living. On full-time courses, retention and

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progression rates are around 90%. Short courses in literacy have a retention rate of 87%. Most City and Guilds courses for literacy and numeracy have retention and pass rates above the national average. On much of the outreach provision, achievement is not measured in terms of formally accredited awards. For the majority of students, achievement is something wider than the achievement of externally recognised awards. For example, a wide range of skills are developed through family learning programmes which lead to the development of skills such as how to communicate effectively with schools and other statutory organisations. Most students enjoy their time at college and the opportunities that the programmes provide for appropriate development to meet their own individual learning needs.

126. Learners on the life skills part of the learning gateway programme do not achieve their potential. Some of these learners are unaware of their needs or how these might be met. Development plans and learning plans fail to reflect accurately the strengths and weaknesses each learner brings to the programme and, in worst cases, fail to identify individual targets and training activities. During the current contract year, 61 learners started in training.

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

127. There is much good teaching in this area. Learning activities are relevant to students' everyday needs. For example, a residential programme planned by the students involved a range of essential skills such as measuring, budgeting and reading for meaning. Some schemes of work are excellent, but others fail to take account of students' individual learning requirements. In lessons for students with learning disabilities and/or difficulties, teachers are good at adapting their approaches in order to respond effectively to the specific learning needs of students.

128. Initial assessment is good in some areas. Where it is good, effective individual targets are identified on students' learning plans. In many cases, these learning plans are issued to relevant staff and support assistants who review personal learning targets regularly. This good practice is not uniformly shared. In some subject areas, the results of initial assessment do not influence learning plans. Programmes of work are not specific enough and reviews are unfocused. On occasion, learners of varying ability attempt the same activities and are not being challenged to the same degree.

129. The monitoring of students' progress is not systematic. It is effective on the full-time entry programmes but not for the part-time community-outreach and the basic skills and ESOL provision.

130. There is good use of learning assistants in a number of classes, including those held in the community. Some classes have additional volunteer staff. Support from learning assistants is available on a cross-curricular basis. This year, the college has screened new students for basic skills and currently provides support currently to 250 students. Results of the screening are supplied to tutors within four days. Supported learning enables students from all curriculum areas, including vocational courses, to get help with their learning.

131. There is well-focused staff development, particularly for those staff working with the most vulnerable students. Where teachers have undertaken staff development the standards of teaching are higher. Staff have appropriate qualifications and experience in sign language, deaf awareness, learning disabilities and in methods of teaching for different kinds of learners.

132. The institute is very responsive to the needs of the local community. A wide range of short programmes are provided, which enable the institute to meet the needs of its community, including under-represented groups. Productive partnerships exist with local and national statutory and voluntary partners. A local steering group, which includes community representatives, advises on community education courses. Good links exist with social services and parents and guardians to enable effective support to be given to people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is equality of access for all learners.

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

133. Responsibility for management of this area falls to three separate departments. The good practice which exists on the full-time entry-level programmes in teaching and learning and in the celebration of achievements is not being shared with other areas of work. Moreover, these skills and achievements are not in evidence in the learning gateway programme. There is a lack of direction in the management of the life skills element of the programme, leading to a poor understanding of the needs of the trainees and the requirements of the contract.

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**Part D: College data**
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**

Level	16–18 %	19+ %
1	10.8	15.1
2	26.0	18.8
3	38.2	10.1
4/5	0.1	0.8
Other	24.9	55.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in spring 2001*

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	2,729	6,026	25.5
Agriculture	26	154	0.5
Construction	256	761	3.0
Engineering	539	760	3.8
Business	818	3,228	11.8
Hotel and catering	591	2,163	8.0
Health and community care	419	2,052	7.2
Art and design	745	2,029	8.1
Humanities	4,531	3,586	23.6
Basic education	533	2,386	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,187</b>	<b>23,145</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in spring 2001*

# MONITORING INSPECTION OF TRESHAM INSTITUTE

*Published April 2003*

## **Outcome of monitoring inspection**

The provision of work-based-learning in the curriculum area of **engineering, technology and manufacturing** is now **satisfactory**.

## **Background**

Tresham Institute was inspected in November 2001. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory in all curriculum areas inspected except construction where it was found to be poor. The provision for work-based-learning in construction, engineering, business administration and life skills were also found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management is unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of any unsatisfactory curriculum areas and of leadership and management, where applicable.

As a result of monitoring inspections, inspectors may judge that the curriculum area or areas, or leadership and management, are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Such a judgement is likely to be made between 12 and 24 months after the initial inspection. A short report outlining the improvements made will be published on the Ofsted website alongside the original report. If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum area(s) or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grades for the areas that continue to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and why.

## **Monitoring inspections**

In accordance with the above procedures, monitoring inspections of work based learning in engineering took place at Tresham Institute on 2 and 3 July 2002, 10 and 11 December 2002, and 8 and 9 April 2003.

## **Engineering, technology and manufacturing (work-based-learning provision)**

In the November 2001 inspection, the quality of the work based learning provision in this area was judged to be **unsatisfactory**. The following strengths and weaknesses pertaining to work based learning were identified in the inspection report:

### **Strengths**

- well-equipped workshops
- productive links with employers.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates on most programmes
- insufficiently rigorous arrangements for students' assessments
- lack of monitoring of assessment
- lack of student's awareness of key skills requirements
- failure to deal promptly with problems identified by students and work-place assessors.

Following the monitoring inspections, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that the work-based-learning provision in this area is now **satisfactory**. The management and co-ordination of work-based-learning are sound. The work-based-learning action plan targets are being met. Learners indicated that the programme has improved in the last 12 months. The assessment practices are much improved. There is a work placement assessment visit calendar with an increasing number of on-the-job assessment visits and increased number of assessments completed. Portfolio evidence is now regularly reviewed and assessed. Learners are aware of their progress and are set completion targets as a part of their progress learning reviews. The reviews are now integrated with assessment visits. Achievement of individual targets in the target time is improving. A camera is used to support the gathering of assessment evidence. Initial assessment of work-based-learners enables additional learning needs to be identified. The match between NVQ competency requirements and employment experiences are now assessed early and plans put in place to ensure learners are able to cover the full range of NVQ competencies through on-the-job assessment. Students are aware of key skills requirements and the need to complete these to gain the complete apprentice framework. Key skills are increasingly put in a vocational context and there are now teachers with specific responsibilities to provide additional support as necessary. A service level agreement specifies the type and nature of the support to be provided. There is improved retention compared with previous years and there are indications that pass rates are improving. The rate of progress of learners towards completion of their NVQ is satisfactory.