College and Area-wide
Inspections

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College and area-wide inspections

Contents

Introduction

1. The Learning and Skills Act 2000 gives the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) the responsibility for the inspection of colleges in the further education sector and requires that such inspections be carried out jointly with the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). The Act also requires Ofsted to carry out area-wide inspections of provision for 16–19 year olds, with the assistance of the ALI as necessary. Between September 2001 and June 2002, Ofsted and the ALI jointly inspected 73 general further education, tertiary and specialist colleges, 27 sixth form colleges, 12 dance and drama institutions and 11 independent specialist colleges catering for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the same period Ofsted led 23 area-wide inspections. This is the first joint annual report by the inspectorates, covering the period from September 2001 to June 2002.

Participation in education and training

aged 16 to 18

cated in Table 1, the proportion of 16–18 year olds in full-time education has remained round 55% over the last three years. Ten years ago, the comparable figure was 47%. alf of these students are educated in colleges in the further education sector: colleges, tertiary colleges, general further education colleges and specialist colleges. nder are educated in schools. The proportion participating in either full-time education has also remained static.

Table 1. Participation in education and training of 16–18 year olds, England, 1999–2001			
	1999	2000	2001
Full-time education	55.4%	55.8%	55.5%
Total education and training	75.0%	75.4%	75.5%
Not in any education or training	25.0%	24.6%	24.5%

people in work-based learning

umber of young people starting work-based learning in 2001/02 was 241,500, ed with 247,600 in the previous year. The number of starts on advanced modern tice programmes fell by 13,000 (18%) compared with 2000/01, but starts on tion modern apprentice programmes rose by 8,000 (8%).

learners

under 1,026,000 adults were enrolled on programmes funded by the Learning and Council (LSC) on 1 November 2001. This is not significantly different from the previous About one in three enrolments are on courses that lead to a qualification. The profile arners changed very little between 2000 and 2001. Nearly three quarters of enrolments women.

Commentary

❏ The findings from area-wide inspections show that there is a clear need for more strategic planning of provision of 16–19 education and training at local level. While local learning and skills councils (local LSCs) are beginning to establish structures intended to bring about better and more collaborative planning, patterns of provision seen in area-wide inspections reflect no principle of design, and can lead to inequity. Higher-attaining learners usually have a satisfactory choice of courses, but the less able often have inadequate access to education and training opportunities suited to their needs.

❏ In colleges, the highest-attaining students are the most consistently well served. Advanced-level students in sixth form colleges receive teaching that is almost always at least satisfactory. As a result, they achieve well. Some of the most vulnerable young people need to be better served. For example, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching in independent specialist colleges for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

❏ The majority of colleges provide a satisfactory education for all types of student. Some are outstanding. However, too many general further education colleges have inadequate provision or unsatisfactory leadership and management. It is disturbing that almost a fifth of the further education colleges inspected were inadequate and almost a quarter had unsatisfactory leadership and management.

❏ Over 90% of lessons observed by inspectors in colleges were satisfactory or better, but the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons (under 10%) is too high. Overall, the quality of teaching is better and examination pass rates are higher in sixth form colleges than in other colleges. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors averaged 78%. Although the average was higher for sixth form colleges than for general further education colleges, it was too low across the sector.

❏ Colleges have responded well to Curriculum 2000. They have revised curriculum policies, broadened choice and improved students' achievements. Student numbers have increased. The wide range of subjects generally enables students to choose the combination of academic and vocational subjects that meets their needs. Most colleges have broadened the range of enrichment activities available to students as a result of Curriculum 2000. However, in some sixth form colleges with a strong tradition of enrichment activities, the increase in the volume of work attributed to Curriculum 2000 has led to a reduction in such activities. Curriculum 2000 has not led to any significant increase in the level of collaboration between schools and colleges, but, in a few areas, colleges work together to reduce duplication of courses or provide students with a wider choice.

Pass rates for key skills qualifications are low. Many students do not complete their key skills portfolios and do not take the key skills tests. The low level of recognition given to key skills by higher education establishments has eroded students' motivation. In many colleges where students are expected to study advanced subsidiary level general studies in addition to key skills, students are dissatisfied because of the additional burden of assessment. Managers in a minority of colleges have failed to develop a systematic approach to the teaching and assessment of key skills. In such colleges, poor initial assessment of students' ability in the key skills results in many students studying key skills at a level that is inappropriate for them.

Adults form the majority of learners in the post-16 sector. Colleges have responded positively to the challenge of widening participation, attracting a growing proportion of adults from disadvantaged or previously under-represented groups. There has been a rapid expansion of courses for adults for whom English is not their first language. Colleges provide a good standard of education and training for adults. Teaching and learning for adults were good, very good or outstanding in 68% of lessons, compared with 63% for 16-18 year olds. Colleges are increasingly paying attention to adults' individual needs and aspirations in designing their learning programmes.

Most adult students who are aiming for a qualification are successful. The number of qualifications taken and the rates of achievement are rising year by year. Retention rates for adults have not risen in line with achievement rates. In too many colleges a significant proportion of adults do not complete their studies. The lowest retention rates for adults are in sixth form colleges where they principally attend part-time evening courses.

The quality of work-based learning is poorer than other college provision: 43% of provision is unsatisfactory or very poor. Some trainees develop useful practical skills, but achievement rates are too low and workplace training is often poorly planned. Initial assessment of trainees is often inadequate and assessment of progress during programmes is weak. Employers are not sufficiently involved in their employees' training programmes. Colleges should pay closer attention to the management and quality assurance of their work-based provision.

Resources overall are satisfactory or good in most colleges. However, 50% of adult learners in colleges inspected have to make do with barely adequate resources, at best. Most colleges have attractive libraries and learning resource centres that are generally well stocked with books, periodicals and audio-visual materials. Colleges have difficulty recruiting suitably qualified teachers in some curriculum areas. In business studies, travel, social care, hospitality and catering, in particular, teachers have not worked in their occupational areas for several years and their specialist skills need updating.

Summary of main findings

Leadership and management

There is a need for better strategic planning of 16–19 education and training at local level

- none of the areas inspected had a clear strategy, based on a detailed audit of local need
- below level 3, many learners had inadequate access to opportunities suited to their needs
- in 11 of the 23 area-wide inspections, advice given by schools was neither impartial nor sufficiently comprehensive.

Almost one fifth of the general further education colleges inspected were judged to be inadequate

- their leadership and management, and/or more than one third of their curriculum areas, were unsatisfactory
- leadership and management were unsatisfactory in 23% of the general further education colleges inspected.

Leadership and management in sixth form colleges were good

- 70% of sixth form colleges were graded good or outstanding for their leadership and management, and in only one college were leadership and management unsatisfactory.

Colleges have responded well to Curriculum 2000

- they have broadened choice and improved students' achievements
- student numbers have increased
- most colleges have broadened the range of enrichment activities.

Colleges have attracted a growing proportion of adults from disadvantaged and previously under-represented groups

- they have made good use of outreach and community centres
- courses for adults whose first language is not English have expanded rapidly.

Too many managers were insufficiently focused on issues of teaching and learning

- there was a strong correlation between weak leadership and management, unsatisfactory teaching and low levels of students' achievements.

The management of work-based learning was unsatisfactory in half the colleges inspected

- colleges and employers frequently did not work together closely enough to provide work-based learning and assessment in a co-ordinated way.

Achievement and standards

9-year-old students in sixth form colleges achieved good pass rates

- 2001, 85% of advanced-level students and 83% of intermediate-level students in sixth
  m colleges achieved their qualifications
- corresponding figures for 16–19-year-old students in general further education
  tertiary colleges were 76% and 69%.

ates for adults studying for level 2 qualifications improved significantly

- verall pass rate for adults at level 2 rose by 4% to 69%
- rates for adults were better in general further education and tertiary colleges
  in sixth form colleges, where they represent a small proportion of the student body.

on rates improved

- west retention rates were those for adults in sixth form colleges: 71% on level 3
  es in 2001
- 1, retention rates for 16–19 year olds in sixth form colleges improved to 84% at level 3
- on rates for general further education and tertiary colleges showed slight improvment
  1: they ranged by level and age group from 76% to 79%
- roduction of one-year GCE AS-level courses has improved retention compared with
  t year of the previous two-year GCE A-level courses.

es for key-skills qualifications were low

- tudents did not complete their key-skills portfolios and did not take the key-skills tests
- ers in a minority of colleges failed to develop a systematic approach to the teaching
  sessment of key skills.

portion of modern apprentices who completed their apprenticeship rk was low

- lure to achieve key-skills qualifications was a major reason for this
- cient opportunities for assessment in the workplace sometimes led to excessively
  progress towards NVQ qualifications.

ased learners achieved good occupational skills

- learners developed good practical skills and theoretical knowledge, relevant to
  r occupational area, and many produced work of a high standard.

Quality of education and training

Half of all provision in colleges was good or outstanding

- the grades awarded for curriculum areas show that 50% of provision was outstanding or good, 39% was satisfactory, and 11% was unsatisfactory or very weak

- the best grades were in visual and performing arts, where 71% were good or outstanding

- the lowest grades were awarded to construction and ICT, where only 33% and 37% respectively were good or outstanding.

The grades awarded to sixth form colleges were significantly higher than those awarded to other colleges

- only 3% of the curriculum area grades awarded to sixth form colleges were less than satisfactory, compared with 12% in other colleges.

Much work-based learning is unsatisfactory

- 43% of the contributory grades for work-based learning were unsatisfactory or very weak.

There is much unsatisfactory teaching and learning in specialist colleges for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- 25% of the lesson observation grades were less than satisfactory. In these lessons, teaching was not matched to learners' needs.

Teaching and learning were better for adults than for 16 to 19 year olds

- 68% of lessons for adults were graded good, very good or outstanding, compared with 63% for 16–19-year-old students.

Most off-the-job training for work-based learners was good

- 61% of teaching was good or better
- 9% was less than satisfactory.

Too much teaching and learning was unsatisfactory

- 8% of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory.

Attendance at lessons was too low

- attendance at lessons observed by inspectors averaged 78%.

Much training in the workplace was poorly planned

- individual learning plans were seldom used effectively to plan and monitor learners' training.

Personal guidance and tutorial support were good in almost all colleges

- tutorials were effectively used to review students' progress and offer careers and other guidance.

ort for students' learning needs was inadequate in a minority lleges

- hough almost all colleges carried out initial assessment, in many cases it was not owed up rigorously enough.

colleges have good resources for learning

- t colleges are well equipped with computers and have well-stocked learning urce centres.

es have responded well to the diversity of adult students' needs

- asingly, courses are offered at times and places to suit the individual circumstances ults and their families

- es have continued to develop inclusive learning methods, in which teaching earning are closely matched to learners' needs.

Area-wide inspections

Background

5. Ofsted, with the Adult Learning Inspectorate, carried out 23 area-wide inspections during 2001/02, all of them in areas where the proportion of young people participating in education post-16 was low and achievement at 16 was also below the national average. The inspections evaluated the range and quality of education and training provided to 16–19 year olds, and the suitability of the guidance they were offered.

Strategic planning

6. In none of the areas inspected was there a clear strategy for rationalising the provision of education and training for the 16–19 age group. Neither were there in place strategies for improving standards, based on a detailed audit of local need. The providers of 16–19 education were only just beginning to move out of a climate of competition, rather than collaboration. The establishment of local LSCs in April 2001 clarified responsibilities for planning 16–19 provision and emphasised the importance of effective needs analysis and joint planning by local LSCs, LEAs, schools, colleges, employers and training providers. Although five of the areas inspected were conducting major reviews, the collaborative planning which the local LSCs are intended to stimulate was inevitably at an early stage of development. It has been hampered by the complexity of the liaison to be effected, as well as by the dearth, in some areas, of data about the movement of students between boroughs.

7. Learning partnerships have started to identify and respond to weaknesses in provision, but they have not addressed issues in a consistent and systematic manner. Their impact has not been significant. There is sometimes a lack of clarity about the role, activities and responsibilities of the different partnerships within an area. Common approaches for determining value for money across the areas inspected have not been developed. In most areas, the low level of collaboration between schools and other providers has hampered the rationalisation and improvement of provision.

Patterns and range of provision

8. A pattern of 16–19 provision has therefore emerged, largely without planning or design, in the areas inspected. In general, that pattern meets the needs of the relatively small proportion of high-achieving students in these areas. A minority of high-performing schools or sixth form colleges attract well-qualified young people and serve them well, although with some unnecessary duplication of choice at GCE A and AS level, leading to costly small teaching groups. Other local schools, keen to maintain their sixth forms, admit students with relatively low GCSE grades, many of whom achieve poor examination grades at 18, or do not complete their course. These schools often provide vocational programmes in addition to GCE A-level courses. In these areas overall, the proportion of young people who had at least five GCSE passes at higher grades was below the national average, and their results at 18 tended also to be relatively weak.

the areas inspected, further education colleges provided academic and vocational
es for students of all abilities. Typically, however, they attracted students with lower
of prior attainment than those entering school sixth forms or sixth form colleges.
e the bias of their entry, in many areas they were not providing a range of
unities adequate to meet the needs of the average or less able students. The contrast
n the relative wealth of choice generally available to the well-qualified A-level student
paucity of opportunity open to the less able across many areas was too stark.
ased training opportunities in particular vary in their availability across the country,
vider range available in the Midlands and north of England than in London.
ased training often attracts a low proportion of participants from minority ethnic groups.
he areas inspected, there were too few training places available to students
lowest levels of achievement.

ng the period (before 1992) when they had the relevant statutory powers and duties
n to colleges as well as schools, LEAs had reorganised 16–19 provision in about half
usually by reducing the number of school sixth forms and creating tertiary or sixth
eges. In five areas, where the colleges were able to attract students across the full range
ent, the revised arrangements had effectively contributed to raising achievement and
on of students on their courses of study. Even in these areas, however, many of the
students chose to enter the remaining school sixth forms, even if it meant travelling to
ea to do so.

Advice and guidance

s context of sometimes inadequate, sometimes excessive, choice, the guidance
o young people on their choice of pathway post-16 is of crucial importance.
ng people had access to adequate guidance, but naturally many relied on the advice
hool. In 11 of the areas inspected, their choices were found to have been influenced
from schools that was neither impartial nor sufficiently comprehensive. Schools often
inadequate information about work-based learning and opportunities outside their own
. Too many students are enrolled on unsuitable programmes in both school sixth forms
ges. Too many students with borderline entry criteria are enrolled on programmes that
emanding for them. Not enough use is made of value-added information to advise
on their personal chances of succeeding on a particular programme. In many areas,
sed training is regarded as suitable only for students with low achievements at age 16,
advice given reflects this view. The proportion of students aged 16 and 17 staying on
ation and training varies considerably within and across areas. In some areas there is
v participation by particular ethnic groups and young men.

Educational standards achieved

almost all of the areas inspected, the proportion of 16 year olds achieving at least five
passes at grades A*–C in maintained schools is well below the national average.
nts' achievements in sixth forms and colleges generally reflect their prior achievements
CSE. Consequently, in the areas inspected, pass rates at GCE A level are also mostly
below national averages. School sixth forms and sixth form colleges that have high
y criteria for their GCE A-level programmes, or attract well-qualified students, usually
e good achievements at GCE A level.

9

Pass rates on level 2 and 3 vocational courses vary significantly across institutions. In some schools, pass rates on intermediate GNVQ courses are particularly low. Pass rates for the full modern apprenticeship qualification are often low, usually because trainees have not obtained the key-skills awards.

13. Many students, especially young men and particularly in further education colleges, do not complete their courses. The problem is more acute on two-year programmes. However, the introduction of one-year GCE AS-level courses as part of the Curriculum 2000 reforms has improved retention compared with the first year of the previous two-year GCE A-level courses.

14. Progression rates to higher education are satisfactory. Progression rates from schools to higher education are mostly good. This reflects the generally higher level of attainment of students who enrol for GCE A-level courses at schools. Progression rates from colleges to higher education are good in some subjects, for example, art and design. Some college students take longer than the norm to reach the standard necessary for progression to higher education. Often the standard is not reached until after the age of 19. Many of these college students achieve better results and progress further than would be predicted on the basis of their achievements at school.

Quality of education

15. Most of the teaching observed in schools and colleges during area-wide inspections was satisfactory or better. However, there is no consistency across areas with regard to the preparation of learning plans. In many lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to students' individual learning needs, or to the development of independent learning and research skills. In the small teaching groups that exist in many school sixth forms, a lack of interaction between students can inhibit learning.

16. Students are generally well supported on personal issues. Students with additional learning needs or learning difficulties are supported effectively and integrated with other students. Most colleges have good accommodation and resources. Their libraries, learning resource centres and ICT centres are usually of a high standard. Other specialist vocational facilities range from excellent to poor. In contrast, many schools in about one third of the areas inspected have unsatisfactory accommodation, ICT resources and specialist facilities for their sixth form students. Facilities for work-based training are mostly satisfactory or good.

Future developments

17. Action is needed to improve participation rates, retention rates and learners' achievements. Through joint strategic planning and partnership working, local LSCs and LEAs should seek to:

- improve the achievements of 16 year olds, including GCSE results, study skills, self-confidence and levels of motivation

- improve the retention of students attending further education colleges

- address the low aspirations and culture of disengagement in some communities, especially among young men

- velop students' independent learning skills at both school and college

- prove the information, advice and guidance for students about the full range of choices ailable at age 16

- ure that the range of provision meets the needs of young people of all abilities and dresses local and regional skills' shortages

- value-added data to set targets for individual students and monitor their performance elation to those targets

- nalise provision, where necessary, and develop effective collaboration between iders of education and training

- ove the range, quality and outcomes of training provision

- ate cost-effectiveness of provision and secure value for money.

Education in colleges

Leadership and management

Table 2. The quality of leadership and management						
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	No of grades
General further education, tertiary and specialist colleges	4%	38%	34%	22%	1%	73
Sixth form colleges	15%	56%	26%	4%	0%	27
Overall	7%	43%	32%	17%	1%	100

18. Table 2 shows a marked difference between inspectors' judgements of leadership and management in sixth form colleges and in other types of college. Unsatisfactory leadership and management were found in one sixth form college and in 20 colleges of other types: general further education, specialist or tertiary; some large, some small; some in rural and some in inner urban areas.

19. The fact that a quarter of general further education, tertiary and specialist colleges were found to be unsatisfactorily managed is disturbing, particularly given the fact that, in most cases, inspections of these colleges under the previous inspection arrangements had detected many weaknesses.

20. This finding cannot necessarily be extrapolated across the sector as a whole, since the colleges inspected during this period included a large proportion of those known from previous evidence to have had weaknesses. To compare general further education and sixth form colleges is not to compare like with like. The former serve a very complex student population with a wide age-range and a wide range of prior attainment. Their purpose is, in part, to secure the widest possible participation in educational opportunities. Their success cannot wholly be measured by the indicators of achievement and retention on which inspectors rely primarily. In addition, there are not adequate measures of the value added by colleges to the education of students who on entry may have few, if any, educational qualifications. By comparison, the purposes of sixth form colleges are more easily defined, their intake narrower and their success more easily measured.

21. Inspections, rightly, concentrate on the management of teaching and learning to secure continuous improvement in pass rates and retention. Financial management, personnel procedures, staff and resource deployment are, by and large, only explored where problematic.

22. Most of the features of good leadership and management observed are common to all well-run organisations. The management and the responsible authority, usually the governors, set a clear direction, which consists of a well-defined strategy with clear targets and a set of expectations (sometimes set out as principles or values) of how people should behave. The latter includes a clear commitment to equality of opportunity, with detailed policies, securely monitored, for securing compliance with the relevant legislation and with whatever commitment to inclusion the college has expressed. This general sense of direction is analysed into detailed operational plans, at school, programme area and course level, with a clear 'line of sight' through all levels of the hierarchy. Ideally, each individual knows what his or her job is for and what he or she has to do, and at what standard, to ensure that the college achieves what it wishes to.

hese are standard features of effective performance management in any kind of
sation, but these are, of course, educational institutions of a very diverse kind.
h, they need to focus on the educationally critical issues, notably pedagogy, and they
articular challenges in ensuring accountability across what may very well be several
undreds of courses, dozens of programme areas, thousands of qualifications, an age
hat may run from 16 to 90 and a multiplicity of funding sources.

e first such challenge is to ensure that managers are able to collect, from the many units
h the college is composed, information which has some common core of meaning,
performance in one area can be securely compared with performance in another, and
ken on the basis of the comparison, that is, to secure consistent interpretation of
criteria for self-evaluation. Mostly, colleges seek to bring this about, using the
Inspection Framework as a key point of reference, by giving careful thought, and
eal of resource, to a reporting structure which is sometimes more complicated than
tive. There is usually an annual cycle of self-review at the course level, overseen by
he managers and subsequently reviewed by some kind of academic board, which
the power to recommend action, including the closure of a course that is failing to
ets or come up to standards.

review processes often entail detailed and evaluative reporting, and are rigorous in
that they often provide a clear means whereby the college can target its resources on
owever defined (usually group size, retention, pass and progression rates form part of
ion). It is, however, uncommon to find a convincing methodology for assessing value
in use. A more fundamental problem is that the detailed observations and
s on which the original self-assessment was based are often flawed. Frequently, the
es later evident on external inspection are not identified, and thus the action taken
be insufficient or inaccurately focused.

ommon for colleges to have not only poor management information systems but also,
data of poor quality. A large number of inspections refer to inadequate data on the
nce of students at all stages, particularly on entry. In part, this stems from the lack of
on supplied to colleges; in part, it is due to the lack of clear equivalencies across the
ions framework, which, for much of the provision, impedes an effective approach to
sment of the value added by the institution. This lack of adequate evidence on which
properly considered and directed action is endemic throughout the college system, even
matters such as the planning needed to meet the individual learning needs of students.

reasingly, too, colleges are being required by the thrust of government policy to effect
ing of a paradigm shift: to see themselves as operating in partnership with other
ions, notably schools, rather than in competition with or in isolation from them.
not an easy shift to make, particularly given the current configuration of the funding
es. Some, nevertheless, are making it, to a surprising degree.

28. Again unsurprisingly, the best colleges give considerable emphasis to communication and consultation, not only across the staff, but with students and, less frequently, local employers, to base the design of the college's provision on the most exhaustive possible analysis of local needs. Some make effective use of intranet sites, both to communicate information to staff and students and to elicit from them evaluative comment at frequent intervals.

29. Inspection reports say little about how effectively colleges discharge their responsibilities as employers: comment on the promotion of equality of opportunity, guidance and the protection of health and safety, for example, is largely confined to provision for students. However, the deployment of staff is generally well managed and, in most colleges, there is a secure connection between appraisal and staff training and development.

30. For the worst-managed colleges, the current accountability framework has yet to prove adequate. One measure of the effectiveness of management is clearly the extent to which it has succeeded in addressing the recommendations of previous inspections. In the first year of Ofsted/ALI inspection of colleges, it has not been at all uncommon to find weaknesses which have been known for some time, but not effectively addressed. It is too soon to say whether local LSCs will improve the situation, or whether the frequent recourse to mergers will do more than compound the problem.

31. Thirteen colleges were judged to be inadequate. These colleges are general further education, tertiary or specialist colleges. No sixth form colleges have been judged to be inadequate. In the colleges where provision is inadequate, managers and teaching staff have failed to ensure that enough students receive a satisfactory standard of education. Typical weaknesses include:

- low standards of students' work in a high proportion of curriculum areas

- low retention rates and pass rates on many courses

- too much unsatisfactory teaching

- unsatisfactory leadership and management

- ineffective quality assurance arrangements

- unreliable management information systems

- poor punctuality and attendance

- poor teaching and assessment of key skills

- lack of strategic direction from governors

- weak financial management.

Educational standards achieved

om September 2001 to June 2002 inspectors awarded 1,042 curriculum grades
colleges. Table 3 shows the grades awarded.

Table 3. Grades awarded to areas of learning						
Area of learning	1	2	3	4	5	No of grades
Science and mathematics	9%	39%	33%	19%	0%	104
Land-based provision	6%	39%	44%	11%	0%	36
Construction	3%	31%	46%	18%	3%	39
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	4%	40%	36%	21%	0%	53
Business administration, management and professional	7%	47%	40%	7%	0%	103
Information and communication technology	5%	33%	51%	10%	1%	92
Retailing, customer service and transportation*	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	2
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	8%	33%	47%	11%	1%	75
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0%	46%	46%	9%	0%	46
Health, social care and public services	6%	41%	45%	7%	1%	83
Visual and performing arts and media	13%	58%	25%	4%	1%	114
Humanities	10%	43%	37%	10%	0%	98
English, languages and communication	13%	44%	40%	4%	0%	78
Foundation programmes	12%	41%	39%	8%	0%	119
Total	8%	42%	39%	10%	0%	1042

nspections of this programme area were carried out

3 shows that 50% of provision was good or outstanding, 39% was satisfactory and
unsatisfactory or very weak. There are significant variations between the grades for
reas of learning. Grades awarded for the inspection of visual and performing arts were
the average, with 71% of provision graded as good or outstanding. In the weaker
example construction, and information and communication technology, less than 40%
on was judged to be good or outstanding. Grades were typically lower in curriculum
re there is a high proportion of work-based learning, in particular construction,
g, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. This is largely due to the failure of many
o complete their training programmes.

grades awarded for provision in sixth form colleges were significantly higher than those
in general further education colleges. Only 3% of the 210 grades awarded in sixth
leges were less than satisfactory, compared with 12% of the 833 grades awarded in
further education, tertiary and specialist colleges. The poorer performance of these
is partly due to the selection for inspection of colleges that were awarded a high
on of unsatisfactory inspection grades at their most recent Further Education Funding
(FEFC) inspection.

15

Other factors include:

● the selection of the more able applicants by many sixth form colleges

● the lack of value-added data relating to vocational courses that would enable colleges to better demonstrate the progress made by many of their students

● the poor completion rates of work-based learning trainees in colleges.

35. Inspectors judged that in about 90% of lessons students had achieved the standard expected by that point in their studies. Adult students are particularly effective in developing their personal and learning skills. In general, inspectors judged the attainment of adult students to be better than that of 16–18 year olds.

36. Tables 4–7 summarise achievement and retention data for students who completed their studies in the academic year 2000/01. Key skills qualifications are excluded since the data are not sufficiently reliable. The *achievement percentage* is the number of students achieving a qualification expressed as a percentage of the number of students completing their courses. The *retention percentage* is the number of students on courses at 1 May (on two-year courses, 1 May of the second year) expressed as a percentage of those enrolled at 1 November. The key points illustrated by the data are:

● achievement at levels 2 and 3 is significantly better in sixth form colleges than in other colleges

● achievement rates for adults are better in general further education and tertiary colleges than in sixth form colleges

● retention rates in sixth form colleges are higher for 16–18 year olds, but lower for adult students than in other colleges

● pass rates are slightly lower in colleges with a high proportion of students from disadvantaged areas, but there is very little difference in retention rates.

Table 4. Achievement and retention rates in general further education and tertiary colleges for students completing in 2001, excluding colleges with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas and excluding key skills				
		Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
No of starters	16–18	137,771	239,560	370,927
No of starters	19+	371,906	361,410	276,872
Achievement	16–18	68%	69%	76%
Achievement	19+	68%	69%	69%
Retention	16–18	79%	76%	77%
Retention	19+	78%	78%	78%

Table 5. Achievement and retention rates in sixth form colleges for students completing in 2001, excluding colleges with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas and excluding key skills				
		Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
No of starters	16–18	12,886	55,962	392,895
No of starters	19+	13,840	11,984	11,390
Achievement	16–18	66%	83%	85%
Achievement	19+	66%	67%	66%
Retention	16–18	83%	81%	84%
Retention	19+	74%	74%	71%

he trend in achievement rates on long qualifications (courses with an expected length
re than 24 weeks) in general further education and tertiary colleges is one of
vement at all levels. In 2000/01, the most significant improvements were on level 2
cations completed by adults, where overall achievement increased by 4% to 69%.
form colleges, the trends in the achievement rates of 16–18 year olds varied
ing to the level of qualification. In 2000/01, achievement on level 1 qualifications
d by 4% to 66%, but improved by 4% at level 2 to 83%. On level 3 qualifications
remained unchanged at 85%.

2000/01, the retention rates for 16–18 year olds in sixth form colleges on level 1 and
qualifications improved. Retention rates for other students in general further education,
olleges and sixth form colleges show negligible improvement.

Table 6. Achievement and retention rates in general further education and tertiary colleges with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas for students completing in 2001, and excluding key skills		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
No of starters	16–18	34,210	49,991	65,345
No of starters	19+	97,329	82,727	61,021
Achievement	16–18	65%	67%	69%
Achievement	19+	69%	65%	66%
Retention	16–18	79%	74%	74%
Retention	19+	80%	78%	77%

Table 7. Achievement and retention rates in sixth form colleges with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas for students completing in 2001, and excluding key skills		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
No of starters	16–18	1,809	7,705	40,489
No of starters	19+	2,356	2,022	1,422
Achievement	16–18	69%	77%	80%
Achievement	19+	53%	64%	65%
Retention	16–18	87%	82%	83%
Retention	19+	78%	71%	71%

chievement rates on long qualifications in general further education and tertiary
vith a high number of students from disadvantaged areas showed a small
ent in 2000/01 on level 1 and level 3 qualifications for both 16–18 year olds and adult
compared with the previous year. In sixth form colleges with a high number
ts from disadvantaged areas, the overall level 1 achievement rates of both 16–18 year
adults declined between 1999/2000 and 2000/01. They improved at level
h age groups, and improved on level 3 courses for adults. Retention rates in colleges
igh number of students from disadvantaged areas showed a slight improvement.

Quality of education

2001/02, inspectors observed
lessons in colleges.

Table 8. Lesson observation grades			
Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	65%	27%	8%
Learning	63%	29%	8%

8 shows that teaching was judged to be excellent, very good or good in 65% of lessons
es 1–3), satisfactory in 27% (grade 4) and unsatisfactory, poor or very poor in 8% of
ns (grades 5–7). Teaching was better in lessons primarily involving adult students.
hing in 68% of these lessons was good or better, compared with 63% in lessons
narily involving 16–18-year-old students.

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41. The majority of lessons are well taught. In the best lessons students develop good oral and listening skills, the ability to respect the views of others and the capacity to think and argue critically. They maintain a keen interest in what they are doing and are able to work independently, taking the initiative where necessary. They understand the assessment requirements of their course of study, are aware of the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.

42. This is not true for all lessons, however. The judgement by inspectors that over 1,400 lessons were less than satisfactory is a major concern that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency in those colleges where they occur. Typical weaknesses include poor planning, failure to check that students understand what is being taught, insensitivity to the needs of individuals of differing abilities, ineffective use of resources, insufficient guidance on how to tackle tasks and poor attention to difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Students in these lessons are frequently disengaged and easily distracted; occasionally they can be disruptive; or else they are unresponsive and unable or unwilling to work on their own.

Table 9. Teaching grades by area of learning			
Area of learning	**1–3**	**4**	**5–7**
Science and mathematics	62%	30%	8%
Land-based provision	62%	28%	10%
Construction	58%	32%	10%
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	61%	29%	10%
Business administration, management and professional	63%	29%	8%
Information and communication technology	63%	29%	8%
Retailing, customer service and transportation*	57%	43%	0%
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	61%	31%	8%
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	61%	30%	9%
Health, social care and public services	64%	28%	8%
Visual and performing arts and media	74%	21%	5%
Humanities	67%	27%	6%
English, languages and communication	70%	24%	6%
Foundation programmes	65%	26%	9%

* Only two inspections of this programme area were carried out

43. The areas of learning where the difference in the quality of teaching of adults and 16–18 year olds is most marked are construction, information and communication technology, and health and social care. In construction, 64% of lessons primarily involving adults were graded 1–3, compared with 54% of lessons primarily involving 16–18 year olds. In information and communication technology, the respective figures were 71% and 57%. In health and social care, the respective figures were 71% and 60%.

44. The quality of teaching varies significantly between colleges. In just under a third of colleges, over 70% of lessons observed by inspectors were good or better. In the eight colleges where teaching was weakest, fewer than 55% of lessons were good or better. In seven of these eight colleges, over 10% of lessons were unsatisfactory. The grades awarded for teaching in sixth form colleges were higher than those awarded in general further education, tertiary and specialist colleges.

he attendance rate at all lessons observed by inspectors in 2001/02 was 78%.
unsatisfactory. The average class size was 10.6. Table 10 shows that there is little
nce between attendance rates in different curriculum areas. The attendance of 16–18-
d students at sixth form colleges was 85% compared with 76% at general further
on and tertiary colleges.

Table 10. Attendance by area of learning		
Area of learning	Average class size	Attendance
Science and mathematics	11.5	80.4%
Land-based provision	10.1	83.6%
Construction	10.8	74.4%
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	9.7	77.5%
Business administration, management and professional	10.8	77.1%
Information and communication technology	11.2	77.9%
Retailing, customer service and transportation*	4.7	86.8%
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	10.4	78.8%
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	10.3	74.6%
Health, social care and public services	10.9	79.0%
Visual and performing arts and media	11.5	77.3%
Humanities	12.0	79.0%
English, languages and communication	10.8	77.4%
Foundation programmes	7.6	73.4%
Overall averages	10.6	77.7%

4 lessons were observed in this area of learning

ance and tutorial support for students are good in almost all colleges. Students are well
by schools and colleges when they transfer to college. Publicity materials are
nsive and most colleges provide good, impartial advice and guidance. Most full-time
eceive regular tutorials. At the best colleges, tutorials are used effectively to review
s' progress and for careers education, preparation for higher education or employment,
ucation and current affairs.

st all colleges carry out initial assessments of students' basic skills and learning needs.
eges provide effective support, for example, through good use of learning support
in lessons and through individual help at learning support centres. However, in a
of colleges, programmes of support are not incorporated into individuals' learning
d many students do not attend the support sessions organised for them. The monitoring
lity assurance arrangements for both learning support and tutorial support are weak
colleges.

sources are satisfactory or good in most colleges. Adult learners, however, frequently
use resources which are, at best, barely adequate. Classrooms are generally fit for
e and most colleges are well equipped with computers for students. Specialist
ces are generally good. Most colleges have attractive libraries and learning resource
s that are generally well stocked with books, periodicals and audio-visual materials.
ges have difficulty recruiting suitably qualified teachers in some curriculum areas,
cularly ICT and business studies. In some curriculum areas, for example in business
ies, travel, social care, hospitality and catering, some teachers have not worked in
r occupational areas for several years and their specialist skills need updating.

Curriculum 2000: the new post-16 qualifications

49. In most colleges, Curriculum 2000 has been well managed. Colleges have revised curriculum policies, broadened choice and improved students' achievements. Student numbers have increased. The wide range of subjects offered at colleges generally enables students to choose the combination of academic and vocational subjects that meets their needs. Most colleges have broadened the range of enrichment activities available to students as a result of Curriculum 2000. However, in some sixth form colleges with a strong tradition of enrichment, the increase in the volume of work attributed to Curriculum 2000 has led to a reduction in such activities. Curriculum 2000 has not led to any significant increase in the level of collaboration between schools and colleges, but in a few areas, colleges work together to reduce duplication of courses or provide students with wider choice.

50. Curriculum 2000 was designed to encourage young people to study more subjects over two years than had been the case previously and to help them to combine academic and vocational study. In 2000/01, the first year of Curriculum 2000, many teachers were unsure of the standard required owing to a lack of exemplary material from awarding bodies. Those uncertainties persisted in the second year of Curriculum 2000, but there was, nevertheless, an improvement in lesson planning.

51. Most colleges provide good guidance for Year 11 pupils. Prospectuses are clear, and useful information evenings are held for students and their parents. A wide range of subjects and effective timetabling generally enable students to choose the combination of subjects that meets their needs. Admissions tutors are increasingly aware of the need to ensure that the number of subjects taken matches each student's previous attainment. Having said that, some students still take too many subjects, given their prior attainment.

52. Many colleges have seen an increase in student numbers. Subjects where numbers have increased typically include information technology, psychology, sociology, media studies and art. Colleges have been able to retain minority subjects, such as music, because they have increased overall numbers. Most students take four GCE AS-level subjects in their first year and go on to study three A2 subjects. Some students taking advanced vocational certificate in education (AVCE) qualifications also study a vocationally relevant GCE AS level, but very few A-level students add an AVCE single award to their programme.

53. Colleges give effective assistance to first-year students with their choice of A2 subjects. Many colleges help students to reaffirm their choices by offering the opportunity to study A2 subjects in July. Colleges support students well in their applications to higher education. Many colleges introduced electronic Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) applications in 2001/02. In some sixth form colleges, support for progression focuses on advice about universities and advice about progression to employment is undeveloped.

ome colleges have broadened the range of enrichment activities available to students
esult of Curriculum 2000. Opportunities typically include sports, community work,
experience and study visits. However, in sixth form colleges with a strong tradition of
ment activities, the increase in the volume of work needed to cover the AS syllabuses,
reased burden of assessment and early deadlines for the submission of coursework to
ng bodies have led to their reduction. Field trips in geography and biology and musical
umatic productions have often been adversely affected. The same factors reduce the
ailable to develop higher-level skills, such as independent research skills.

nagers in a minority of colleges have failed to develop a systematic approach to the
and assessment of key skills. Typically, some key skills teaching will be integrated with
ents' main courses, but, on other courses at the same college, key skills will be taught
y, often resulting in unnecessary repetition of work. In such colleges, there is poor
sessment of students' ability in the key skills. This often results in students studying key
level that is inappropriate for them.

nnouncement, in the summer of 2001, that students are only required to take one
t level 3, reduced levels of motivation among students who had previously been
three key skills. The low level of recognition given to key skills by higher education
ents has also eroded motivation. Consequently, many students do not complete their key
olios and do not take the key skills tests. Pass rates for key skills qualifications are low.
olleges, students are expected to study AS general studies in addition to key skills.
re often dissatisfied with this arrangement, because the additional assessment is a burden.

part, in most colleges, Curriculum 2000 has been generally well managed. Colleges
ed curriculum policies, broadened choice and improved students' achievements.
opment enabled teachers to prepare for the introduction and assessment of the new
ons. Many colleges updated teachers' IT skills to enable them to make better use of
nologies in their teaching. A few colleges work collaboratively with other local colleges
duplication of courses or provide students with wider choice. However, collaboration
schools and colleges is rare.

Centres of Vocational Excellence

tres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) are a major government initiative intended
standards of vocational training and reduce skill shortages. In particular, CoVEs will
e more innovative approaches to vocational training and increase employers'
ment. By the end of 2004, it is anticipated that over half of further education colleges
e at least one CoVE that will develop vocational skills to meet local, regional or
l needs. In June 2002 there were 137 proposals for CoVE status. Sixteen centres were
ated 'pathfinder' CoVEs in 2001. Five of these were included in curriculum area
tions in 2001/02. In each case, the curriculum area that included the CoVE was graded
nding or good. One college withdrew its proposal for development as a CoVE after
ctors identified serious weaknesses in provision. Since September 2002, college
ections have included formal evaluation of CoVEs.

Reinspection of colleges

59. In addition to the inadequate colleges, a further 53 colleges had at least one curriculum area that was less than satisfactory or leadership and management that were unsatisfactory. In the period up to June 2002, 22 monitoring inspections were carried out. Most colleges visited are making reasonable progress in addressing their key weaknesses. At one college, a curriculum area has been re-graded as satisfactory. Colleges that are making progress have typically begun to take the following actions:

- prepared detailed action plans, with clear targets for improvement, realistic timescales, well-defined responsibilities and appropriate allocation of resources

- paid closer attention to the quality of teaching

- improved the reliability and availability of retention rate and pass-rate data

- improved curriculum management and increased levels of accountability

- strengthened learning support for individual students

- improved systems for monitoring students' progress

- developed strategies to improve students' attendance.

Adult learners in colleges

Scope of provision

60. People over 19 currently account for around 70% of students in further education colleges. A striking characteristic of adult students is their diversity: older students completing their initial education; people returning to education, including those in employment; the unemployed; women returning to work; older people facing retirement; and minority ethnic groups. They learn for a wide variety of motives, purposes and expectations and require different kinds of education, training and support.

61. The majority of colleges have been innovative and entrepreneurial in extending the opportunities that adult students have to study and obtain qualifications. There are innumerable examples of successful work undertaken by colleges to raise their profile locally to widen their adult student intake. Many colleges are developing city-centre sites to attract students who might well find aspects of the main campus alien, intimidating or simply too far away. Over 80% have outreach and community centres and offer distance-learning opportunities.

62. Almost all colleges have responded positively to the challenge of widening participation. A growing proportion of students are adults who come from disadvantaged or hitherto under-represented groups. Many of these adults do not have traditional entry requirements but wish to progress to higher education or employment. There has been a widespread development of 'access to higher-education' programmes in a variety of subjects, and an increase in vocational courses for adults seeking new skills or to update their skills to obtain jobs.

Most colleges commit themselves, in their mission and charter, to offering students
ty of opportunity. In many, the focus on the needs of learners from minority ethnic
s has increased. There has been a rapid expansion of courses for adults for whom
n is not their first language. In some inner-city colleges, the number of such students
to the thousands. In one general further education college, the promotion of equal
unities has involved all staff and students. Equal opportunities initiatives are interwoven
her developments in the college, such as curriculum and staff development.
es equality of opportunity a high profile. Under-represented groups are effectively
ed into mainstream provision and they feel valued within the college.

mission statements of some sixth form colleges reflect the development of their adult
n. These colleges have rapidly expanded their part-time evening programme for adults.
form college publishes a separate adult prospectus and offers a well-coordinated
me at eight centres in the local community. Another has over 2,000 enrolments on
ification courses in modern foreign languages and ICT. Sixth form colleges find it
o attract adult students to daytime courses because their timetables are not designed
particular needs of adults.

ges generally do well in meeting the individual needs and aspirations of adult students
ivering nationally recognised qualifications in flexible ways. More and more, colleges
sing courses to match both the personal and job aspirations of adults. Increasingly,
ents are offered a choice of starting dates for their course which gives them
ded flexibility in planning their studies. Many colleges have developed courses in the
and at weekends, and generally at times that fit better with school, childcare provision
ne work. However, development across the sector remains uneven, and some colleges
relatively little to accommodate the commitments many adult students have.

ip and management

two thirds of colleges manage their adult provision effectively and responsively.
ide good opportunities for adults to gain qualifications and they are concerned about
the quality of the students' work. To identify local adult learning requirements,
college conducted an audit of the local community's learning needs. The result of this
was the formulation of effective adult learning strategies for each curriculum area.
eral further education college, the investment of time, effort and resources in the
ment of adult-specific learning support services was repaid amply by a rise in student
and pass rates. However, 25% of colleges have less than satisfactory leadership and
ment which adversely affects the quality of the provision for adults in these colleges.

tandem with initiatives to widen participation, many colleges are developing strategies
note inclusive learning. The development of inclusive learning often signals a
mental shift in a college's perception of the service it provides to its community
udents. The best colleges develop a thorough understanding of what students require
hieve their goals and make meeting the needs of individual learners paramount.
ensure coherence in the design of adult learning programmes, teaching and training
support activities, taking into account students' prior achievement. This approach has
ved particularly effective with adult learners.

68. As colleges recruit adult students from a greater diversity of backgrounds, they have had to continuously review their teaching and training methods and develop them to suit the needs of new learners. In 66% of colleges, this process is well established. In 25%, it is barely starting. A complex curriculum taught to a diverse adult student population demands particularly skilful teaching. Although most full-time teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced, colleges do not always have sufficient numbers of good-quality part-time teachers for their rapidly changing adult student population.

69. The best colleges consistently retain disadvantaged adult students and enable them to achieve. These colleges demonstrate that widening participation and high standards can go hand-in-hand. They realise that coping with a greater diversity of adult students is a significant challenge for teachers and college managers. The most successful colleges ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of individual students, and that there is coherence in the design of learning programmes, teaching and support activities. In the best-managed colleges, standards of student achievement are systematically monitored, the quality of teaching is regularly evaluated and all staff engage in development planning which results in targets for improvement. The quality assurance arrangements for adult provision were judged to be good or better in 50% of colleges and unsatisfactory in 25% of them.

Quality of education and training

70. During 2001/02, 68% of the teaching in lessons for adult learners was good or better, compared with 63% for 16–18 year olds. Similarly, the inspection grades for learning bring out the relative strength of adult provision: learning was good or better in 68% of lessons for adults, compared with 60% of lessons for 16–18-year-old students. In particular, teaching was better for adults in construction, ICT and health and social care. Over two thirds of colleges were judged to be good at ensuring that teaching and training met the needs of individual adults. When it came to meeting the needs of 16–18 year olds, this was true of only half of the colleges inspected.

71. Teachers of adults build skilfully on the knowledge and experience that students bring to the classroom. In humanities and social sciences, this often gives rise to lively discussions by groups of students in which teachers encourage the adults to reflect on their experience when considering aspects of theories. This is particularly evident in access to higher education lessons. In business courses, adults are given opportunities in their practical assignments to draw on their work roles. Teachers skilfully encourage adults to participate enthusiastically in lessons. Adult students are given guidance on how to work effectively on their own or in small groups. This leads to good progress in subjects such as ICT, where many students have access to learning materials designed to allow them to work at their own pace.

72. In the better-quality provision, teaching is of consistently high quality and takes into account the different needs and abilities of students. Teachers of adults place a substantial emphasis on individual learning. The best teachers ensure students can relate practical work to theoretical concepts, and succeed in stimulating students' enthusiasm and curiosity. In an art lesson in a general further education college, the teacher maintained an appropriate balance and integration between theoretical and practical activities. The assignment was carefully related to an industrial environment to make learning more realistic and more relevant to adult students. Practical teaching is frequently reported as being more effective than theoretically based work. In practical lessons, teachers usually provide students with individual advice and guidance of high quality.

ess successful lessons are characterised by the lack of thought given by teachers
w to help students with different abilities to learn. Often learners are given insufficient
tunity to extend their skills and knowledge, and those who are lacking in confidence
en insufficient support. Teachers fail to draw on students' experience of the world
k, missing valuable opportunities to make the learning more relevant to them.
eachers oversimplify their explanations and students gain only superficial understanding
epts.

ny teachers devote much time and effort to helping adult students to reach the required
ls. The best teachers ensure that the needs of individual students are met so that each
the greatest chance of learning successfully. The teachers take time to analyse what
dent requires to achieve their goal. They adapt the environment in which learning takes
e programme of study, teaching and tutorial styles, modes and times of study,
nt methods and support arrangements to ensure each student is afforded the best
opportunity to achieve their learning goals.

t learners frequently have to make do with resources that are at best satisfactory and
ases unsuitable. The learning resources and accommodation for adults was judged to
r better in only half of the colleges inspected. The accommodation available at the
y centres is often not of the same standard as at the main college site. However, most
that they prefer to study locally rather than travel to the main college. Some colleges
onsiderable effort to provide community venues which are welcoming and well
d. Some have also forged links with local agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau
e, which provide their services from the same centre.

nformation, advice and guidance offered to adult learners are good or better in 80%
s. Adult students commented favourably on the help and guidance provided by the
and outside the classroom. Most adults are made well aware, early in their course,
ilability of careers advice and guidance, of childcare arrangements and support for
ssues. In some colleges, the pre-enrolment guidance is unsatisfactory and adult
are enrolled on inappropriate courses.

ents benefit from the substantial amount of additional learning support many colleges
in place to help them. These colleges help students prepare for employment or more
d study from the earliest stages of their courses. To meet the diverse learning support
f its adult students, one general further education college has developed a
hensive and effective network of learning support services for adults, which are clearly
ed in an easy-to-read guidance pack for adults. Conversely, in another general further
on college, some adults for whom English was not their first language or who needed
nal learning support were not assessed effectively at the outset as to their learning
and had difficulties following their course.

ndividual learning programmes which provide students with the right combination
allenge, support and opportunities for early success are of particular benefit to adult
ents with low levels of confidence and poor study skills. Such courses help students
gress more easily to advanced study or employment.

Achievement and standards

79. In almost two thirds of colleges, the development of adult learners' personal and learning skills was considered to be good, very good or outstanding. The corresponding figure for 16–18 year olds was 50%. Many adult learners have returned to study after a considerable time away from education. Colleges are successful in enabling them to develop their study skills and personal skills, while increasing their confidence and self-esteem. The mutually supportive working relationships which colleges develop enhance adults' motivation and helps them to make steady progress in their studies.

80. Most adults do well on vocational programmes. Many benefit from the practical experience they already have in the vocational area concerned. For example, construction students use their experience in the workplace to produce good work soon after starting their programmes. The level of attainment demonstrated by adults in lessons is higher than by 16–18-year-old students: in 60% of lessons it was good or better, compared with a figure of 52% for younger students. Adult learners use ICT effectively in their work. They show good research and presentation skills, and work well in groups.

81. Many adult students choose not to have their achievements accredited. They enrol primarily on courses to gain knowledge and skills rather than to gain a qualification. The majority of students who complete courses which do lead to a qualification are successful. In 2000/01 achievement rates rose by almost four percentage points for adults. This builds on a two percentage points rise the previous year and is set against a background of widening participation and an increase in the number of courses leading to qualifications being taken by adults each year. In contrast to 16–18-year-old full-time students, adult success rates do not vary appreciably by level of qualification. There are, however, wide variations in achievement rates between different colleges. As Tables 4 and 5 show, achievement rates for adults are higher in general further education and tertiary colleges than in sixth form colleges.

82. In the better-quality provision, courses are designed with clear progression routes to employment or more advanced study of which adult students make extensive use. However, data on the employment destinations of students are rarely comprehensive. There is little systematic analysis of student destinations as a means of informing curriculum planning or guiding applicants in their choice of courses. Variations in achievement from year to year, by students on similar courses at the same college, are often not investigated and remain unexplained. Many adult students achieve high standards of practical work. They generally demonstrate good levels of knowledge and skill which they are able to apply when solving problems.

83. Retention rates for adults are significantly lower in sixth form colleges than in general further education and tertiary colleges. The retention rate for level 3 courses is 71% in sixth form colleges and 78% in general further education and tertiary colleges. In some colleges which have previously had a poor record of student retention, there have been significant improvements; others are making little headway. In 25% of colleges, a significant proportion of adult students enrolled on courses are not continuing or completing their studies. Students' lack of punctuality and poor attendance are treated too tolerantly. Students have unrealistic ambitions, and when they fail to meet the standards required for progression to higher levels, they drop out. Students enrol on courses designated as vocational, but have no intention of gaining a qualification. In such colleges, therefore, much remains to be done to make participation more effective.

Work-based learning

Context and scope of provision

Work-based learning comprises a programme of training in the workplace combined with practical and theoretical learning in college. Learners work towards foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and key skills qualifications. The college has responsibility for the organisation and management of the programme. To complete a modern apprenticeship, learners have to achieve all the elements of the apprenticeship framework, including an NVQ and qualifications in the key skills of communication, use of number and information technology.

Leadership and management

The management of work-based learning was unsatisfactory in half the colleges inspected. This was because the college and the employer had not created a sufficiently close partnership to provide work-based learning and assessment in a co-ordinated way. There is a mismatch between learners' work-based activity and their studies in college. Colleges have not done enough to involve employers in the training programmes and ensure that they are knowledgeable about NVQ processes and standards. Colleges place insufficient emphasis on work-based learning in their quality assurance arrangements, and do not give it enough critical attention in their self-assessment reports. They do not monitor equality of opportunity closely enough in the workplace.

Contributory grades

Where work-based learning forms a significant part of the area of learning, inspectors award a contributory grade. In 2001/02, inspectors awarded 111 contributory grades for work-based learning in 43 colleges.

Table 11. Contributory grades awarded to work-based learning in colleges						
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	**Total**
Number	5	20	39	42	5	111
Percentage	5%	18%	35%	38%	5%	

Table 11 shows that 58% of the work-based learning provision inspected was satisfactory or better. The corresponding figure for all college provision was 89%. The contributory grade was often one grade lower than the overall grade for the area of learning of which it formed a part. The profile of contributory grades is similar to that in the work-based learning providers other than colleges inspected by the ALI in 2001/02.

Achievement and standards

Learners develop good practical skills and theoretical knowledge, relevant to their occupational area, and demonstrate a satisfactory level of attainment in their training sessions. Their practical work is frequently of a high standard. Through their training they develop their personal and learning skills, and work well with others in teams. However, learners' success in achieving qualifications, particularly modern apprenticeships, is low. Among the contributory factors are low retention rates, poor assessment practice and insufficient opportunities for assessment in the workplace. Failure to achieve the key skills qualification is a significant cause of poor achievement of modern apprenticeships. Many learners take an excessively long time to complete the NVQ and apprenticeship framework. Slow progress towards the qualification means that too many learners leave the programme without anything to show for the skills they have acquired.

Quality of education and training

89. Inspectors observed 362 learning sessions.

Table 12. Grades awarded to learning sessions			
Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	61%	30%	9%
Learning	60%	30%	10%

90. As table 12 shows, the practical and theoretical tuition which learners receive in off-the-job training sessions is at least satisfactory in the vast majority of cases. The teaching of key skills often fails to hold learners' interest, particularly when taught separately or unrelated to activity in the workplace. Most training takes place on the job, where there is frequently a lack of planned, individualised training. Although most learners have individual learning plans, they are seldom used to full advantage. Many plans do not take sufficient account of learners' previous experience or achievements, or fail to set step-by-step achievement targets so that each learner's training can be effectively planned and monitored.

91. The quality of the accommodation and specialist equipment used for work-based learning is a strength in almost two thirds of the colleges and workplaces inspected. Some colleges and employers find it difficult to recruit suitably qualified work-based assessors and staff qualified to teach and assess key skills in a work-based setting. Staff in the workplace frequently do not fully understand the NVQ process or the requirement for learners to gather evidence of their competences from the work they were performing.

92. Despite examples of good assessment practice, such as in hairdressing, the assessment and verification of achievement in much work-based learning are weak. Too much of the assessment takes place in the college and not enough in the workplace, so that direct observation of learners at work is insufficiently used as an assessment method. There are too few work-based assessors, and the planning of assessments does not ensure that all the necessary NVQ competences are systematically covered. The assessment of learners' key skills frequently relies too much on simulation rather than actual work-based activity. In many cases, progress towards the NVQ is hampered by infrequent assessment or failure to spot opportunities for assessment when they arise. Unit-by-unit assessment is not sufficiently used, with the result that some learners who change their employment leave the programme with no accreditation of their achievements. Internal verification is often inadequate; the observation of assessment is infrequent, and assessors are not given sufficient feedback to enable them to improve the consistency and rigour of their assessment.

93. Many employers and colleges give learners opportunities to enrich their programmes by taking qualifications which are not an integral part of the apprenticeship framework, such as first aid or health and safety courses. In some colleges, learners are encouraged to attend elements of relevant full-time courses and to build up a programme which suits their individual interests. Where initial assessment and guidance are poor, learners find themselves following an inappropriate programme. Some programmes are insufficiently flexible to allow learners to join at different times of the year.

94. Learners receive good support from their employers and workplace supervisors on personal and practical issues. The initial assessment of individual learning needs and the provision for these needs were unsatisfactory in a third of cases. Most learners have regular reviews of their progress. Often, these are conducted well and include the setting of personal targets, but lack the crucial involvement of the learner's workplace supervisor. Employers do not always receive reports on learners' progress. Learners do not receive sufficiently comprehensive advice and guidance on progression from work-based learning to further and higher education.

Independent specialist colleges

...ground

...even residential colleges catering for students with learning difficulties and/or
...ties were inspected during the year. They vary in size from small colleges for fewer
...students to large, multi-site colleges with over 200 students. The students' disabilities
...om moderate to severe and complex.

...ship and management

...o of the colleges, leadership and management are good; in six of them, they are
...ry. Operational management and the sharing of the college aims, values and mission are
...most colleges. Strategic management is less well developed. The colleges have made
...nents in their self-assessment procedures, although only a few have rigorous procedures
...or the monitoring, review and evaluation of their progress against specific performance
... In most of the colleges, quality assurance procedures are underdeveloped.

...ssessment, support and guidance

...initial assessment is not related sufficiently closely to the needs of individual students.
...assessment of students is inadequate in most colleges. It does not always inform the
...ent of individual learning plans. Formative assessment is in place in all colleges.
...in 30% of colleges the target-setting process is imprecise and burdensome.
...ntly students are sometimes unaware of their progress. Support and guidance are good
...olleges, with thorough care planning and individual risk assessment. Advice and
...relating to behaviour management are good in most colleges. However, in the majority
...s, staff have insufficient knowledge of the needs of students with complex disabilities.

...nal standards achieved

...ents' achievements are satisfactory in two thirds of the colleges and unsatisfactory
...rd. Provision at one of these colleges is inadequate to meet the educational needs of
...ts. Residential care is good in most colleges, enabling students to live more
...dent lives. Educational programmes are often underdeveloped, with over half of the
...unable to measure accurately the progress made by individual students since the
...heir placement at college. Opportunities for students to gain qualifications at
...y and entry level are missed in over three quarters of the colleges. In most colleges the
...tions for the more able students are too low.

...ty of teaching and learning

...here is much unsatisfactory teaching and unsatisfactory literacy and numeracy provision
...ny colleges. Provision at one college is inadequate to meet the educational needs of its
...nts. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory or better in only 75% of lessons.
...high proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is a significant weakness in several colleges.
...ere teaching is good, students are engaged in creative and practical activities that are
...ningful and relate to their individual learning plans. In the weaker lessons, work is not

matched to individuals' needs. In these lessons the majority of students are often working on the same task. Literacy and numeracy provision is unsatisfactory in 75% of the colleges and strategies for its co-ordination across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.

100. Enrichment activities and links with the local community are generally good, although opportunities for supported external work experience are underdeveloped in two thirds of the colleges. Transitional arrangements are good in a minority of colleges. Good arrangements include specific final year courses and effective links to careers and Connexions services. Most courses do not pay enough attention to issues of equality of opportunity, such as sex, race and sexual orientation.

101. Residential accommodation is of a high standard in eight colleges. Classrooms are generally equipped to meet the needs of the particular disability group. Most care and teaching staff hold relevant qualifications. Very few staff have additional specialist qualifications relevant to the teaching of students with disabilities.

Dance and drama schools

Background

102. In 2001/02, Ofsted and the ALI inspected 13 courses at 12 of the private dance and drama schools, academies and colleges at which some students receive financial awards from the Department for Education and Skills.

Leadership and management

103. Leadership and management are outstanding at four schools, good at four schools, satisfactory at two schools and unsatisfactory at two schools. In the best-managed schools, good course management complements strong leadership. Effective action is taken to improve standards or sustain them where they are already high. Schools have a self-critical and evaluative culture, but formal quality assurance arrangements in most schools are not systematic. Several schools have successfully widened participation, for example, through school links or short holiday courses. In the weaker schools, the promotion of equal opportunities is ineffective.

Achievement and standards

104. Students work long hours. Thirty hours of lessons a week is common. The best schools produce students who are confident and accomplished performers. Working relationships between teachers and students are excellent. The best students work with impressive maturity. In a few cases, students' performance standards were below those needed in a demanding and competitive profession.

105. Retention is generally good. Destination information is often incomplete. When available, it indicates that almost all students secure employment that is related to their training. Some students from the most successful schools move quickly into good jobs. Students from the schools where standards are lower are generally less successful in finding suitable employment.

ity of education and training

Of the 183 lessons observed by inspectors, 84% were good or better, 10% were
ctory and 6% were less than satisfactory. Of the 13 courses inspected, inspectors
four to be outstanding (grade 1), seven to be good (grade 2), and two to be
factory (grade 4.) Standards of teaching and training are high. Teachers have a wide
f professional experience. Guest teachers, currently working in the profession, help
the training up to date. Students receive detailed individual guidance in class from
s who are encouraging, but who expect a high standard of commitment and
ration. In the unsatisfactory lessons, there was a lack of attention to individual students'
d the work was insufficiently demanding.

essment is generally detailed and rigorous. Audition criteria are usually easily available
opriate, and the recording of audition panels' decisions is reasonably systematic and
n all but a few instances. Guidance and support for students are generally good.
all cases, accommodation is adequate; in a few schools it is good. A few schools have
tres of their own. Most schools make effective use of professional theatres for their
formances.

Particularly successful colleges

following colleges have been recognised as particularly successful as a result of
by Ofsted and the ALI, taking into account the circumstances of the colleges.

further education, tertiary and specialist colleges

ege

r College

stol College

von College, Barnstaple

College, Leeds

th College, Cheshire (Land-based)

d Adult and Community College

neside College

ollege

form colleges

Peverill College, Eastleigh

ry Sixth Form College, Birmingham

the King Catholic Sixth Form College, London

Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge

y Cross Catholic Sixth Form College, Bury

Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College, Birmingham

Loreto Sixth Form College, Manchester

Scarborough Sixth Form College

Sir George Monoux College, London

St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College, London

The Sixth Form College, Colchester

The Sixth Form College, Farnborough.

109. In all of these colleges managers and teachers have worked effectively together to ensure high-quality teaching and learning. Students appreciate the quality of education they receive. Typical strengths of these colleges include:

● high standard of students' work

● high retention rates and pass rates

● very good teaching and learning

● good progression to higher education and employment

● rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress

● excellent support for students

● very good work with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities

● good governance, leadership and management

● accurate self-assessment and effective quality assurance systems

● good accommodation and learning resources

● strong links with parents, employers and the community.

ea of learning reports

Science and mathematics

Main findings

- e low retention rates and poor pass rates
- ning meets the needs of the majority of students
- rdeveloped use of ICT in mathematics teaching
- technical support and appropriate resources
- w range of vocational courses and courses specifically for adults.

Inspection data

lum grades

ectors awarded 104 grades for science and mathematics. The grades awarded were:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	9%	39%	33%	19%	0%

bservation grades

ectors observed 1,856 lessons in science and mathematics. The grades awarded are
low. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges
r comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	62%	29%	9%
Teaching upper quartile	84%	14%	2%
Learning	61%	31%	8%

host cases a single curriculum grade was awarded for both science and mathematics.
ience was graded separately from mathematics, the grades awarded for the science
m area and for observations of science lessons were slightly better than those awarded
subjects were combined. For all science and mathematics inspections the proportion
r better teaching in sixth form colleges was 69%, compared with 57% in general
ducation and tertiary colleges.

ance

r of lessons observed	1,856
e number attending lessons	11.5
l attendance	80.4%

33

Scope of provision

Range of programmes

113. In sixth form colleges the major programmes are GCE AS and A levels in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. A minority also run environmental science, electronics, geology and further mathematics courses. Few offer a comprehensive programme of part-time courses or courses specifically for adults. General further education and tertiary colleges usually offer the same GCE AS- and A-level subjects as sixth form colleges, but also offer more part-time programmes to meet the needs of adults, often including access to higher education courses. Most colleges offer GCSE mathematics and many offer alternative mathematics qualifications at level 2. GCSE science as a general subject is commonly offered but single science subjects, other than human physiology and health, are rarely available. There are few students studying vocational sciences. There is very little vocational provision at level 1 in science and the progression rates through from level 1 to level 3 are poor. The vocational courses offered at sixth form colleges are usually restricted to the AVCE in science. A few colleges provide specialist courses, for example, cleaning science, dental technology, pharmacy, laboratory technician and environmental health courses.

Achievement and standards

Students aged 16 to 18

114. Science and mathematics was graded as unsatisfactory in 19% of inspections. This is much higher than the average. The majority of unsatisfactory grades were awarded in general further education colleges. The main reasons for these unsatisfactory grades were low retention rates and pass rates, combined with the low standard and poor quality of students' work. There are many colleges where the retention rates and pass rates are declining or where they fluctuate greatly from one year to the next. Results for GCSE mathematics have improved in some colleges in recent years, but the overall pass rate at grades $A^*–C$ remains low.

115. Attendance rates are slightly above the national average. Attendance rates, retention rates, pass rates and overall grades tend to be higher in sixth form colleges. Most students in sixth form colleges are well motivated and perform at least as well as expected when compared with predictions based on their GCSE results. The proportion of students who progress to higher education is also high from these colleges.

116. In the better colleges, the work produced by students is often of a high standard. Attendance and punctuality are good. The most successful colleges set homework frequently. Teachers monitor progress through regular testing. Assessed coursework is of a high standard. Students understand basic scientific and mathematical concepts and apply them well during problem-solving sessions. Students on less successful courses lack confidence and are not able to enter into a meaningful discussion with teachers or other students. Some mathematics students have poor numerical and algebraic skills. Even where students have a good grasp of basic skills and techniques, they may be unable to apply these to unfamiliar concepts.

ents aged 19 and over

The most popular courses for adults are access to higher education courses. On these
s students attain well. They are generally well motivated and produce work of a high
rd. A large proportion of these students progress to higher education. Examination
in GCSE mathematics are usually better for adults than for younger students.
ademic work of adult students is usually at least of the standard expected and often
ew adult students attend other part-time GCSE and GCE A-level courses. There is a
in retention rates on these courses. Many students leave after their AS-level course or
ger than two years to complete the GCE A-level programme. The numbers of adults
me vocational courses are also low and frequently retention rates are poor.

Quality of education and training

s aged 16 to 18

ching was good or better in 62% of observed lessons in this area of learning.
significant differences between colleges. In one sixth form college, 92% of lessons
d or better. The better lessons are exemplified by good preparation. Clear learning
are shared with the students, learning is reinforced by a variety of means and all
re catered for. Teachers have high expectations, explanations are clear and students'
ding is rigorously checked. The interest of students is often maintained through good
nour, and teaching is well related to the local area, for example by referring to local
ut pollution in an environmental science lesson. Workshops are often provided outside
ics lessons to offer support to individual students. The weaker lessons were poorly
nd taught. Explanations lack clarity with poor-quality board-work and handout
Students are often asked to undertake inappropriate tasks. Some teaching is dull and
ding, and does not take into account the range of abilities within a class. Students are
o progress at the same pace, regardless of ability.

re are some good examples of ICT being used as a teaching aid. For example,
ics students investigated the connection between the binomial theorem and Pascal's
sing specialist software to help them in establishing proofs, and a physics teacher used
ctive whiteboard effectively to illustrate what happened when materials are taken
heir elastic limit. Nevertheless, too many opportunities to use ICT in lessons are
particularly in mathematics.

actical lessons are generally taught better than theory lessons. The work is carried out
y with appropriate attention to issues of health and safety. Most students are able to
periments and to interpret results using graphical methods when required. Investigative
used to develop problem-solving skills. For example, in a GCE AS-level mathematics
students used simple apparatus to model bungee-jumping, and checked their
mental results against a simplified mathematical model.

Students aged 19 and over

121. Teachers effectively communicate their enthusiasm to students. They often use illustrations and demonstrations that the part-time adult students relate to well. In the best lessons homework is set regularly and coursework is imaginative. The marking is thorough with helpful comments that enable students to improve their work. Good learning materials were often used in mathematics to enable students to work independently. The main weaknesses identified were the inability of teachers to ensure that all students were catered for and inadequate checks on students' learning. Questioning is often too general and does not ensure that some students understand the concepts taught.

Leadership and management

122. Leadership and management are satisfactory in most cases. The best-managed curriculum areas usually have a nominated individual responsible for science and mathematics across the institution. This usually leads to well-constructed schemes of work, lesson plans and professional development programmes that contribute to improvements in teaching and learning, and retention and pass rates. Good practice includes the review of teaching strategies, the analysis and use of management information and examination data to assess performance, and the effective use of lesson observation to improve teaching and learning. Students' progress is monitored carefully. Resources are well managed in most cases. Full-time staff are well deployed and there is adequate technician support for practical activities.

123. Part-time staff are sometimes not well integrated into the work of the curriculum area and do not always attend meetings or professional development activities. There is some inappropriate use of laboratories for theory lessons in science. Where the science and mathematics provision is split over several sites, management is often less effective. There is a lack of co-ordination of the work of teachers. Where subject teams are small or made up of individuals, they often feel isolated and there is little opportunity for the sharing of good practice.

Land-based industries

Main findings

- …ndards and achievements vary considerably between subjects and colleges
- …k-based learners often take too long to achieve their qualifications
- …cessful lessons combine theoretical and practical studies
- …management of work-based learning is often unsatisfactory
- …e is a shift away from agriculture towards other land-based subjects and a rise in the …ber of students studying at entry and foundation level.

Inspection data

…lum grades

…pectors awarded 36 grades for land-based provision.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	6%	39%	44%	11%	0%

…eteen contributory grades were awarded for work-based provision. In four colleges …was good, in four it was satisfactory, in eleven it was unsatisfactory and in two … weak.

…bservation grades

…ectors observed 530 lessons in land-based industries. The grade profile for teaching …riculum area in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	62%	28%	10%
Teaching upper quartile	80%	16%	4%
Learning	58%	32%	10%

…nce

…of lessons observed	530
…number attending lessons	10.1
…attendance	83.6%

Scope of provision

…ost land-based colleges offer courses in a range of subjects including agriculture, …lture, animal care and veterinary nursing, equine studies, countryside studies and …tural machinery. Colleges are meeting the needs of adult learners by introducing new …s such as garden design. The range of courses has increased and, in most subjects, full-…nd part-time courses allow students to build on previous experience and …fications. While the majority of students are enrolled on first and national diploma and …nal certificate courses, most colleges have expanded their entry level and foundation …ision to meet demand.

128. The number of students taking agricultural courses is declining, while enrolments on other land-based provision, such as equine studies and animal care, are increasing. Colleges remain committed to offering agricultural qualifications and courses, and are inventive in running courses with small numbers by combining groups of students from different courses. Most students have opportunities to obtain additional qualifications to improve their job prospects. These include certificates of competence in areas such as pesticide application, forklift truck driving, pet-store management and professional qualifications from organisations such as the British Horse Society and the Royal Horticultural Society.

Achievement and standards

129. The standard of students' work and their success in achieving the qualifications they aim for vary considerably between courses and colleges. In general, retention and pass rates match the national averages for the further education sector. Within any one subject area, pass rates and retention rates vary markedly from one year to the next. There are few consistent patterns of success and no discernible differences between the performance of younger students and those over 19. A significant number of younger students studying on advanced-level courses progress to higher education. Students enjoy and are competent at handling animals, plants and machinery. Colleges have sufficient specialist equipment, and estates varied enough, to help students develop practical skills. In a few cases, students' progress has been impeded because there is insufficient equipment or too few animals to ensure that all students can use their lesson time productively.

Work-based learners

130. Work-based learners take too long to obtain their qualifications. Retention rates on work-based programmes are satisfactory, but achievement rates are poor. Most students achieve their NVQ eventually, but many do not gain the qualifications they need to complete their modern apprenticeship. The poor standard of much work-based learning was the chief reason for the award of unsatisfactory curriculum grades in this area.

Quality of education and training

131. Teachers make good use of the college estates, work placements and local work sites to help students develop their practical skills. For example, at one college students carried out grounds maintenance at a national football stadium in preparation for an international football match.

132. The quality of teaching on foundation-level provision is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers meet the needs of individual learners. On courses at levels 2 and 3 the quality of teaching is less effective. Teachers usually use their own industrial experience and that of the students to relate theory to industrial practice. There are insufficient opportunities for students at level 3 to supervise other students and gain adequate supervisory skills and experience. In many subjects there is insufficient use of ICT and links between key skills and vocational subjects are poor. Most colleges monitor students' progress effectively, using a range of assessment methods. There is a balance of practical assessment and assignments, presentations and tests. The better assignments clearly integrate key skills.

Initial advice and guidance for students are generally better for 16–18-year-old students
or adult students and work-based learners. Induction is good and the emphasis on
and safety is appropriate. In many colleges students' records are inadequate and
identify what students need to do to improve and progress.

eachers are well qualified and competent in their vocational areas. Some full-time
s lack recent industrial and professional experience. Part-time teachers bring valuable
al and professional experience to the classroom, but often have little teaching
nce and the quality of their lessons is lower than that of full-time teachers.

ost colleges have made a substantial investment in resources, and the quality of
t resources is good. The better-equipped colleges make state-of-the-art equipment
to students. Despite the investment, demand for computers is high and sometimes
cannot gain access to a machine. In most colleges, use of the Internet for teaching
is underdeveloped.

d-based colleges, affected by the foot-and-mouth epidemic of 2001, extended their
en and distance learning materials and introduced a number of innovative teaching
to minimise the effect on students and their learning. Colleges used e-mail and
tutorials, as well as tutorials held off campus, for many students who were unable
college.

sed learners

much assessment takes place in the college, rather than in the workplace, because
oo few work-based assessors. In addition there is insufficient use of direct observation
ssment method. The tutorial arrangements for work-based learners are not well
. Students receive good advice about progression to employment, but the routes from
d learning to further and higher education are not well understood or used.

eadership and management

s with employers are usually strong and colleges keep in touch effectively with the
they serve locally. These include employers serving as governors and employer groups
s on a specific field of employment. Links with employers give students opportunities
xperience of workplace conditions and use of up-to-date equipment.

e management of work-based training is often unsatisfactory. There are insufficiently
ks between the students' programme in the workplace and their studies in college
re that they make good progress.

Quality assurance is most effective when there is a rigorous lesson observation scheme
e. More colleges are setting realistic targets for retention and pass rates for courses
king action to ensure that these targets are met. While much of the day-to-day
gement of courses is good, the management of the teaching of key skills is often weak.
ge governors are often well informed about the issues facing the college and many
orations have begun to monitor the quality of teaching and students' progress and
cess much more closely.

Construction

Main findings

- students produce practical work that is of a high standard
- practical skills are taught well
- low retention rates on craft courses at foundation and intermediate levels
- the teaching of theory is often unimaginative
- poor management of work-based learning
- low completion rates for modern apprenticeships
- insufficient use of evidence from the workplace in students' portfolios.

Inspection data

Curriculum grades

141. Inspectors awarded 39 grades for the construction curriculum area.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	3%	31%	46%	18%	3%

142. The proportion of provision in construction judged good or outstanding is significantly lower than the national average for all areas of learning.

143. Inspectors awarded 21 contributory grades for work-based learning in construction. Provision was good in 2 colleges, satisfactory in 7, unsatisfactory in 11 and very weak in one college.

Lesson observation grades

144. Inspectors observed 703 lessons in the construction curriculum area. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	58%	32%	10%
Teaching upper quartile	73%	21%	6%
Learning	59%	30%	11%

Attendance

Number of lessons observed	703
Average number attending lessons	10.8
Overall attendance	74.4%

Scope of provision

The majority of construction courses lead to craft-based NVQ qualifications.
...ntry and joinery, electrical installation and brickwork are the most commonly studied
...A few colleges offer additional specialist crafts. Fewer students study the AVCE,
...al certificates and diplomas, or courses for those employed in the industry which
...supervisory and management qualifications. Increasingly, colleges are offering
...assessment and training for experienced construction workers. The majority of students
...art time, are aged over 19 and are on intermediate-level courses. Few full-time students
...portunities to take additional studies or other enrichment activities. School pupils
...tage 4 and those at risk of permanent exclusion from school often study for craft
...tions.

Achievement and standards

...ention and pass rates vary considerably between colleges. Retention rates for
...ions at level 1 are consistently lower than the sector average, often below 70%.
..., retention rates have declined significantly over the last three years and are below the
...erage. Those at level 3, often over 80%, are above the sector average. Pass rates for
...ons at all levels have improved over the last three years and are about the average for
...However, within individual colleges, pass rates for construction qualifications often
...n good to poor. The average attendance of 74% is unsatisfactory. Most students,
...many with no industrial experience, demonstrate good levels of practical skills and
...work well.

...s aged 16 to 18

...ents on technician courses often produce good-quality coursework, including designs
...ngs. Portfolio work is often word-processed and well produced. Many students who are
...on technician courses at level 3 progress to higher education. Few craft students
...beyond level 2. Only in a few colleges do students achieve an appropriate standard in
...skill. Some students are hampered by underdeveloped craft skills and the standard of
...k is less satisfactory.

...s aged 19 and over

...ults on part-time courses often start their courses with few formal qualifications, but
...ake good progress and have high levels of attainment. They use their experiences in
...kplace effectively to produce good work soon after commencing their studies.
...on rates of adults are lower than for those aged 16–18. Some adults studying at levels 1
...eave their courses when they have acquired sufficient skills to obtain employment and
...complete the qualification.

...-based learning

...Completion rates on modern apprenticeships and other work-based learning
...ammes are low. Few students achieve the key skills certification needed to complete the
...ern apprenticeship framework. Colleges have been slow to recognise this and to put in
...e better arrangements for instruction in key skills. Most work-based learners develop
...d practical skills and produce high-quality work of an industrial standard.

Quality of education and training

150. Teaching and learning are poor compared with other curriculum areas but are better in lessons that contain practical work. In most lessons students aged 16 to 18 and adults working at different levels are taught together. Teaching and learning are good for technician students, but poor for craft students at levels 1 and 2. Both are satisfactory for craft students at level 3.

151. Teachers are usually well qualified and suitably experienced in their occupational areas. In one college, all the teachers gained a supervisory qualification in health and safety so that they could visit students on sites. Part-time teachers have up-to-date industrial experience, but often have inadequate teaching skills. A few teachers fail to manage lessons effectively, allowing students to disrupt the learning of others. Insufficient technician support sometimes hinders students' progress.

152. Most workshops are well equipped and provide realistic site conditions, but overcrowding and poor layout sometimes hinder the supervision of students. Computing facilities are generally good, but teachers rarely use them in their teaching. Survey equipment is good and laboratories are adequate.

153. In the majority of colleges, assessment is carefully planned and managed. However, few students and work-based learners, except in electrical installation, are assessed in the workplace or use evidence from the workplace. Progress reviews for work-based learners often lack challenging targets and are poorly recorded.

154. At the start of their courses, many craft students are assessed as needing additional learning support, but the quality of support provided is often unsatisfactory. Some students with weak literacy and numeracy skills are placed on inappropriate courses. However, in one college, students who did not have English as their first language were well supported by an English teacher who taught them alongside their plumbing teacher. Tutorials are generally effective for full-time students, but are often unavailable for part-time students.

Students aged 16 to 18

155. In lessons where students are predominantly aged 16 to18, about 50% of all teaching is good, but, in 13% of lessons observed, teaching is unsatisfactory. Practical teaching is generally good with tasks carefully chosen to interest students. In contrast, many theory lessons are badly planned or unimaginatively taught. Often, students become bored and disruptive. In the best lessons, however, a good balance of theory and practice was achieved. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used ICT to explain the composition of mortar mixes. After a demonstration of how to test the mortars, the students tested some commonly used mixes themselves. The students worked well together in small groups and in a final discussion correctly identified suitable applications for the different mixes. Many students receive insufficient individual support from the teacher to help them make progress.

ents aged 19 or over

Over 60% of teaching is good or better. The majority of practical lessons are well
ed. In one lesson, students worked in small groups laying block paving slabs.
acher frequently checked their work and showed those who had laid some slabs before
pave around a manhole. The fact that the lesson was well organised and that the
knew the background of each student helped to keep the students motivated and
ned their interest throughout so that they all produced work of a high standard.
er, some practical activities are unrealistic; large class sizes prevent teachers from
individual students the help they need and teachers do not check that students
nd technical terms or why they are using particular techniques. In the better theory
eachers use their own industrial experiences or those of their students to illustrate
ts and promote effective group discussion.

ased learning

-the-job training for work-based learners is rarely planned. Students often repeat in the
e tasks they undertake regularly in the workplace. Teachers fail to motivate learners
o the required standards in key skills.

Leadership and management

hers and support staff work well together, although rarely share good practice.
riculum managers have failed to raise achievement levels or improve the quality
g and training. Many teachers are unaware of the retention and pass rates for their
argets are often unrealistic and rarely include the completion of modern
eships. Self-assessment is not thorough, and weaknesses are understated or missed.
ns rarely build upon strengths or address weaknesses. The management of work-based
poor.

43

Engineering

Main findings

- failure by too many students to achieve qualifications
- low attainment in mathematics
- weaknesses in the monitoring of individual progress
- low modern apprenticeship completion rates
- good teaching and learning in many practical lessons
- frequent high standard of practical work
- insufficient attention by managers to improving teaching and learning, or to retention and pass rates.

Inspection data

Curriculum grades

159. Inspectors awarded 53 grades for the engineering curriculum area.

The grades awarded were:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	4%	40%	36%	21%	0%

160. Nineteen contributory grades for work-based learning were awarded. Provision was good in five colleges, satisfactory in seven, unsatisfactory in six and very weak in one college.

Lesson observation grades

161. Inspectors observed 958 lessons in the engineering curriculum area. The grades awarded are set out below. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	61%	29%	10%
Teaching upper quartile	85%	13%	2%
Learning	55%	35%	10%

162. There is no difference in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons where students aged 16 to 18 predominate compared with those where adults are in the majority.

Attendance

Number of lessons observed	958
Average number attending lessons	9.7
Overall attendance	77%

Scope of provision

Most of the colleges inspected offer a broad range of craft and technician provision. …mic courses leading to GCE A and AS level and AVCE qualifications are provided … general further education and sixth form colleges. Specialised courses such as … engineering, lighting and process control are designed to meet local, regional …ional needs. Electronic or computer maintenance feature strongly in new course …ment and assessment in the workplace is increasing. Slightly more adults than learners … to18, but few women, enrol on engineering courses. There are substantial enrolments … of the levels 1 to 3.

…me provision has been developed to suit the needs of pupils aged 14–16 who do not …hool regularly. Full-time students often enrol for qualifications additional to their main … study. In many departments, there are insufficient relevant work experience …nes for full-time students.

Achievement and standards

…ntion and pass rates differ widely between colleges. They are above 85% on the …erforming courses. However, a minority of colleges run courses where retention …ypically below 55% and pass rates are below 40%.

…ractical lessons, students concentrate well on the task in hand, work safely, use tools …tly and often produce work of a high standard. The quality of students' written work …riable. In the better examples, assignments are well presented, often making use of IT, …lios include a wide range of evidence that is carefully organised. However, some work …m poor standards of spelling and grammar. Many engineering students have low levels …natical ability. Failure to complete portfolios is a significant factor in the low pass rates …courses.

…s aged 16 to 18

…ntion rates in engineering are broadly similar to those for the sector as a whole. …y significantly between the different qualification aims. They are lower for two-year …nd for courses leading to NVQs. Pass rates also vary significantly, from 40% to 70%, … the different qualifications. Where craft courses are unit-based, students often have …y in completing all the units within the expected timescale. Pass rates for engineering …n below those for the sector as a whole. In nearly all cases the rate is rising, but often …e which is not closing the gap. Poor punctuality and attendance are evident in some …nents, especially on courses at levels 1 and 2.

…nts aged 19 and over

…Retention rates are also broadly similar to those for the sector as a whole. They are …on two-year courses and NVQ 1 and 2 courses. Pass rates vary from 45% up to 75%. …are highest on courses leading to GNVQ precursors at level 3 and lowest on courses …ng to NVQs at levels 1 and 3. They are at or below pass rates for the sector as a whole.

Work-based learning

169. The proportion of modern apprentices who complete their full apprenticeship framework in the planned time is often low. This is usually because few learners pass the necessary key skills qualifications or because arrangements to assess the necessary practical competences in the workplace are poorly developed.

Quality of education and training

Students aged 16 to 18 and adult learners

170. The quality of teaching and learning in engineering is slightly poorer than that for the sector as a whole. Both teaching and learning are better when lessons contain at least some practical work. The teaching of practical skills is often well organised and of good quality. It is at its best where assignment briefs explain clearly what is required and links are made to underpinning theory. The use of realistic working situations or imaginative project work often stimulates students to produce work of a high standard. For example, in one college, students produced good work when required to develop specialist motorcycle components. Appropriate attention is usually paid to safety, but sometimes learners fail to wear the correct safety clothing. Practical lessons sometimes suffer from equipment which does not work, where there is not enough to keep all learners working, or where assignment briefs are not clear enough to enable students to work without constant help.

171. The better theory lessons are well structured. These lessons often include a short introduction which captures the students' interest and exposition which is brief and to the point. Frequent and thorough checks are made of students' understanding. Links to industrial practice and to students' experience, and the use of demonstration models, serve to improve interest and understanding. For example, the use of a spinning wheel and a globe to demonstrate the movement of an aircraft stimulated a productive discussion on how the direction of flight is determined. A lesson on torque converters made good use of sectioned models and diagrams to promote understanding. Students' interest, in another lesson, was quickened when the teacher asked students about the welding jobs they were currently undertaking at work. Students' motivation and understanding were often improved by mixing practical work or computer simulation with theory. For example, in one lesson the students were asked to determine circuit values through calculation, check the answers using computer simulation and then build the circuits and measure actual circuit values. Much of the teaching of engineering theory, however, is not of the quality described above. Over-long exposition by the teacher, too much note-taking and failure to check that learners are following too often lose the attention of students. Teachers are often unable to deal effectively with groups of broad ability range. This is particularly so where students aged 16 to 18 predominate. Insufficient attention is given to the development and assessment of key skills.

172. Teachers usually possess relevant qualifications and demonstrate appropriate technical knowledge. Teaching by part-time teachers is of lower quality. Motor vehicle and aircraft maintenance teachers benefit from technical updating delivered by the industry, but generally insufficient attention is paid to the need for continuing industrial updating. In some lessons, theory is taught in inappropriate rooms. Workshop accommodation is generally satisfactory. It varies from being spacious and attractive to being cramped.

Engineering departments usually have a wide range of equipment and in many there
od examples of modern facilities. Departments which train the apprentices of major
alers are usually helped by the industry to maintain a good stock of up-to-date vehicles.
ver, there is too much out-of-date equipment and sometimes it is not easily accessible
etimes its use is not well planned. Stocks of books are usually adequate, but too few
ments place sufficient emphasis on their use.

ssessment processes are managed at least satisfactorily. Assignments are usually of an
iate standard. In the better practice careful scheduling ensures that students receive a
able workload through the year. In some cases grading criteria are insufficiently
Students often do not receive advice on how they can improve their work.
itoring of the progress of individual students is best in workshop activity. In the better
ors meet regularly with each student to review progress, are well informed about
and set and review the implementation of short-term plans to improve performance.
owever, tutors are not sufficiently well informed, reviews are not frequent enough and
ans insufficiently rigorous.

hy engineering students possess only the minimum levels of attainment in literacy and
. Full-time students usually have their levels of competence ascertained and additional
provided where needed. Nevertheless, weaknesses in mathematics, in particular,
or contributor to poor pass rates.

ased learning

k-based learners generally receive good practical tuition when they attend college.
are often insufficiently involved in the training programmes, in assessment or in review
s' progress. Many learners are unclear about NVQ requirements or of their
eship framework.

k-based learners' reviews are often infrequent and, when they do take place, teachers,
assessors and workplace supervisors are insufficiently involved. Most learners have
lans but these rarely reflect their prior experience. The plans rarely include short-term
argets, often merely specifying the qualification aim.

ny learners and employers do not understand or accept that key skills certification is a
part of the framework. Teaching and assessment of key skills often fail to hold learners'
. They are often insufficiently related to the vocational work and workplace experience.

ssessment is frequently not planned to ensure that it covers all the requisite NVQ
ences. There is too little assessment through direct observation of learners' performance
. Many staff in the workplace do not understand the NVQ process or the requirement
rners to gather evidence of their acquisition of competence.

Leadership and management

180. Teams generally meet regularly, record their discussions and pay appropriate attention to learners' progress. Subject management remains underdeveloped and teaching materials are not routinely shared between teachers teaching similar subjects. In many departments links with industry are strong. Most departments operate college procedures for quality assurance, including those for annual course review and self-assessment. While targets are increasingly being set at course level for retention and pass rates, the lack of reliable data often hinders the effectiveness of such processes. Insufficient attention is paid to improving the quality of teaching and learning and to addressing low retention and pass rates.

Business and retailing

Main findings

- od teaching and high pass rates at GCE A level in sixth form colleges
- h standards of learning on management and professional courses
- he best colleges, thorough course review and evaluation
- e are low completion rates in work-based learning
- hing on level 2 programmes is often unsatisfactory
- is insufficient sharing of good practice across the area of learning.

Inspection data

lum grades

ectors awarded 104 grades for the business and retailing curriculum areas.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	7%	47%	40%	7%	0%

he 104 grades awarded, 75 were in general further education or tertiary colleges, n sixth form colleges, and one business grade was given in an agricultural college. in sixth form colleges was slightly better than in other colleges.

sed learning

ectors awarded 15 contributory grades for work-based learning in business. In four rovision was good, in four it was satisfactory, in six it was unsatisfactory and in one y weak.

observation grades

ectors observed 1,878 lessons in business. The grade profile for teaching in the m area in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	63%	29%	8%
Teaching upper quartile	85%	13%	2%
Learning	62%	30%	8%

ance

r of lessons observed	1,878
e number attending lessons	10.8
l attendance	77%

Attendance in lessons within the business curriculum area was close to the nal average for all curriculum areas.

Scope of provision

186. Further education colleges offer courses from foundation to higher levels. Part-time students on administration and ICT courses are able to enrol on courses throughout the year. There is a wide choice of management and professional courses, particularly in the evenings. The range of full-time vocational courses at levels 1 and 2 is often insufficient to meet the needs of learners in the local community. Retailing courses are offered in very few colleges. Sixth form colleges predominantly offer GCE AS/A level or AVCE business to full-time 16–18-year-old students. Foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in administration and accounting attract relatively small numbers of students in colleges. Nearly 60% of students undertaking business courses were female.

Achievement and standards

Students aged 16 to 18

187. Retention and pass rates on full-time business courses are generally higher in sixth form colleges than general further education colleges. Most sixth form colleges have good retention and pass rates on GCE AS- and A-level courses. In general further education and tertiary colleges, retention and pass rates on full-time courses are more variable. Unsatisfactory retention, more particularly on vocational programmes, was a feature of weaker further education colleges. Students' attendance and punctuality were also sometimes poor. Progression to higher education from business courses is steadily improving, particularly for students on AVCE programmes where over two thirds of applicants are now accepted for degree programmes.

Students aged 19 and over

188. Standards are generally high on management and professional courses, where the majority of adult students are enrolled. They are particularly good for personnel and teacher training qualifications. Adult learners achieve high standards because they are able to draw on their own work roles and experience in assignment work. Although some national NVQ pass rates, for example on accountancy courses, appear modest, many students enrol with the intention of completing particular units, rather than the full qualification. Unit pass rates are high. Achievements on some marketing courses are poor at well below 50%.

Work-based learning

189. There are poor completion rates by young people in work-based learning. Fewer than 50% of learners successfully complete the full modern apprenticeship framework; the achievement of NVQ qualifications is also low. Students are failing to achieve the required standard, either because of insufficient development of key skills or because portfolios of evidence are incomplete.

Quality of education and training

190. The quality of teaching in lessons primarily attended by students aged 19 and over was better than for other students.

...ents aged 16 to 18

...The figures for teaching grades hide significant differences in standards between college ...and levels of course. In sixth form colleges, where teaching is mainly at advanced level, ...was judged good or better. In the best lessons, schemes of work make reference to the ...external business links and the broad range of teaching methods employed, including ...of topical business case studies and simulations. Key skills are integrated into subject ...g; business theory is closely linked to practice. Good use is made of visiting speakers ...esent scenarios of real company problems, for example in marketing or production, ...ents to solve. Standards at level 2, where a greater proportion of teaching takes place ...al further education colleges, were significantly lower with only 57% of teaching ...good or better. The less satisfactory teaching includes insufficient use of ICT and local ...contexts. Teaching is insufficiently matched to the needs of individual students.

...s aged 19 and over

...ndards in teaching and learning are often good, particularly at the higher levels. ...st lessons, learning materials make reference to current business practice and teaching ...ncorporate students' preferred learning styles. Many students undertaking management ...ssional courses are currently employed in a related occupation and have a rich ...of experience. In the better lessons this experience is used imaginatively by the teacher ...oretical concepts into a practical context. Occasionally, in administration workshops, ...progress is not regularly recorded or monitored through the use of tracking sheets ...ual learning plans.

...sed learning

...quality of training in work-based learning is mainly good at levels 2 and 3. ...good matching of off-the-job training with relevant on-the-job practical experience, ...elopment and assessment. For example, most learners undertaking a modern ...eship in accounting are placed with accountancy employers and undertake work ...levant to their accounting NVQ.

Leadership and management

...he best business provision, curriculum management is characterised by the setting and ...ng of performance targets and by thorough course review and evaluation, which ...ate students' views. Curriculum planning ensures that extensive use is made of ICT ...ning resource. Intranet sites can be accessed remotely by learners; they contain ...lans, worksheets, coursework assignments and links to different business web sites ...ed by topic and level. Lack of industrial updating for teaching staff and insufficient ...of good teaching practice are common weaknesses across the curriculum area. ...ges where work-based learning is good, inspectors found strong links between ...e staff and employers. Workplace supervisors were fully involved in discussing ...rs' progress and in planning their short-term objectives. However, these features were ...pical of work-based provision. Common weaknesses included: insufficient work-based ...sment; poor awareness by employers of the requirements of the modern apprenticeship ...ework; and inflexible programmes not suited to learners who wish to join at various ...s throughout the year.

Information and communication technology

Main findings

- good opportunities generally for adult students to take part-time introductory courses in further education colleges, but insufficient provision of work-based training
- adult students enjoy good teaching and learning; too much unsatisfactory teaching of 16–18-year-old students, particularly in further education colleges
- effective use of ICT in the best colleges to enhance learning by creating online access to tutors and learning materials
- computing facilities mostly of good quality and readily accessible to students.

Inspection data

Curriculum grades

195. Inspectors awarded 92 grades for information and communication technology.

Grades	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	5%	33%	51%	10%	1%

196. Inspectors judged the majority of the provision to be satisfactory, while 11% of provision was judged unsatisfactory. The percentage of good and outstanding provision is low in this area. Two contributory grades for work-based learning were awarded, one of which was grade 3 and the other grade 4.

Lesson observation grades

197. Inspectors observed 1,792 lessons in information and communication technology. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area, in the top 25% of colleges, is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	63%	29%	8%
Teaching upper quartile	81%	16%	3%
Learning	62%	30%	8%

Attendance

198. Attendance by full-time students is erratic and not monitored carefully in weaker colleges. It was higher in sixth form colleges (83%) than in other colleges (76%).

Number of lessons observed	1,792
Average number attending lessons	11.2
Overall attendance	77.9%

Scope of provision

Most general further education and tertiary colleges provide a wide range of full-time
art-time courses in the use of applications software from introductory level to level 3.
orm colleges offer a smaller range of these courses. Many further education colleges
creased access to adults returning to study by providing courses at community venues.
urses include computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), European
er driving licence (ECDL), City & Guilds certificates and diplomas and integrated
s studies (IBT).

any colleges have retained first and national diploma courses because they are
ed by employers and offer a fuller vocational training than AVCE courses. Part-time
nd work-based training for students employed in the industry, for example in computer
ming and computer maintenance, are less common and do little to reduce the skills
Many colleges have difficulty in recruiting teachers and technicians with appropriate
g qualifications and industrial experience.

Achievement and standards

ough in the majority of colleges most students make satisfactory progress, in just over
lleges many students do not complete their course and achieve a qualification.
sector as a whole, students are more successful on introductory, foundation and level 1
here are unacceptably high variations in retention and pass rates for level 2 and level 3
etween colleges recruiting similar students.

aged 16 to 18

rates and retention for 16–18 year olds are generally good on level 1 and foundation
ull-time students studying for level 2 qualifications such as GNVQ intermediate and
are often the least well motivated and colleges frequently struggle to retain them.
qualifications are frequently the least well taught. While assignments and project
erally meet or exceed the required technical standards, the quality is often reduced by
ish and spelling. Retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses vary too much
colleges. Sixth form colleges generally attract students with better prior achievements
eve better results. Few colleges provide ICT work experience placements to enhance
knowledge of the industry.

ts aged 19 and over

ass rates and retention for adults are generally good. Often adults are successful in
g specific IT skills but do not wish to complete a full qualification. This depresses the
on and pass rates for the qualification. In the better colleges, students are carefully
d and set short-term goals and are encouraged to complete the full qualification.
s gain self-confidence and self-esteem and frequently exceed their own expectations
ccess. Many progress from basic to higher level courses.

Quality of education and training

204. There are marked differences in the quality of teaching for 16–18 year olds and adults. Of lessons primarily involving 16–18-year-old students 57% were good or better compared with 70% of lessons primarily involving adults.

Students aged 16 to 18

205. In the best lessons students were enthused by lively expositions, for example by teachers demonstrating software applications using PowerPoint and the interactive whiteboard. The college intranet was often used imaginatively, for example for supporting 'chat rooms' monitored by the teacher, to provide opportunities for discussing project and group work and providing access to previously prepared learning resources to support practical lessons. In the poorer lessons, teachers failed to take account of the differing abilities of students, offered insufficient feedback and failed to challenge and motivate them sufficiently. For example, lessons were dominated by a sequence of undemanding practical tasks which students completed with little one-to-one support. The teaching of theory was weaker than that in practical sessions.

Students aged 19 and over

206. Relationships between adult learners and teachers are good. Teachers respect the maturity of adults, understand their initial lack of confidence and adapt to their different learning styles. Jargon is avoided and technical language is introduced as required. Adults like being able to work at their own pace and to draw upon their peer group. In the weaker lessons, students waiting for individual support from teachers waste valuable time. Some adults with learning support needs, including those who speak English as a second language, are not assessed effectively and have difficulty in using the workbooks.

Leadership and management

207. The management of courses in the community is usually good, with learning materials being adapted to student needs. The introduction of AS levels as part of Curriculum 2000 courses has been well managed, but few colleges have had success with the teaching of the IT key skills. Students' attendance in key skills has been poor and completion rates have been low. Where management was judged to be unsatisfactory, this was often due to a lack of coherence in the development of the use of information and learning technology across the college. Responsibility for ICT courses was often shared between different departments and there was poor communication between teachers to share good practice and the learning materials.

Hospitality and catering

Main findings

- ...od practical teaching, particularly in kitchens and restaurants, stimulates students ...d maintains their interest
- ...ctive development of students' occupational skills and production of good ...ctical work
- ...d development of students' personal and social skills, preparing them well for employment
- ...de range of courses provides students with good progression opportunities
- ... low retention rates and poor punctuality
- ...y lessons often do not extend the more able students and insufficient attention is ...to the development of key skills
- ...out-of-date specialist facilities and equipment in kitchens and restaurants and some ...ot sufficiently up to date on current trends in the industry.

Inspection data

...lum grades

...ectors awarded 22 grades for hospitality and catering. In addition, in 16 inspections ...y and catering formed part of a combined grade with sports, leisure and travel.

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	Total grades
Hospitality and catering, inspected as a discrete area	5%	50%	36%	9%	0%	22%
Hospitality and catering, sports, leisure and travel	0%	25%	63%	12%	0%	16%

...ased learning

...ectors awarded seven contributory grades for work-based learning in hospitality, sports, ...d travel. Provision was good in two colleges, satisfactory in two and unsatisfactory ...olleges.

...observation grades

...ectors observed and awarded grades for 1,206 lessons for the hospitality, sports, leisure ...l curriculum area. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the ...of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	61%	31%	8%
Teaching upper quartile	87%	12%	1%
Learning	60%	31%	9%

...he grades awarded for the hospitality and catering lessons were as follows:

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	64%	30%	6%
Learning	64%	28%	8%

...ndance

...ber of lessons observed	1,206
...rage number attending lessons	10.4
...erall attendance	78.8%

55

Scope of provision

212. Many colleges offer a wide range of hospitality and catering programmes that meet the needs of employers and students. The main courses lead to NVQ qualifications from levels 1 to 3, foundation and intermediate GNVQs and the AVCE. A growing number of colleges offer courses for the licensed retail industry and some are meeting the needs of the local community by offering ethnic cookery courses. Most students are enrolled on NVQ food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service courses. The majority of students work towards a combination of qualifications. Most study for additional qualifications such as first aid and customer care and nearly all students undertake basic food hygiene training. A wide range of enrichment activities helps to motivate students and provide them with a better understanding of the industry. These include visits to hospitality and catering establishments and suppliers, United Kingdom and overseas study tours, competing in national cooking and waiting competitions, and working at functions outside college.

Achievement and standards

213. The pass and retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 and for most adult students are similar. Most students make good progress and achieve their individual learning goal. In colleges where there are low retention rates, appropriate strategies are seldom in place to address this issue. Few students who leave before the end of their programme of study subsequently complete their qualification.

214. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory or better. A small proportion of students produce work which is excellent. The standard of work produced by AVCE students varies widely. In the best examples, students demonstrate effective research skills, produce thorough analysis and evaluation and show good problem-solving skills. However, too often students are set undemanding tasks that require a minimum of independent research and do not reach their full potential. Most foundation and intermediate GNVQ students progress well in relation to their levels of attainment on entry to their course. The portfolios of work of NVQ students are generally well organised and of a good standard. Many colleges do not give enough attention to enabling the more able students to progress more quickly and complete their NVQ qualification before their target date. Students' written work contains too many spelling and grammatical mistakes and these are not always corrected by teachers. Most colleges follow up student absences systematically but a minority do not. Teachers often tolerate poor timekeeping in lessons.

215. Students work effectively in teams and acquire good social skills in realistic work environments. In the better-managed facilities they acquire a good understanding of modern and traditional culinary approaches, experience different styles of cooking and service operations and work at a commercial pace. However, a few colleges have not adapted their menus and restaurants to reflect current trends in the industry. Despite these shortcomings, most students are prepared well for employment and the majority progress to jobs in the hospitality and catering industry.

216. Students' communication skills are generally well developed but across all programmes at all levels students' number skills are weak. AVCE and foundation and intermediate GNVQ students often use ICT effectively to complete their assignment work, but only a minority of NVQ students frequently use ICT to complete their portfolios of work. Many students lack a good understanding of the use and application of ICT for the hospitality and catering industry.

Quality of education and training

Overall, adults are taught better than 16–18-year-old students. However, there is also
on in the quality of teaching, depending on the level of the course. For students aged
over, the quality of teaching at levels 1 and 2 is better than for younger students, but
3, students aged 16–18 are taught better than adults. Students are less well taught on
nd GNVQ programmes, with the weakest teaching on intermediate GNVQ courses.
s in most practical lessons give clear introductions, make good use of short
trations to extend students' occupational ability and take effective account of individual
needs. They provide students with a challenging and stimulating learning environment
cessfully motivates them to develop good technical skills. In theory lessons, teaching is
ll, there is scant recognition of students' individual requirements and little checking of
understanding by appropriate questioning. Too many lesson plans are no more than a
ics and provide no information on how the teaching and learning are to take place.
details including aims and objectives and links to training in the workplace are
ndividual learning plans for work-based learners are mostly inadequate and contain
t detail on the planning of training. Students on NVQ level 1, 2 and 3 programmes are
bined for practical lessons in restaurants and kitchens. This works well when students
ly defined job roles and tasks appropriate to the different level of award.

ents appreciate the good levels of individual personal support they receive from
nd trainers. Most students receive satisfactory careers guidance and education.
ts are generally carried out effectively and meet awarding body criteria. In some
d learning, assessment is hampered by insufficient assessors or poor planning.
oring of students' performance by teachers is variable. Where it is unsatisfactory,
o not provide students with sufficient detail on how well they are performing,
written feedback on marked work and what they need to do to improve the standard
ork.

t teachers hold appropriate qualifications and have relevant experience of the
industry. However, a minority of teachers have not updated their knowledge of the
nd thus some teaching does not reflect current trends and industry practice.
e of specialist accommodation including restaurants, kitchens, larders, pastry kitchens
ries is good. A significant minority of specialist equipment is out of date which stops
gaining experience on equipment that is found in industry. There is little use of
specific IT for teaching and learning in hospitality and catering. The standard of
ments used for most work-based learning is high and provides learners with good
and the opportunities to cover a wide range of competencies for their NVQ.

Leadership and management

220. Leadership and management are uneven. Effective managers show clear direction and commitment to improving the standards of teaching and students' achievements. Targets set for students' achievements are challenging and take account of national averages and past student performance to establish targets. Course reviews focus clearly on monitoring the quality of the provision and how to raise teaching standards and achievement. In colleges where managers are less than effective, there is a lack of emphasis on raising standards. Arrangements for setting targets are underdeveloped. Managers set targets with little consultation with staff. They have little awareness of national averages or the achievement and retention rates of their own students. The monitoring of provision is minimal. Curriculum area meetings frequently cover operational matters rather than quality of education, achievement and retention. Management of work-based learning provision is inconsistent. Some provision is managed well, but often the co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training is ineffective.

Sports, leisure and travel

Main findings

- development of sports academies at some colleges has attracted new students into
  her education
- hing and learning often do not stimulate the more able students
- pletion rates of modern apprentices are low
- ortunities for part-time study are insufficient.

Inspection data

um grades

ectors awarded 39 curriculum grades for sports, leisure and travel as follows:

Grades	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	13%	28%	46%	10%	3%

observation grades

ectors observed and awarded 1,206 lessons in total for the hospitality, sports, leisure
curriculum area. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25%
s is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	61%	31%	8%
Teaching upper quartile	87%	12%	1%
Learning	60%	31%	9%

grades awarded for lessons in sports, leisure and travel were as follows:

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	63%	29%	8%
Learning	59%	30%	11%

nce

of lessons observed	531
number attending lessons	10.4*
attendance	79%*

all attendance figure is for the area of learning as a whole, which also includes courses in hospitality.

Scope of provision

224. Most sports, leisure and travel courses in colleges are for full-time 16–18-year-old students. There is insufficient training for staff in local industry through work-based routes and part-time study. Courses are offered from entry level through to level 4. Provision is made for leisure and recreation, physical education, travel and tourism, sports studies, sports science and uniformed services. In addition to following primary qualifications, such as GNVQ and GCE A and AS levels, many students take additional qualifications through short courses such as sports coaching awards and travel operations, fares and ticketing qualifications. Many colleges have successfully attracted new students to further education by opening sports academies, often linked to local sporting associations such as football clubs. Residential activities, work experience and participation in college enrichment activities make a valuable contribution to widening student experience.

Achievement and standards

Students aged 16 to 18

225. Students' achievements on advanced courses are generally good. However, student success on level 1 and level 2 courses is often weak and performance on GNVQ intermediate and NVQ 2 courses is a particular cause for concern. Students on leisure courses and those for the uniformed services develop good practical skills and benefit from well-organised work experience. On travel and tourism courses, in contrast, students often do not develop sufficient vocational skills because of the lack of practical facilities, such as on-site travel offices. Student portfolio work and course work is normally well presented and of a high standard. Many students are supported in the transition to employment through the achievement of additional industry specific qualifications. Key skills are insufficiently developed and often not fully integrated within vocational programmes. Student punctuality, poor attendance and retention are identified as weaknesses in those colleges receiving unsatisfactory grades.

Students aged 19 and over

226. Retention and pass rates on most travel, sports and recreation courses are good. Most students attend college from work and require the qualification for their current job. Students develop good ICT skills and portfolios of evidence demonstrate a high level of vocational skills.

Work-based learning

227. Trainees often do not complete the modern apprenticeship framework. Slow progress in gaining key skills inhibits achievement. Many colleges do not start key skills training until too late into the programme.

Quality of education and training

...ents aged 16 to 18

...Although the overall picture is of satisfactory teaching, there are too few examples of ...eaching in theory classes, which engages and stretches students. Teaching is most ...e on AVCE and AS courses while GCSE courses have the most unsatisfactory teaching. ...t teaching and learning often occurs when there is a mix of theory and lively practical ...s. In these lessons students working together can often immediately apply theoretical ...ts through observation, discussion and active participation. Such lessons often provide ...portunities for student assessment, underscored by individual and group achievement. ...a need to strengthen the pedagogical skills of part-time and agency staff. ...rs found many examples of poor practice here, for example, cursory assessment of ...vork with little feedback to enable students to tackle areas of difficulty. Colleges have ...d productive links with employers, many of whom offer effective work experience ...ts for students. Colleges often have access to good facilities for sport and recreation ...-site or through the use of external resources. Practical training facilities in colleges for ...l tourism are normally well used but, on occasion, not sufficiently realistic. Individual ...r full-time, college-based students is often good.

...s aged 19 and over

...quality of teaching is generally good or better. Lessons are well managed. ...give students tasks that sustain their interest. Most schemes of work and lesson plans ...ed but there are often insufficient checks on students' learning and progress during ...he arrangements for assessment are generally good with regular reviews of the learning ...e. Good links are often drawn in lessons between theory and practice, but tutors could ...heir teaching by making better use of their work experience to demonstrate industry ...Support for students is good.

...ased learning

...ployers respond well to individual students' needs and help them to obtain a good ...work experiences. In most cases tutors meet regularly with employers to monitor ...rogress. However, target-setting for individual trainees with employers is often ...ctory and tutors do not check that the students understand them. Arrangements for ...sessment do not ensure that students' learning needs are identified before the start ...course.

Leadership and management

...eadership and management of full-time college programmes are often good. ...ourse teams benefit from effective team meetings that support the sharing of best ...ce. However, the co-ordination of work-based provision is often unsatisfactory and lacks ...gour of college-based provision. Quality assurance procedures are weak in many ...ges. Self-assessment reports lack rigour, with insufficient attention given to students' ...evement and over-generous internal assessment of classroom observations. Some staff ...specialist qualifications for the subject they teach while others have little recent ...ustry or commercial experience or have not updated their skills and knowledge.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Main findings

- good opportunities for additional studies
- retention rates, particularly on full-time courses, are unsatisfactory
- teaching and learning are better for adult students than for 16–18 year olds
- students acquire good standards of commercial competence
- inadequate workplace assessment of both full-time and part-time students
- standards of specialist accommodation and resources vary widely.

Inspection data

Curriculum grades

232. Inspectors awarded 46 grades for the hairdressing and beauty therapy curriculum area.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	0%	46%	46%	9%	0%

Work-based learning

233. Inspectors awarded 17 contributory grades for work-based learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Provision was outstanding in one college, good in two, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in a further seven colleges.

Lesson observation grades

234. Inspectors observed and graded 762 lessons in hairdressing and beauty therapy. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	61%	30%	9%
Teaching upper quartile	82%	14%	4%
Learning	60%	33%	7%

Attendance

Number of lessons observed	762
Average number attending lessons	10.3
Overall attendance (%)	74.6

Scope of provision

Colleges offer a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing and therapy, for both 16–18-year-old and adult students. Typically, hairdressing is available ls 1, 2 and 3 and beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. Many colleges also have work-based g provision leading to foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships.

ome colleges offer taster courses for school pupils or programmes for disaffected young However, gaps exist at entry and foundation level in many colleges, limiting ion for students with low levels of previous attainment.

urses in complementary therapy and related courses such as sports therapy, reflexology, make-up, Indian head massage and aromatherapy have increased their number of ts, especially of adult students, for whom they provide a popular second career choice. good examples of flexible provision to meet the needs of adults, including classes on and in the evenings.

his area of learning, a major strength is the frequently extensive enhancement e. Most programmes enable students to gain additional qualifications, for example, in body painting. Students also gain additional experience through taking part in regional al hair and beauty competitions.

Achievement and standards

aged 16 to 18

ngths in students' achievement were identified in nearly 60% of inspections. retention rates were identified as a weakness in over 40% of inspections. dressing and beauty therapy students reach a good standard of commercial ce. Student attainment is higher in practical sessions than in theory lessons. t is also higher at NVQ level 3 than at levels 1 and 2. The standard of students' and ractical work is often very good. For example, in one college, after watching a demonstration of foil highlight application, foundation modern apprentices were able m the task with considerable expertise. Students drew on their experiences in the ce and confidently shared knowledge of different commercial techniques with the However, progress is sometimes limited because there are insufficient clients for all in practical sessions, which also limits opportunities for assessment.

he best students are able to research, analyse and interpret information, and produce uality reports. Some draw effectively upon a wide range of evidence, including raphic, pictorial and diagrammatic material, model sheets and witness statements. 16–18-year-old students fail to recognise the significance of key skills because they are lated to or integrated with their main programme of study. Students' attainment in both cal and written work is sometimes affected by poor attendance.

Students aged 19 and over

241. Adult students progress at least as well as and often better than their younger counterparts. Retention and pass rates on complementary therapies and related courses are generally high. Students readily develop good practical skills. For example, in one lesson students developed good body massage skills and clearly understood the properties and effects of using essential oils. The quality of their assignment work is good and sometimes excellent. The best examples demonstrate good use of ICT and independent research skills. Some assignments on make-up showed independence of thought, along with flair and imaginative use of colour and application. Students who are working in industry and attending college part time are not routinely encouraged to provide evidence of achievement from their workplace.

Work-based learning

242. Teaching, learning and attainment grades are all lower for trainees on work-based learning programmes than for those on conventional college courses. Attainment was less than satisfactory in 21% of lessons observed, compared with 9.4% in lessons for 16–18-year-old students and 5.6% in those for students aged 19 and over. Retention rates are poor and many trainees do not achieve the key skills qualifications required to complete the modern apprenticeship framework.

Quality of education and training

Students aged 16 to 18

243. In the better lessons, a variety of teaching strategies is used to motivate and maintain students' interest. Detailed schemes of work and lesson plans take account of the differing needs of students. Teachers use skilful questioning to check students' understanding. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, teachers rely too much on dictation and there is little use of visual aids to help motivate students and increase their interest in the topic. Links between theory and practical are not clearly explained. Poor-quality resources are used in some lessons.

244. Too few college salons reflect commercial standards. In many colleges there are insufficient clients available for hairdressing students to practise on. If students work on each other or on practice blocks merely to occupy their time and without clear objectives, they generally find lessons dull and uninspiring.

245. Assessment is carried out well when it includes commercial pressures. In one college in some second-year sessions, the teacher, rather than the students, undertook the consultations with the clients. However, there is insufficient workplace experience for full-time students. In the best tutorials and progress, reviews students are set challenging targets which are monitored and reviewed regularly.

246. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Many have updated their professional knowledge and skills. In many colleges part-time teachers from industry are used effectively to teach particular specialisms. The standard of accommodation and resources available to hairdressing and beauty therapy students varies from excellent to poor. While some salons are modern, spacious and well equipped, others do not reflect commercial practices and standards.

ents aged 19 and over

Teaching and learning are often better for students aged over 19 than for their younger
erparts. This is related to the fact that many of the older students attend part-time
ementary therapy courses in the evenings.

-based learning

the better provision for work-based trainees good use is made of workplace salons for
ent. The most effective progress reviews include trainees' workplace supervisors and
ege to workplace activities.

Leadership and management

erall, leadership and management are satisfactory. In the best colleges, there are clear
management responsibility, and teachers work well as a team and are involved in setting
g targets for raising retention and pass rates. Part-time staff are well supported and
in team activities. Schemes of work are shared to ensure consistency in approaches to
and learning. There is effective internal communication, regular meetings are held and
re taken and acted upon. Social and educational inclusion are effectively promoted
eeds of a wide range of students are catered for, including young mothers and young
ho have previously been excluded from school. There is a very positive impact when
aff ensure that there are good links between on- and off-the-job training for
d trainees.

ere leadership and management are less than satisfactory, a contributory factor is often
e quality assurance. Management information in some colleges is unreliable, which
e effective planning and monitoring of provision. Good practice is not shared and
teachers receive little support to help them improve the quality of their teaching.
ities are missed to expand programmes to create progression routes and to provide
or employers and the local community. Equality of opportunity is not monitored
across the provision, for example for work-based trainees in the workplace.

Health, social care and public services

Main findings

- effective teaching of adult students
- good use of community links to widen participation
- insufficient appropriately trained and qualified teachers
- low completion rates for NVQ qualifications
- good arrangements to support adult students who find it difficult to attend college.

Inspection data

Curriculum grades

251. Inspectors awarded 83 grades for health, social care and public services.
The grades awarded are set out below.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	6%	41%	45%	7%	1%

Work-based learning

252. Inspectors awarded 12 contributory grades for work-based learning in health, social care and public services. Provision was outstanding in one college, good in three, satisfactory in a further three and unsatisfactory in five colleges.

Lesson observation grades

253. Inspectors observed and graded 1,408 lessons in health, social care and public services. The grades awarded are set out below. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	64%	28%	8%
Teaching upper quartile	83%	13%	4%
Learning	65%	28%	8%

Attendance

Number of lessons observed	1,408
Average number attending lessons	10.9
Overall attendance	79%

Scope of provision

Most colleges provide an appropriate range of courses leading to qualifications in
are and education, and health and social care. The most popular courses at level 3 are
CE in health and social care and the Council for Awards in Childcare and Education
E) diploma in childcare. At level 2, GNVQ intermediate in health and social care and
certificate in childcare and education courses recruit most students. Fewer than 50%
ges offer level 1 provision in health, social care or childcare and education.
mber of adult students is increasing. Most adult students follow more specialised
courses in areas such as counselling, first aid and play work. NVQ qualifications
2 and 3 often form part of the modern apprenticeship framework at foundation or
d level.

increasing number of colleges are finding it difficult to provide appropriately trained
ified staff to teach the broad range of provision in this area of learning. Many part-time
provide valuable experience of current care practice but do not possess teaching
ions. Conversely, many well-qualified teachers have been working outside the care
a long time and their specialist skills require updating.

Achievement and standards

aged 16 to 18

ention and pass rates improved at levels 1 and 2 during 2000/01, while at level 3 they
to vary significantly between courses. Students following national diploma courses
er levels of retention and achieve higher pass rates than students on AVCE courses.
where no level 1 provision is offered, students who would benefit from a foundation
ften enrolled unsuccessfully on level 2 courses.

ents develop good collaborative skills. Portfolios of work are well presented and often
te good levels of research and analytical skills. Students develop language which
tes respect for the dignity and needs of client groups. Their understanding of
minatory practice, particularly in relation to cultural diversity, is good.

aged 19 and over

ention and pass rates for students aged 19 and over on part-time courses are high.
lleges provide specific access courses in care, progression to higher education

increasing number of students make effective use of ICT in research and presentation.
, many part-time students do not have sufficient access to computers to develop these
ficiently. Students following courses leading to NVQ qualifications demonstrate
els of practical care skills, although many take longer than the planned time to
te their studies.

tudents who are currently employed in care work bring much valuable experience
classroom. They use it effectively to develop the topics they are studying and improve
evels of understanding.

k-based learning

Success rates in completing the foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship
eworks are low. Many trainees are successful in their NVQ qualification, but cannot
nonstrate sufficient progress in the development of their key skills to complete the full
prenticeship framework.

Quality of education and training

Students aged 16 to 18

262. The best lessons engage students in a range of vocationally relevant learning activities. Tasks are structured to ensure that students are referred to care settings and draw upon their work experience. In a successful GNVQ foundation health and social care lesson on discrimination, the students experienced discrimination through taking part in a word game in which the rules advantaged one group. Those unfairly discriminated against were quick to point this out. At the end of the lesson, all the students were very clear about discrimination and what it felt like to experience it. In less successful lessons, there are a number of weaknesses: the learning needs of some students are not adequately addressed; students spend a disproportionate amount of time completing worksheets and written exercises and are not given the chance to think for themselves or to show what they can do. Work set is not always sufficiently demanding for more able students. Assignment briefs are clear and normally specify the marking criteria. Assessment of students' work is thorough.

263. Students receive good pre-course guidance that helps them to make well-informed choices. Induction is well planned and is used to assess the needs of individuals and agree learning plans. Tutorial support is effective.

264. Students' access to computers is improving. However, few colleges provide sufficient specialist software programs in care and early years to help students to develop their key skills. Opportunities to develop practical caring skills are often hindered by the lack of suitable practical facilities.

Students aged 19 and over

265. Lessons for students aged 19 and over are more successful than lessons for younger students. On courses such as counselling, students are involved in demanding group work and are given constructive individual feedback that increases their understanding and confidence. Teachers often build skilfully on the knowledge that their students bring to the classroom. In a lively 'access to nursing' lesson, the teacher presented students with well-structured case studies, highlighting a range of factors that influence the spread of disease. Students were clearly knowledgeable about health issues and able to analyse the case studies successfully and provide suggestions about how individuals could improve their lifestyle. Students receive good tutorial support. Many colleges provide tutorials to fit in with the work patterns of employed students.

Work-based learning

266. The quality of teaching for work-based learners is good. Most employers are well informed about assessment in the workplace, but their involvement in the assessment and review of trainees' progress is extremely variable.

Leadership and management

267. Communications between curriculum areas and within course teams are mostly good. In many colleges, teachers are making more effective use of data in target-setting and student tracking. More courses are being provided in response to community needs. Short courses in early years have often been developed through links with local early years services. There are strong links with the local authority where public services courses are offered. In work-based learning provision, the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is sometimes unsatisfactory.

Visual and performing arts and media

Main findings

- s rates are generally high
- ly teaching of practical subjects; theory teaching is less effective
- standard of students' work and performances
- e good specialist resources, but technician support is often insufficient
- tion rates are often low
- tuality and attendance are poor at times.

Inspection data

lum grades

ectors awarded 114 grades for visual and performing arts and media.
ections were in general further education and tertiary colleges. Two specialist colleges
design and 26 sixth form colleges were also inspected.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	13%	58%	25%	4%	1%

ddition, work-based learning in one college was awarded a contributory grade 3.

bservation grades

ectors observed and graded 1,925 lessons in visual and performing arts and media.
profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges is given
rison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	74%	21%	5%
Teaching upper quartile	92%	7%	1%
Learning	71%	24%	5%

nce

of lessons observed	1,925
number attending lessons	12
attendance	77%

Scope of provision

he range of courses provided by general further education colleges in this area of
g is very wide. At level 3, subjects include general art and design, three-dimensional
, fashion and textiles, graphic design, multimedia, music and performance arts.
students follow complementary subjects at level 2 or 3, as a supplement to their main
e of vocational study. There is less choice for students who wish to follow full-time
es at levels 1 and 2, although many part-time courses are available.

272. Sixth form colleges provide a wide range of GCE subjects at AS and A2 level, such as drama, music, photography, graphic design, fine art, textiles and media studies. Some offer AVCE or national diploma courses. Only a few provide full-time level 2 courses other than GCSE.

273. Colleges have been successful in devising courses which are responsive to adult learners and their needs. Several colleges offer NVQs in specialist areas such as printing and furniture design. Few colleges provide opportunities for work-based learning.

Achievement and standards

274. Pass rates are high, and students produce work of a high standard. At advanced level, work is technically very sound and shows a good grasp of the principles of design. GCE A-level students demonstrate good critical, analytical and research skills. They are able to critically evaluate their work in progress. In one college GCE A-level drama students adapted and performed a play which effectively explored stereotypical views of gender and sexuality. In another college, design portfolios and examples of print work provided plentiful evidence of relevant exploratory and research work. Evaluation of 'work in progress' is part of many lessons and students show high standards of critical analysis and reflection. Poor punctuality and low attendance adversely affect the achievement of some students. In a few courses with small numbers of enrolled students, the range of learning approaches is restricted and there is a lack of critical stimulus. Low retention rates are a cause for concern.

Students aged 16 to 18

275. Students work well with each other. This is most apparent in performing arts and media, where much of the practical work is in groups. Co-operation, mutual respect and trust are fostered and used for the benefit of the whole group. In a few courses, students' research skills are insufficiently developed and written work is unsatisfactory. There is an over-reliance on ready-made images or written material from the Internet. Some students are not given time to develop their work fully.

Students aged 19 and over

276. Many adult students are able to evaluate effectively the quality of their work and that of their colleagues, and to explain their ideas in a detailed and articulate manner. Part-time students develop good practical skills in creative studies and photography. Adult students on access to higher education courses have been particularly successful in progressing to further study.

Quality of education and training

277. Teaching was lively and stimulating and placed strong emphasis on promoting students' initiative and creativity. Practical skills were well developed. In an outstanding textiles lesson, the teacher skilfully supported discussion and helped students develop the ability to criticise work constructively. Students then went on to produce high-quality observational drawings and design ideas.

Teachers used their industrial and creative experience to make their teaching more
sting and relevant. In one college there were excellent demonstrations of techniques
aried approaches to work which develop and broaden students' skills. Staff encourage
essional approach to drawing and painting with an emphasis on working from
ation and life. In some lessons, teachers did not make students sufficiently aware of
apply design principles or formal elements to their project or performance work.
ful lessons in art and media did not extend students' abilities. In theory lessons,
s did not always check that learning was taking place. Where theory teaching was
l as part of a practical exploration of tasks and presentations, students were better
rstanding underlying principles.

ecialist resources are generally very good, although some colleges have insufficient
nt for the numbers of students in the class or access is restricted outside lesson time.
d performance students have difficulty in finding practice rooms. In several colleges there
of specialist technician support, which restricts the scope of students' practical work.

most colleges, the level of academic and personal support is high. Students are
carefully for higher-level courses and employment. Those on lower-level courses
om the enhanced resources and influence of students following higher education
the same college. Many courses are enriched with study visits abroad, live projects
from performers, designers and artists.

aged 16 to 18

evels 1 and 2, the standard of teaching and learning was lower for 16–18 year olds than
At level 3, there was little difference between the two age groups. For full-time
ged 16–18, assignments were well designed and imaginative. Teachers monitored
rogress carefully and assessment practice was good. However, some students did not
fficiently detailed written feedback or targets to help them improve their work.

aged 19 and over

hers used their vocational and technical expertise effectively to build adult students'
e, particularly where they were learning new skills. In one good embroidery lesson,
er carefully prepared students to work on a new form of quilting by giving them good
l and theoretical information and showing students examples of the technique.

Leadership and management

rriculum management is good. In many cases, course leadership is strong and there is
t teamwork. Course reviews are thorough and informative. Students' views are
y sought and acted upon.

one college, good course management contributes to high levels of achievement.
ts' progress is monitored rigorously. Careful attention is paid to improving the quality
hing and learning and targets have been set to increase the numbers of qualified
ers. Self-assessment is well developed and the action plan has precise strategies
provement.

In some colleges poor planning, ineffective quality assurance and poor
munication between subject teachers hinder improvements. Students' retention and
ievements are not monitored closely enough.

Humanities

Main findings

- learners make the expected amount of progress given their starting-points
- some poor pass and retention rates, especially in psychology and sociology
- achievement is undermined where attendance is poor
- teaching is often effective and imaginative
- underdeveloped use of progress indicators and target-setting
- good practice is not shared effectively.

Inspection data

Curriculum grades

286. Inspectors awarded 99 grades for humanities subjects.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	10%	43%	37%	10%	0%

Lesson observation grades

287. Inspectors observed and graded 1,596 lessons in humanities subjects. The grades awarded are set out below. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	68%	26%	6%
Teaching upper quartile	89%	10%	1%
Learning	64%	29%	7%

Attendance

Number of lessons observed	1,596
Average number attending lessons	12.0
Overall attendance	79%

Scope of provision

288. Most courses in humanities are GCE AS and A2 courses or one-year GCSE courses. GCE A-level psychology and sociology are particularly popular. There are smaller, though still significant, numbers studying history, geography, government and politics and law. There are also GCSE courses in these subjects along with access to higher education courses. Most students take full-time courses. In colleges of further education, 20% of students taking courses in humanities study on a part-time basis.

Achievement and standards

ts aged 16 to 18

Across all courses, the majority of students make about the expected amount of progress heir prior achievements. For a minority, achievements in external examinations are ly affected by poor attendance. Standards of achievement are better in sixth form s than in colleges of further education; this reflects students' higher achievements on advanced-level programmes. Pass and retention rates are usually better in history, hy and politics than in sociology, psychology and law. Pass rates at grades A*–C on urses are mostly in line with the low national averages for humanities subjects. % of humanities provision was graded as unsatisfactory, reflecting poor achievements ts.

advanced courses, most students, particularly in the second year of their courses, ate a sound grasp of key concepts and theories. Students with lower prior achievements gently and, in relation to their starting-points, are doing well. Approximately one third s struggle to adjust to the demands of their course. A minority have missing rk, or work that shows they have not followed up at home the good starts made

ged 19 and over

t learners aged 19 and over are part-time students and they achieve at least as well year-old learners. Where they do not, irregular attendance is often a significant factor. nts who complete access to higher education courses progress to degree courses opout rate before completion is often too high.

essons, most learners make good progress, asking questions which reflect well upon ing understanding of important themes and issues. Most display increasing confidence wn abilities as the course progresses. Most do not achieve as well with their written hey do orally, although the improvement in their work in their second year of study mpressive.

Quality of education and training

s aged 16 to 18

ost of the teaching seen was good and engaged the students' attention. For example, in evel geography class at a sixth form college, the teacher used the students' own h effectively to explore some of the main issues involved in managing and conserving l rainforests. Working in pairs the class considered the impact of human activities in contrasting countries to see whether there were any common patterns emerging and at extent particular conservation strategies were proving effective. The quality of the nts' contributions was impressive. Most showed a particularly good understanding of the physical and human factors combined to destroy large sections of orest. Throughout the study, students used a wide geographical vocabulary accurately with authority. Similarly, most other humanities subjects provide examples of resting and demanding research and project work, and opportunities for useful

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enrichment whether through fieldwork activities or attendance at subject conferences. In most lessons there is good use of innovative, stimulating teaching methods that involve students and make reference to everyday, contemporary and personal experiences. Similarly, there is good use of group work, discussion and questioning.

294. However, teaching that was mainly good did not always lead to the expected gains in learning especially where irregular patterns of attendance occur. This problem was more common in general further education colleges than in sixth form colleges. Average attendance ranged from less than 58% to over 95%.

295. The marking of students' work is completed regularly and accurately, but students are not always informed in sufficient detail in writing about what they need to do to improve. Tutorials are used regularly to discuss progress and any underachievement. However, while most teachers share their grade predictions with students, they do not use students' prior learning sufficiently to set targets and review their progress in achieving them. Teachers are well qualified and have updated their subject expertise, particularly in respect of Curriculum 2000. Library book stocks were often inadequate. ICT to support the curriculum was used in less than a tenth of the lessons observed.

Students aged 19 and over

296. The quality of teaching was similar to that observed for 16–18 year olds. Most is good or better. Most lessons are well planned to include a variety of teaching and learning methods, and maintain a strong and appropriate pace and momentum. In an AS sociology lesson on national identity in a college of further education, the teacher's sensitivity enabled students to draw effectively on their own experiences. The students responded well to the teacher's careful planning and used knowledge of their locality to good effect to challenge stereotypical generalisations and to explore the concept of nationalism with maturity. Several students used examples of languages, food, rituals and symbols from Bangladesh and Pakistan in their argument. The fact that the lesson was well structured and carefully organised contributed to the high-quality discussion about the National Front and British nationalism.

297. This group of students is also diligent and well motivated. They speak highly of the individual support and encouragement they receive from teachers. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and possess a good knowledge of their subjects. They display a keen awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students.

Leadership and management

298. Leadership and management of the humanities provision ranged from excellent to poor. They were most effective in colleges where accommodation and subject rooming allowed teams of teachers to share information and good practice on a daily basis. Access to higher education courses is often poorly co-ordinated. This leads to a slow response in meeting the needs of those learners who are finding it difficult to adjust to a return to study. In less popular subjects, teachers often work in relative isolation from their colleagues.

English, languages and communication

Main findings

- od range of courses is provided in most colleges
- e modern languages courses have very low numbers
- t students make progress broadly in line with expectations
- c errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar are made by students of all abilities
- hing is often well planned and effective
- e of resources in use is inadequate in some colleges
- ership and management are usually good.

Inspection data

lum grades

ectors awarded grades for English, modern foreign languages and communication.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	13%	44%	40%	4%	0%

bservation grades

ectors observed 1,379 lessons in English, modern foreign languages and
cation. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area in the top 25% of colleges
r comparison.

Grade	1-3	4	5-7
Teaching	70%	24%	6%
Teaching upper quartile	88%	11%	1%
Learning	67%	2%	7%

nce

f lessons observed	1,379
umber attending lessons	10.6
ttendance	77.4%

Scope of provision

ost colleges offer GCE AS and A2 courses in one or more of English Literature, English
e, and English Language and Literature. Communication Studies remains a minority
There is an increasing demand for Spanish and Italian. Class sizes in modern foreign
es are often small. More females than males take English and language courses.

GCSE English attracts large numbers, but is unsuitable as a starting point for many
r students who are enrolled. The range and level of courses in English as a foreign
age (EFL) reflect the need and nature of local populations. English studies form an
rtant part of access to higher education courses. All colleges offer communication key
. Most colleges make good provision for additional learning support in English, but not
udents needing such support take up the offer.

Achievement and standards

Students aged 16 to 18

303. Retention rates for many GCE advanced courses are poor, but there are good pass rates on the majority of courses for those who stay to the end. Pass rates for GCE A-level Communication Studies vary, but are generally lower than those for English courses. The percentage of students achieving grades A*–C on GCSE English courses is often poor, reflecting their low starting-points. There are good pass rates on EFL intermediate-level courses. There are poor pass rates on communication key skills qualifications. The best pass rates are achieved on courses where students can see the relevance of the skills to their main programme of study.

304. Most students make at least the progress that might be expected from their prior achievements. On GCE AS and A2 English courses, the majority of 16–18 year olds make the transition from GCSE well, but not all understand the nature and demands of an advanced English language course. In the best work in English, students build up good knowledge of texts, develop critical skills and show an ability to analyse a range of material. Many students, including the very able, have a poor grasp of the basic writing skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Too few students are used to talking at length about a text, concept or point of view.

305. In modern foreign languages, many students communicate well in the language they are studying. Able students use idiomatic expressions and complex structures confidently. Listening skills and the ability to give extended oral answers are not well developed among many students. Reading aloud is not often used to boost students' confidence and accuracy in speaking the language.

Students aged 19 and over

306. In the majority of lessons, attainment for older students was good or better. GCSE pass rates at grades A*–C among adult students are generally high. The materials chosen for study by teachers are relevant to the students' background and experience. Adult students on evening courses respond well to opportunities for discussion and shared research. In a number of EFL lessons, students participated effectively in role-play to aid their understanding and recollection of vocabulary and idioms. In GCE A-level groups and access courses, there are often mutually supportive working relationships between motivated older students.

Quality of education and training

Students aged 16 to 18

307. Most of the teaching was good, characterised by effective planning and clear objectives, usually shared with students. There is a good level of attention paid to GCE AS and A2 assessment objectives. Teachers of modern foreign languages often have to work hard to bridge the gap between GCSE and advanced level. Teachers usually successfully employ a good range of strategies, including exposition, reading and presenting texts, question and answer sessions and group tasks. In modern foreign languages, teachers use the foreign language whenever possible. In the best EFL classes, the cultural diversity of the students is used to provide material for discussion. English teachers train students well in textual analysis. Marking usually indicates clearly what students need to do to improve their work. Students are given good individual support. There is often a wide range of enrichment activities, such as theatre trips and opportunities for drama and debate.

Lessons are not always sufficiently well structured and a minority lack variety.
nts often need more detailed feedback on their progress than is offered in class.
dern foreign languages, insufficient use is made of cultural, social and political contexts
ulate interest and develop understanding. In all courses, the range of resources is often
, and insufficiently critical use is made of the Internet or satellite television broadcasts.
n students' prior attainment at the beginning of a course rarely inform subsequent
g.

ts aged 19 and over

e majority of lessons are well taught. Teachers draw effectively upon the experience
ural backgrounds of older students to initiate discussion and develop critical skills and
n. Students are encouraged to consider and challenge established theory. Teachers
od knowledge of their students and their strengths and weaknesses, and adjust
roach to individuals accordingly.

Leadership and management

dership and management are usually satisfactory and often good. There are examples
o-ordination of English courses across large, complex colleges. In all courses, there is
ocus on raising standards and in most cases there are realistic action plans to meet
retention and achievement. Effective teamwork results in the sharing of good practice.
practice, schemes of work are simply lists of topics, with no reference to important
teaching and learning.

English for speakers of other languages

Main findings

- teaching is often good
- low retention and attendance rates
- inadequate data on students' progression and destinations
- inadequate internal verification systems for non-accredited programmes
- ineffective use of target-setting
- unsatisfactory reviews of students' progress
- many colleges use good teaching material that draws on students' cultural backgrounds and experience.

Inspection data

Curriculum grades

311. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) was inspected in 16 colleges, either as a separate graded area or together with other foundation programmes. Inspectors awarded 11 grades for ESOL.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	18%	46%	27%	9%	0%

Lesson observation grades

312. Inspectors observed and graded 224 lessons in ESOL. The grades awarded are set out below. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area, including foundation programmes, basic skills and ESOL programmes, in the top 25% of colleges is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	63%	28%	9%
Teaching upper quartile	87%	11%	2%
Learning	66%	25%	10%

Attendance

Number of lessons observed	224
Average number attending lessons	10.2
Overall attendance	67%

Scope of provision

313. ESOL part-time courses are offered in colleges and community venues at times designed to suit learners' needs. Courses range from pre-entry to level 2. Some ESOL courses offered at levels 1 and 2 prepare students for further study or work in specific vocational areas. Others are offered in the community for particular minority ethnic groups, or groups sharing a common interest or need. For instance, one further education college offers a course in medical English designed for doctors who are refugees or asylum-seekers and includes placements in a local hospital. Colleges offer full-time ESOL courses comprising vocational skills and give well-structured language support for students on vocational programmes. A wide range of accreditation is offered to ESOL students. Of the 11 colleges where ESOL was inspected separately, 10 offered external accreditation only and three offered internal or non-accredited programmes as well as external accreditation.

National initiatives in this area include the development of national standards, the ESOL
ulum, individual learning plans and internal verification systems for non-accredited
ng. Colleges are providing professional updating for their staff in these areas.

Achievement and standards

tudents' attainment was good or very good in 66% of the lessons observed. In the best
students are motivated to apply their language skills in new situations. Particularly in
ernally accredited courses, they make good progress in their studies. They develop good
g skills and gain in confidence and fluency.

tention and attendance rates are low. In some cases, retention rates were adversely
by the asylum-seeker dispersal policy as students were re-housed in different localities
le to attend classes. This had a disruptive effect on students' progress. Five of the
were unable to provide reliable data on their retention and pass rates and therefore
vement table was published in the inspection reports.

oo many cases, students have little opportunity to move on to level 1 mainstream
d there are ineffective mechanisms to measure students' progress. Records of students'
n rates to higher-level courses were not available in a number of colleges.

Quality of education and training

e best lessons, schemes of work are thorough and related to the national curriculum.
hare with students clear objectives, assessment practice and marking policy, and
te their commitment to equal opportunities by drawing on students' experience and
ds in planning lessons. The lessons are taught at an appropriate pace with a good
f group work and individual tasks. Where cultural diversity is valued, tasks allow
o make productive use of their personal experience. For example, in one lesson on
ng, students described the conventions of addressing envelopes in their countries of
achers use a variety of methods and resources to consolidate language skills and
including role-play, miming, discussions and video recording. In a lively numeracy
eachers used take-away pizza advertising leaflets to develop numeracy and language
range of levels within the group.

the less successful lessons, there is a heavy emphasis on pronunciation practice and
activities at the expense of developing spoken fluency in a way that serves learners'
al needs. Inadequate use is made of real life and vocational materials. The materials
more advanced students are not demanding enough. Students have little
unity to become independent learners.

Links between ESOL teachers and those who teach vocational subjects are frequently
developed. ESOL students are not always taught the specialist language in order to
progress in their vocational subjects and vocational teachers are not always aware of
anguage demands on ESOL students. In one further education community college,
uage development was integrated effectively with a basic food hygiene certificate
rse for women cooking in the local Sikh temple.

321. In the best practice, good use is made of ICT to promote language development based on individuals' interests. For instance, students designed web pages and PowerPoint presentations about their countries of origin. Homework was set, marked regularly and integrated with coursework. In one lesson students used the Internet to find travel information for a planned trip to York in response to an e-mail from the teacher. In the best provision, all students have an initial assessment with an interview to establish individual learning plans based on their needs and experience. These are assessed against the ESOL national standards and lead to regular action-planning. Students with additional literacy needs receive language development either from a volunteer or from a support tutor. In one college, higher-level ESOL students were recruited, providing bilingual support and positive role models. Asylum-seekers and refugees received specialist guidance and support. Where provision was of a lower standard, there is insufficient monitoring of individual progress and individual learning plans do not make effective use of target-setting and reviews. Many of the courses that are accredited internally by the college do not meet students' needs. They lack sound internal verification systems.

322. Students have access to good learning resources in some colleges. Learning resource centres are well stocked with a range of textbooks, simplified readers, dictionaries and worksheets which encourage independent learning skills. However, some classrooms are too small and do not provide an effective setting for developing communication skills.

Leadership and management

323. Where ESOL provision is well managed, senior managers give strong strategic direction and good support to curriculum teams. Team meetings and training events regularly update staff and create clear lines of communication. Lesson observation and appraisal schemes include all full- and part-time staff. Record-keeping at course level is meticulously detailed especially with regard to the assessment and progress of students. Course teams evaluate student questionnaires, individual learning plans, retention and achievement data. These form the basis of curriculum planning and the annual self-assessment report. Where there is off-site and community provision, good links exist between the specialist ESOL staff and those in the community development unit. In one college teachers worked with the local Race Equality Council to recruit community mentors and set up citizenship courses.

324. Poorly managed provision is characterised by a lack of a college-wide strategy on the implementation of ESOL in relation to both discrete courses and the embedding of ESOL in vocational areas. As a result, staff work in isolation and students achieve too little or fail to secure their intended work-related or vocational outcomes. There is an inadequate use of monitoring procedures and a lack of internal verification systems.

Literacy and numeracy

Main findings

- rly one fifth of provision is unsatisfactory and there is little good and outstanding vision
- few learners are working towards accreditation
- ity and use of individual learning plans are underdeveloped
- fficient use is made of retention and achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness ovision
- teaching is good or better.

Inspection data

lum grades

racy and numeracy were often graded together with English for speakers of other s and sometimes with provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. e 62 colleges where literacy and numeracy were graded separately from other areas g. The grades awarded in these colleges are set out below:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	3%	29%	50%	18%	0%

bservation grades

ectors observed 802 lessons. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area, foundation programmes, basic skills and ESOL programmes, in the top 25% of s given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	62%	28%	10%
Teaching upper quartile	87%	11%	2%
Learning	61%	27%	11%

nce

of lessons observed	802
number attending lessons	Data not available
attendance	72.3%

Scope of provision

teracy and numeracy provision includes discrete literacy and numeracy classes and ops in colleges, community venues and workplaces. It also encompasses learning t in the form of drop-in workshops and in-class support where a learning support tutor lesson to assist individual students.

The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy was launched in March . This includes new national standards, core curricula and national tests in tion to challenging national targets aimed at increasing participation. These changes n that existing teachers need additional training and support. There is a shortage of erienced and qualified staff in some colleges that is affecting both the quality and the ilability of provision.

81

Achievement and standards

329. National tests at levels 1 and 2 and new national qualifications at entry level are being introduced to replace the wide range of existing qualifications. Colleges are at different stages in the transition between the two systems. Most colleges are offering qualifications in at least some areas of their provision. Overall, attainment was satisfactory in 2000/01.

330. Individual learning plans are important in judging students' achievements. The best of these are based on a thorough initial assessment of students' skills. They include clear and challenging targets, agreed with students, which are monitored and reviewed regularly. In too many colleges, however, the initial assessment is not being used effectively to inform the individual learning plan, and the learning targets do not match closely enough the needs, interests and aspirations of individuals. Targets are often not precise or detailed. This makes monitoring difficult and means that the students are not actively involved in the review of their individual learning plan.

331. Students often improve their personal skills, self-esteem, confidence and ability to work on their own, although this is not always recorded. This feature is most evident with adult students who report having more self-assurance in helping their children with schoolwork and gaining the confidence to use the Internet. Where the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy support has been evaluated, it has been shown to improve both retention and achievement.

Quality of education and training

332. The quality of teaching in most lessons was good or better. In the best lessons, teachers are well prepared and lesson plans have clear objectives. Teachers are supportive and encouraging, know their students well and prepare individual, challenging tasks for well-motivated students. Assessment schemes and recording systems are understood and used effectively.

333. Students are usually very well motivated and many make good progress. In the best work, they understand and value the relevance of basic skills and make good progress, often to higher levels. At levels 1 and 2 particularly, significant gains in confidence and skills often take place. For example, in one college a group of childcare assistants was undertaking training to attain accreditation at a higher level. Many studied in the evening and at weekends to improve their basic skills.

334. An increasing number of staff have relevant and recent qualifications and are proficient in the use of ICT as an aid to teaching and learning. They are becoming skilled in assessment and monitoring and in providing flexible provision which matches the needs of the learner. One college has converted an under-used library to a well-used flexible learning centre. Over 700 students use the centre during the year and many study intensively, attending a number of sessions during the week, including Saturdays.

335. Basic skills provision was unsatisfactory in 18% of colleges inspected, a high proportion compared with all areas of learning. In poor provision, the learners do not have clear and realistic learning goals, assessment is weak and progress is slow. Tutors fail to identify and address the short- and long-term goals of the learner. Lesson planning is weak, with insufficient focus on individual students' needs. Feedback to students is poor and there are few opportunities for them to reflect on their progress. Learning resources are poor and badly prepared and accommodation is unsuitable.

Leadership and management

Where leadership and management are effective, training opportunities to update skills
od. Co-ordination across the institution is well managed. Staff meetings are held
ly and policies and procedures implemented. The ethos, commitment and vision are
and clear strategic goals set for the development of the provision. A senior manager
erall responsibility and the work is rigorously monitored against agreed clear criteria.
but challenging targets are set for recruitment, retention and the achievement
ers.

here leadership and management are poor, staff work in isolation and do not use
ent and recording systems effectively. They are unsure about accreditation and students'
is often too slow. There is a lack of a clear college-wide policy and strategy on the
and implementation of basic skills. Approaches to co-ordination and delegation are
underdeveloped.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Main findings

- teaching is generally good
- pastoral support for students is generally excellent
- underdeveloped use of management information systems to assist target-setting and the monitoring of retention and achievement
- poor target-setting in individual learning plans
- no routine use by students of ICT in the classroom and too little access to computers in some colleges.

Inspection data

338. In 2001/02, 52 inspections included programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, English for speakers of other languages, and literacy and numeracy. Discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was graded in 30 of these inspections.

Curriculum grades

339. Inspectors awarded 30 grades for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as follows:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	13%	59%	19%	9%	0%

Lesson observation grades

340. Inspectors observed 448 lessons. The grade profile for teaching in the curriculum area, including foundation programmes, basic skills and ESOL programmes, in the top 25% of colleges, is given for comparison.

Grade	1–3	4	5–7
Teaching	69%	24%	8%
Teaching upper quartile	87%	11%	2%
Learning	77%	27%	8%

Attendance

Number of lessons observed	448
Average number attending lessons	Data not available
Overall attendance	82%

Scope of provision

341. Discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities includes full- and part-time programmes for 16–19 year olds and adults with wide-ranging needs: behavioural difficulties; moderate learning difficulties; severe learning difficulties; autistic spectrum disorder; sensory impairment; profound multiple and complex learning difficulties; and learners recovering from mental illness.

Programmes, which span pre-entry to level 3, range from developing the skills needed
lependent living to vocational programmes offering progression to employment.
idespread use of individual learning plans meets learners' individual needs.
rogrammes result from partnerships with external agencies and organisations such as
ducation authorities, schools, charities, and residential and day-care providers.

ccreditation is offered through college-based certificates, external qualifications and
The new national standards, core curriculum and national tests for literacy and
cy are being integrated into some programmes. Courses offered range from pre-entry
level 2 courses in most areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

llege data for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are often unreliable,
hmarking of qualifications is limited. Most colleges offer qualifications in some of their
rovision. Accreditation available includes: Associated Examining Board (AEB) literacy
eracy tests; Open College communication skills; NVQ units; City and Guilds skillpower;
kills for working life; MENCAP essential skills award; and the Award Scheme
nent and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Achievement on accredited programmes

ners make good progress in achieving independence and improving social and
nal skills. They also show improvement in self-esteem and confidence. This is
y significant on programmes for adult learners recovering from mental illness.

best individual learning plans are based on comprehensive initial assessment and set
lenging but achievable targets that are monitored and reviewed regularly.
vidual learning plans emphasise weaknesses, do not build on strengths, lack clarity
t understood by learners. Learners often fail to achieve their learning goals.

od provision includes preparation for employment and work experience opportunities.
s identified many examples of innovative real and simulated work experience,
le, working in the college shop and office, running a pizza business or hosting a
how. The examples often involve partnerships with the local community and industry.
ndards of learners' work are in evidence in practical lessons. Practical and realistic
situations are used to develop vocational, social and independence skills. In one
entry-level students in a fabrication workshop learned about health and safety and used
y of power tools and spot-welding equipment while completing a metal lantern.

Vhere there are few opportunities to take vocational courses, learners' prospects of
yment are diminished. Some colleges' programmes lack coherence and there is
cient planning of progression from pre-entry to level 1 programmes and beyond.

Quality of education and training

349. The quality of teaching in 68% of colleges is good or better. In the best lessons, teachers are well prepared, enthusiastic and have high expectations of learners. They manage the classroom well and deal effectively with any disruptive behaviour. Different media are used to stimulate learners, including dance, movement, drama, visual, tactile arts, water and cookery. The most effective teaching is where practical activities are linked to individual learning plans. Learners are set demanding tasks, are well motivated and make good progress. For example, in one lesson in which students were producing individually designed puppets, the teacher supervised students using the sewing machine and allowed them to have increasing control of the machine as their confidence grew. In another lesson, students explored aboriginal art and were encouraged to experiment with a range of colours and techniques in their own designs.

350. ICT is not used systematically in teaching. In the best examples, colleges have dedicated areas and good specialist equipment, and teachers and support staff are well qualified. However, few staff have specialist qualifications or training in the areas of severe and complex learning difficulties. Some staff lack appropriate vocational qualifications and recent industrial experience.

351. Standards vary in the assessment, monitoring and recording of learners' work. In good examples, colleges use extensive initial diagnosis of learning needs to set rigorous and clear targets in individual learning plans. These are then monitored through lesson plans, recorded weekly by individual teachers and personal tutors. However, there are many instances of poor initial diagnosis, target-setting and monitoring of progress. In weak lessons, some tasks result in little or no learning. For example, learners were given worksheets where the reading levels were too high and too much time was spent writing answers. Teachers did not develop communication by building on learners' own experiences. The most effective individual learning plans specify how the learner is to meet learning goals, and comment clearly on what has been learnt and what progress has been made towards the achievement of the learning goal. The best assessment of learning includes recording by using photographic or video evidence as well as written records. Some assessment includes witness statements of learners' achievements.

352. Learners with diverse learning needs are well represented and it is commonplace to find colleges that include courses for learners with severe and complex learning difficulties as well as for learners recovering from mental illness. Part-time provision, often involving attendance by learners from residential homes, is contributing well to widening participation.

353. Most colleges have an effective personal tutorial system. Learners report that they feel valued and that their contributions to the life of the college have purpose. Some learners contribute to the student council and their views have led to programme changes. Participation by learners in general college enrichment activities is limited.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory or good. There is effective communication,
ost staff, including part-time staff, are involved in the self-assessment processes and
setting. Increasingly, colleges are making strategic links with external agencies,
larly charities and local residential homes, to improve their responsiveness to the needs
ocal communities. In the best examples, strategic planning encompasses the college as
e and learners are able to participate in a range of vocational courses, with the
ment of the provision devolved to the vocational area. Where provision is not as good,
al provision is limited, part-time staff feel less involved and there is insufficient
ation of the part-time provision. The management information systems are not used
y to track learners' progress, and targets are not sufficiently challenging or relevant.

hough staff are increasingly involved in teacher observation schemes, these have not
d to improvements. Good practice is not routinely shared between programmes.