



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

TEESSIDE TERTIARY COLLEGE

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TEESSIDE TERTIARY COLLEGE INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Week: 23 April 2001

Reporting Inspector: J R Marriott HMI

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Summary

Part A: Summary

Information about the College

Teesside Tertiary College is located in the town of Middlesbrough. The college was formed in 1995 following a merger between Longlands College and Marton Sixth Form College. Shortly before the inspection, the college governing body agreed to work toward a further merger with Middlesbrough College of Further Education. The college provides courses in most vocational areas. Eight per cent of the college's work is in work-based training and assessment conducted on employers' premises. Six per cent of the full-time students and 4% of part-time students are following higher education programmes in business, engineering, sports science and music technology. The college provides courses for 400 students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. During 1999/2000, over 8,000 students (2,141 full-time and 5,935 part-time) attended the college. The college employs 550 staff. The college's statement of key purpose is to 'provide opportunities in education and training to support the economic and social development of the Tees Valley'.

How Effective is the College?

The college provides satisfactory teaching and opportunities for learning for most of its students. Pass rates in national examinations have been above the national average. Part-time adult students achieve high standards on many courses. Few modern apprentices achieve a pass in the qualifications that are part of their work-based training. Student attendance is generally poor. Students are not given adequate support in developing basic or key skills. The arrangements for quality assurance are ineffective. Management of many aspects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Key strengths

- comprehensive range of courses providing good opportunities for progression
- high proportion of students completing their courses
- well-planned and well-managed enrichment activities
- effective management of assessment in the college and in the workplace
- extensive links with local schools
- good, comprehensive student support services.

What should be improved

- inadequate planning of teaching to meet students' learning needs
- insufficient use of information and communication technology by students and teachers
- unsatisfactory teaching of key skills
- inadequate provision for basic skills
- inadequate quality assurance, including the monitoring of action to address weaknesses
- weak monitoring and promotion of equal opportunities
- inefficient use of staff and other resources.

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

Summary

Quality of Provision in Individual Curriculum Areas

The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Courses leading to awards in sports studies were not inspected as part of the work in leisure and tourism. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: outstanding (grade 1), good (2), satisfactory (3), unsatisfactory (4), very poor (5).

Area	Overall judgements about the provision, and comment
Mathematics and Science	Satisfactory Standards achieved are mainly at or above the national average. Most level 3 students perform better than predicted on the basis of their previous qualifications. Students are well supported.
Construction	Satisfactory There is good practical tuition, but theory sessions often lack sparkle. Pass rates at level 1 are high. There is effective support for those with special needs. Links with employers are weak.
Electrical Engineering	Satisfactory There is a wide range of electrical engineering courses. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but many teachers employ too narrow a range of teaching methods. Retention rates are above the national average. Pass rates are unsatisfactory and there is inadequate tutorial support.
Mechanical Engineering	Satisfactory Practical workshop skills are well taught, but much teaching of theory lacks variety and imagination. Insufficient equipment and poorly managed laboratory facilities adversely affect some teaching. Students' progress is inadequately monitored. Retention rates are good. Pass rates overall are satisfactory. Learners studying National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) on employers' premises receive good support and achieve well.
Business Administration and Information Technology	Satisfactory Retention rates are good. Practical sessions are well taught. Learners achieve high standards at NVQ level 3. Pass rates for some information technology (IT) and NVQ examinations are low.
Business and Management	Satisfactory There is good teaching and effective learning on the part-time management courses. Levels of attendance and attainment on the vocational courses for 16–18-year-old students are unsatisfactory. Students receive strong individual support in completing their assessment tasks.
Leisure and Tourism	Satisfactory Pass rates are good. Retention rates on some courses are unsatisfactory. Teachers in some lessons do not demand enough of students. There is a high level of support for individual students. The monitoring of students' progress in developing key skills is inadequate.
Care, Child care and courses for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities	Satisfactory The teaching in practical lessons is good. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities gain confidence and acquire good social skills. Some uninspiring teaching fails to meet the needs of individual students.

Summary

Art & Music	Satisfactory There are high standards of work in some areas. Teaching is generally effective. There are many opportunities for students to perform.
English, Languages and Humanities	Satisfactory There is much well-planned and suitably varied teaching. Teachers make good use of learning resources. Retention rates are good in some subjects. Pass rates are generally below average. Support for students is good and their work is effectively monitored. Teaching in subject areas is not co-ordinated effectively.
Basic Skills	Unsatisfactory Students receive inadequate additional support for numeracy and literacy. There is some skilled and effective teaching, but students' level of achievement is unsatisfactory. Management and co-ordination of basic skills are inadequate.

How Well is the College Led and Managed?

The leadership provided by governors is satisfactory. Management of many aspects of the curriculum and resources is weak. Classes are small and the use of staffing and other resources is inefficient. In most curriculum areas courses are effectively administered but self-assessment has not been used effectively to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

How Well are Students and Trainees Guided and Supported?

Teachers generally provide good support for full-time students. There is a comprehensive range of support services including good guidance about progression to higher education. Initial guidance is satisfactory. Many part-time students aged 19 years and over receive little or no guidance and support. Too many students receive inadequate tutorial support.

Students' Views of the College

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

What students like about the college

- friendly and encouraging teachers
- being treated as adults
- the support received from teachers and the interest taken in their development
- the wide range of student support services.

What they feel could be improved

- some inadequate accommodation
- lack of equipment and materials, especially information technology resources
- the slow pace of lessons and undemanding work

Summary

- poor arrangements for developing and assessing key skills
- weaknesses in the structure of the timetable
- lack of social spaces and facilities.

Other Information

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

The College as a Whole

Part B: The College as a Whole

Achievement and Standards

How well do learners achieve?

1 Most students complete their courses. Retention rates have been well above the average for both 16–18-year-old students and students aged over 19. Pass rates in external examinations at foundation and intermediate levels have been well above the average when compared with students taking the same qualifications at similar colleges. Pass rates for 16–18-year-old students and students aged over 19 on some intermediate level courses have been consistently good. In 1999/2000, full-time students achieved 100% pass rates in photography, information technology, dance, performing arts, art and design and communications. However, pass rates in mechanical and electrical engineering, information business technology (IBT) and computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), business, music, law and foreign languages were below the national average. Students on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses generally achieved good pass rates, well above the national average for further education colleges. More data on students' achievements can be found in Part D of the report.

2 Most students' achievements on GCE A level courses are in line with what might be expected from their qualifications on entry to the college. However, general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) students with higher levels of attainment on entry underachieve. In mathematics and science, better than expected results are achieved when measured against qualifications on entry. In 1999/2000, students aged 16–18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations scored an average of 4.0 points per

subject entry (where A=10, E=2). The average point score for 16–18-year-old students taking two or more GCE A levels was 11.8.

3 The college has significant numbers of part-time adult students who are successful in gaining qualifications. Pass rates for students aged 19 and over at levels 1 and 2 have been well above the national average. By 1999/2000, pass rates at level 3 had improved and were at the national average. Adult students on modern foreign language courses achieve high standards in their written work. Students taking basic skills courses make inadequate progress and their achievements are unsatisfactory. On externally accredited basic skills courses, retention rates are generally close to or above the national average, but pass rates are significantly below.

4 Overall, the standard of work produced by current students is appropriate to the requirements of the courses they follow. There is good work in all subjects. Some assignment work is well presented and carefully researched. In art and design, standards are above average. GCE A level coursework is a particular strength. Coursework in English and social science subjects is usually of a high standard. At all levels, however, there are too many students with low expectations who are underachieving. Few students make use of information technology (IT) in their work. In many cases, students' oral skills are underdeveloped. In some lessons students are unresponsive when invited to express a view or to join in discussion. The standards achieved by many full-time students on the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses are unsatisfactory. Low standards of attainment are reflected in poor results for continuous assessment and external tests.

The College as a Whole

5 Students' practical skills are generally good. They work well in the engineering and construction workshops, displaying mature attitudes to learning, and producing work of a high standard. GCE A level science students carry out practical work effectively and GCE A level computing projects are well documented and well presented. Students achieve high standards of performance in dance.

6 In many curriculum areas, part-time adult students achieve high standards. On management and professional courses, students' project work is particularly good. Students are able to apply management concepts to the analysis of work-based problems. They show confidence and display a high level of ability in making presentations and writing formal reports.

7 Few modern apprentices achieve a pass in the full qualification. There are very low levels of achievement among modern apprentices. Few achieve the full award, which is almost always due to their poor understanding of, and application of, key skills. Over the past two years, the proportion of New Deal clients achieving their goals has also been low. This is partly due to inadequate initial assessment of their learning needs and partly due to unrealistic learning goals. Few New Deal clients gain permanent employment at the end of their programme.

8 Many students are failing to achieve satisfactory levels in key skills. Many have not yet developed portfolios of evidence and most have little evidence of the work they have completed on the course. In application of number, poor course planning and low levels of motivation have meant that students have been slow to develop the requisite skills. In information and communication technology (ICT), the portfolio work is unsatisfactory and test results have been poor. There was a high rate of absenteeism amongst the students entered for the first external examinations

taken in January 2001. The pass rates were low at levels 1 and 3.

9 Attendance at, and punctuality for, the lessons observed during the inspection were generally unsatisfactory. The average attendance rate of 70% was well below the national average as the table illustrates. Attendance was particularly poor in humanities, modern foreign languages, mechanical engineering, business management, arts, and leisure and tourism. Average attendance in GCSE English lessons was only 59%. Attendance was also unsatisfactory in many tutorials, key skills and additional support lessons.

Attendance in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance
Teesside College	8	70%
National Average for 1999/2000	10.3	76%

Source: National average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999/2000: FEFC Chief Inspector's Annual Report.*

The College as a Whole

Quality of Education and Training

Quality of teaching observed during the inspection

Courses	Teaching which was judged to be:			Sessions observed No.
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	51%	35%	14%	102
Level 2 (intermediate)	43%	45%	12%	56
Level 1 (foundation)	41%	41%	18%	32
Other sessions	24%	43%	33%	33
Total	43%	40%	17%	223

Note: More information on the grades awarded by inspectors to teaching, learning and attainment can be found in Part D: College Data

How effective are teaching, training and learning?

10 As the table shows, over 80% of the teaching observed by inspectors was judged to be satisfactory or better. Teachers generally provide effective support for the development of students' interpersonal skills. However too many lessons are not planned effectively and fail to cater for the needs of all of the students in the class. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is too high at all levels. Teaching for level 3 courses is generally better than for courses at other levels. The highest proportion of good teaching was observed on AVCE/GNVQ advanced courses, and the quality of teaching provided for adult students is generally better than that for 16–18-year-olds. More information on inspectors' judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and attainment can be found in Part D.

11 In the best lessons, teachers were well prepared and employed suitable methods of working. In arts and music,

teaching in 21 of the 27 lessons was good or better. In science, teaching in more than half the lessons was good. In some areas of work there is a marked contrast between the quality of teaching and learning experienced by part-time adult students and that experienced by full-time students. For example, adult students pursuing management and professional qualifications enjoy effective teaching and assessment which are directly relevant to their employment.

12 In some of the less successful lessons, the teaching was dull and uninspiring. Students lost interest and their concentration wavered. Many teachers relied on too narrow a range of teaching methods and the methods used in particular situations were often unsuitable. For example, students often spent an excessive amount of time copying materials from whiteboards or from overhead projector transparencies. Many teachers failed to make use of visual aids or practical activities in theory lessons. Students make insufficient use of ICT during their studies. Low numbers of

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computers and inadequate access to computers in most curriculum areas impede the development and use of IT by students and teachers.

13 Most practical lessons are taught effectively and students learn purposefully. Individuals are able to progress at a pace that suits them. There are good resources and students receive effective support from tutors. Construction teachers frequently relate workshop activities to situations that occur in the workplace. Workshops are effectively managed and they often contain learners working at different levels. Employers value the practical training received at the college and confirm that students are capable of working to high occupational standards. The better lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were in practical areas such as performing and creative arts, relaxation and cookery.

14 The teaching of key skills is unsatisfactory and students are poorly motivated. Lessons were frequently unstructured and there were no individual learning goals for students. Some students wasted time whilst their teacher provided assistance to others. Some application of number lessons took place in rooms without computers. In one lesson, students were not able to build on the work they had done previously, because it was on computer disk and there were no computers in the room. Attendance at key skills lessons is poor.

15 Well-planned and well-managed enrichment activities contribute to students' learning and the development of skills. In general, work placements are well planned and effectively related to other aspects of the students' course. Students value the experience it provides and the opportunity it gives them to explore employment prospects in the industry. Public performances in and out of the college provide valuable additional experience for music and performing arts students. In most areas of work,

opportunities are also provided for students to gain additional qualifications. For example, many engineering students are taking a City and Guilds of London Institute course, alongside their technician qualification, to increase the amount of practical work on the course. Engineering students also prepare for a well-managed exchange programme to Sweden by taking language tuition as part of their course.

16 College staff provide effective support for the assessment and completion of NVQs in the workplace. Learners are highly motivated and make good progress towards their learning goals. However, teachers fail to develop students' understanding of theory adequately and the NVQ is predominantly based on assessment of existing work-based competences. Employers value the quality of teaching and support given to their employees. Employers themselves, however, do not have enough influence on the teaching which takes place in the college. Learning and achievement on-the-job are not systematically recorded or used to influence activities at college. Theory sessions do not always take account of the latest developments in industry. The progress of New Deal clients is inhibited by the lack of attention to their needs when they are in classes which include other learners. Many do not complete their learning plans. New Deal clients' work experience is often inadequately planned.

17 Arrangements for identifying students' needs for additional support with literacy and numeracy are unsatisfactory. Most basic skills teaching is dull and uninspiring. Few learners are fully involved in negotiating, planning and reviewing their own learning. Too much teaching focuses on practical tasks which do not effectively develop students' understanding of fundamental concepts. Students' progress is not adequately monitored. There is insufficient communication between additional support tutors and course teams.

The College as a Whole

How are achievement and learning affected by resources?

18 Many music staff, in addition to being well qualified, bring continuing experience of industry to their teaching. Construction staff are well qualified and occupationally competent. In engineering, only a small proportion of staff have a teaching qualification and only a few are qualified assessors. Inappropriate timetabling and poor deployment of staff have meant that modern apprentices have not had appropriate access to the teaching of theory or key skills. In sciences, electrical and mechanical engineering, art and music there is insufficient technician support.

19 The lack of recent industrial experience or professional development for staff is identified by the college as a weakness in science and mathematics, business administration and management, and work-based learning. Some staff development has taken place in relation to the introduction of the new key skills qualifications, but there has been no staff development specifically related to the teaching of key skills or the development of suitable materials. There is little indication that staff development is leading to more imaginative or inspiring teaching.

20 The college's 'cybercentre' aims to support the needs of all learners and to provide a base for private study. The centre is well organised and attractive, and students like to work there. The centre combines the library and an IT resource centre located on a mezzanine floor. The main study areas are generally well used. Private study space is insufficient to provide for all students. The book stock is barely adequate for the range of courses on offer. There is a lack of up-to-date books and periodicals to cover the work in some curriculum areas. The centre's staff provide effective guidance for students and lecturers; for example, they provide an induction to the centre and an evaluation of web sites. The smaller library on the

Longlands site is shortly to be replaced by more suitable provision.

21 As the college recognises, the low number of computers is a major impediment to the development and use of ICT in the curriculum. IT resources have been strengthened recently, and the 'cybercentre' and key skills centres have improved students' access to IT resources. Students value these resources. They are able to access the Internet to carry out research on web sites. There are computers in most vocational areas, but some of them are out of date and do not reflect the software and hardware used in modern industry. The systems in use in the vocational areas are not integrated, are not supported centrally and do not provide access to the Internet. There are not enough computers in science laboratories to permit appropriate teaching of data capture and analytical techniques.

22 Some subject areas are well equipped. Equipment in electrical engineering and electrical installation is industrially relevant and up-to-date. The instrumentation laboratory, for example, is well equipped, and the equipment for simulating process plant operation is good. There is an adequate range of equipment in the mechanical engineering workshops. Most of the equipment is old, but it is serviceable. Much of the general engineering equipment is stored in small rooms and is not easily accessible to students. Much scientific apparatus is also old and, in some areas, a shortage of equipment or consumables adversely affects the way in which even small groups of students are taught.

23 Health and safety matters are taken seriously. The college has sound procedures. Damage caused by vandalism is repaired quickly. All incidents, such as those involving theft and assault, are logged and the appropriate actions are taken. Quarterly reports are provided for managers and governors.

The College as a Whole

24 The college has made a significant investment at the Marton Campus, totalling £800,000 over the past two years, to improve teaching accommodation. Rooms have been refurbished and decorated pleasantly. Most students, however, are still required to attend some lessons in unsatisfactory accommodation. Most accommodation at the Douglas street site is unsatisfactory. Public areas and general teaching rooms are drab and poorly decorated, and much of the furniture is old. Very few rooms have appropriate wall displays. Several lessons were held in rooms which were too large or too small for the classes using them.

25 College buildings were not designed and built to meet the needs of students with physical disabilities. Access to the upper floors of buildings is not possible for wheelchair users. As areas are upgraded and refurbished, however, the needs of disabled students are receiving full consideration. The ground floors of all buildings are accessible to those with restricted mobility and, at the Marton Campus, there are no aspects of the curriculum that cannot be offered to students with restricted mobility.

How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?

26 On most courses, assessment is generally fair and accurate and it is carried out regularly. Assignments are designed to encourage the development of particular knowledge and skills, and some draw on students' experience of industry, external visits and study tours. Assessment is used effectively to help students improve the standard of their work on business courses and GCE AS level courses in humanities. Suitable methods of assessment have been developed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The assessment procedures for students on basic skills courses and New Deal clients are unsatisfactory. There is not an adequate basis for the development of

individual learning plans. The assessment of NVQs on employers' premises does not provide enough opportunity for students to progress at their own pace.

27 Marking is generally of an appropriate standard. Many teachers take considerable trouble to annotate students' work with helpful comments. On basic skills, mathematics and science courses, the marking is not systematic enough. On work-based courses, too much evidence in students' portfolios is presented in written format. Other forms of evidence are lacking.

28 There are good systems for monitoring and recording students' progress on many courses. Most curriculum areas conduct individual reviews of students' progress and help students to set targets for their learning. Parents are informed of students' progress at least once a year through written reports. Parents' evenings are held twice yearly, although these are poorly attended. The frequency of progress reviews for students on New Deal and modern apprenticeship programmes varies substantially. Employers are not systematically involved in progress reviews with modern apprentices, nor are they made aware of planned assessments for their employees.

29 Procedures for the Initial assessment of key skills are ineffective. The prior attainments of students and modern apprentices are not being taken into account when allocating them to key skills courses. Assessment of students' key skills has not been planned effectively. The delayed start to key skills teaching for many modern apprentices is out of line with awarding body requirements. Students taking key skills qualifications do not have sufficiently developed portfolios of evidence to achieve the qualification. There has been inadequate monitoring of students' progress in key skills.

The College as a Whole

30 Internal verification of assessment is generally systematic, but assessors and verifiers do not meet with sufficient regularity to exchange ideas and good practice. Internal verification is highly effective on NVQ courses for work-based students and for students on NVQ management courses. A programme of staff development leads to a qualification in internal verification. In some areas of the college, however, there is a continuing shortage of qualified verifiers.

How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?

31 The college provides a broad range of programmes and courses, with suitably varied modes of attendance. In most curriculum areas, there are good opportunities for successful students to progress to higher level courses. The college's vocational and academic programmes meet the needs of most young people and adults. Provision is less than satisfactory in basic skills. There are no evening classes, and some of the external awards are not suitable for all learners. Programmes for students with learning difficulties are insufficiently focused on the specific learning needs of individuals.

32 The college has made a major commitment to Curriculum 2000 reforms. It has invested considerable resources and made substantial changes to timetables to enable the principles of curriculum breadth and diversity to be translated into opportunities for all 16–18 students. Students are able to follow courses which are complementary to their main course. All take key skills and all have the opportunity to participate in a variety of enrichment activities. However, practical difficulties in introducing some of the planned courses, and additional pressure created by new GCE AS and AVCE requirements, have meant that opportunities for students to combine academic and vocational provision have

yet to be fully developed. Many students benefit from the range of enrichment activities available to them on vocational programmes. Timetabled sessions include creative and recreational activities. There is also the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Sports teams and individual athletes compete successfully, sometimes at national level.

33 The introduction of the new key skills programme for all first-year students has not been successful. Work in key skills is not an integral part of programmes of study. There is no link with parallel work in English, mathematics and ICT courses. Some students duplicate work in key skills when taking general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) qualifications.

34 The college responds to local needs. There are links with local employers which enable it to meet its training requirements and help students to gain employment. The college has effective provision for refugees and international students. The provision for learners in the community is good. The college has strong links with local schools. In co-operation with schools it provides a well-organised work-related programme for 14–16 year-olds, leading to a range of vocational qualifications.

35 For learners based wholly in the workplace, good opportunities to progress from NVQ level 2 to level 3, include the opportunity to gain supervisory management qualifications. Arrangements for many New Deal clients do not comply with the specifications laid down by the Employment Service. Work with clients is not systematically monitored.

How well are learners guided and supported?

36 There are strong and effective links with schools in Middlesbrough and the surrounding areas. Evening events are planned on a regular basis to outline the

The College as a Whole

range of college courses on offer and to explain changes arising from the introduction of curriculum 2000. Year 9 pupils from schools in East Middlesbrough attend 'taster' sessions with the support of education action zone funding. Ninety-two school liaison visits were organised between September 2000 and March 2001.

37 The college ensures that key members of staff and Careers Service personnel are available at the time of enrolment to offer information and guidance to potential students. Much of the planned advice and guidance is directed at 16–18-year-old students. The college offers guidance for adults through specific events such as the adult learners week and through the 'GET IT' centre, a joint initiative supported by the colleges in Middlesbrough, the Careers Service and the Local Education Authority (LEA). The guidance for adult learners, however, is not as effective as that provided for 16–18-year-olds.

38 Most of the handouts and leaflets on courses and services are good. Some, however, contain unnecessarily complex language and phrasing. The college's prospectuses, although attractive and well presented, create problems for those with reading difficulties. There is a lack of published information in community languages and of material relevant to the increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers who are coming into contact with the college. Admission and selection procedures are clearly explained in a helpful applicants' charter. The charter also includes general information about course fees.

39 In some areas, tutorial provision is excellent; in others, however, it is poor. Many students are offered little or no tutorial support. The college has recently conducted an audit of its tutorial provision and is taking steps to improve the quality of tutorials. It has introduced the concept of a student 'entitlement', staff training, and

support in organising programmes of visiting speakers. It has also identified staff who have the appropriate skills and interest in tutorial work.

40 The student support service, which is centrally located in attractive and well-furnished centres on the Marton and Longlands sites, offers a comprehensive range of services. The services include: student finance, accommodation, welfare, careers advice, a listening service and support for international students. The service is responsible for organising the education maintenance allowance scheme, involving over 600 students. It is time-consuming work, which involves staff in dealing with a constant flow of complaints from parents and students, particularly about entitlements to payments and whether reasons for absence are acceptable. The student support service provides much needed and valuable support to international students and their families. In addition to finding local accommodation, specialist staff act as interpreters, accompany the students on visits to schools and doctors, and help them in getting to know local shops and services.

41 The development of careers education and guidance across the college has been adversely affected by recent changes within the local careers service company, 'Future Steps', which have led to careers advisers spending less time in college. The changes have taken place at a time when the college has also lost the services of a specialist guidance worker with specific responsibility for careers. Information and guidance relating to opportunities in higher education are excellent. The quality of careers information relating to employment and training opportunities is satisfactory.

The College as a Whole

Leadership and Management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

42 Governors provide a clear strategic direction for the college. They review the college's mission annually and agree the strategic objectives for the coming year. They have shown sound leadership in steering the proposals for merger with a nearby college. The governors are well informed about the college and monitor academic performance effectively. They receive regular reports on progress against the strategic plan. The full board scrutinises students' achievements and asks for action to be taken as necessary. It receives regular reports on the quality of teaching and also monitors closely the college's financial performance. The college plays an active role in several local educational partnerships which enhance the learning opportunities and support available to students.

43 The organisational structure of the college does not facilitate the management of the curriculum. In some cases, the location of related courses in disparate areas of work has led to inconsistencies in standards. There are inadequate links between operational and strategic planning, and operational plans lack measurable targets. There is little involvement of staff in strategic planning and staff have a poor understanding of the college's strategic objectives.

44 The quality of leadership and management of the teaching schools varies widely. Some heads of school have effective procedures for curriculum planning and review, for example, on construction and management courses. However, in engineering there are no formal arrangements for teams to meet to address issues relating to students' performance. There is also a lack of coherence and direction in the

management of humanities subjects. The provision for basic skills is not co-ordinated effectively.

45 The recent adoption of new systems has led to a significant improvement in management information. Managers can now obtain accurate, up-to-date reports on retention and pass rates. There is inadequate information available on student attendance.

46 The college's quality assurance arrangements are insufficiently rigorous. The response by senior management to issues raised through the quality assurance system has been inadequate. There are no measures for assuring the quality of college services. All teachers are observed as part of an established self-assessment process, but lesson observation is not rigorous enough. Some key weaknesses in teaching and learning have not been identified. Course reviews do not consistently address the quality of teaching or levels of retention and achievement. Students' views are not being used effectively by course teams to bring about improvements to courses and student facilities. The judgements made by the college in its self-assessment are generally less critical than those made by inspectors.

47 The college's equal opportunities policy is reviewed regularly. An equal opportunities monitoring group has recently been established. The policy is not implemented effectively in respect of work-based training. There is not enough attention to the promotion of equality of opportunity within the curriculum. There is no analysis of student recruitment and achievement to identify equal opportunities issues. The college has satisfactory procedures for student complaints and appeals.

48 The management of resources is inefficient. The college has recently moved from being in a sound financial position to having a substantial deficit. It is

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unlikely to achieve its funding target in the current year, and a serious shortfall in income is projected. Staffing costs are high and have recently increased. There are no effective arrangements for monitoring the efficient deployment of resources. A strategic decision to maintain the existing range of courses means that many courses are operating with very low numbers of students.

What should the college do to improve further?

49 To raise standards and improve quality, the principal, staff and governors should:

- ensure more effective planning of teaching to meet students' learning needs
- develop a more comprehensive strategy for improving students' attendance and raising their expectations
- improve the arrangements for assessment and diagnosis of individual students' needs in basic and key skills
- ensure the tutorial policy is more effectively implemented in all areas
- improve the support and guidance provided for adult students
- develop self-assessment procedures so that they lead to a more rigorous assessment of the quality of teaching and learning and help to promote good practice
- ensure that the standards set for modern apprentices and New Deal clients are met
- improve the unsatisfactory provision for basic skills
- address the areas for improvement identified in other curriculum sections of the report.

Curriculum Areas

Part C: Curriculum Areas

Science and Mathematics

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

Strengths

- broad range of provision
- pass rates that are at or above the national average in most subjects
- high levels of achievement in most advanced level subjects
- effective classroom tuition.

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of higher order skills by more able students
- substantial proportion of teaching which is dull and uninspiring
- poor specialist resources in science
- failure to implement action plans to remedy identified weaknesses.

Scope of provision

50 The college provides a wide range of science and mathematics courses and there are good opportunities for progression. GNVQ science is offered at levels 1 to 3. There are four GCE A level science subjects and three GCSE separate science subjects, including some evening provision. Options in science are offered as part of the access to higher education programme. Appropriate mathematics courses are provided for the full range of students recruited to the college.

Achievement and Standards

51 In 1999/2000, the majority of GNVQ programmes and GCE A level

subjects in science had student retention rates and examination pass rates above the national average for further education colleges. GCE A level retention rates in mathematics have been below the national average in each of the last three years. Fewer than half the students completed the course in 2000. For those who did the pass rate was much better than in previous years. The proportion of students starting GCE A level mathematics courses who achieve a pass grade has remained poor, barely exceeding 40% in the last three years. Most GNVQ advanced science and GCE A level physics, mathematics and chemistry students who completed their courses did better than expected from predictions based on their GCSE results in 2000. In class, mathematics students tackle straightforward questions in a capable way. However, they do not always recall techniques sufficiently well, and opportunities to deal with extended or unfamiliar problems are limited. GCE A level science students carry out practical work effectively. GNVQ science students produce well-kept files of work, a substantial number of which contain assignments of a high standard.

52 The proportions of students achieving higher grades has been satisfactory or better on GCSE intermediate mathematics courses, and overall pass rates, including the pass rates on foundation level courses, have been in line with the national average. For most students, their performance in module examinations taken during this academic year has shown a clear improvement on previous GCSE results. Students demonstrate a sound grasp of the mathematical techniques relevant to the level at which they are working, and most of their calculations are accurate. Retention rates on the GCSE human physiology and health course are very high and pass rates are good. In GCSE physics, retention rates are high and pass rates satisfactory. GCSE chemistry retention and pass rates have dipped

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below the national average in two of the last three years.

Quality of education and training

53 Individual support for students in lessons, particularly in practical and problem-based lessons, is usually good. Science students are willing to ask questions, make mistakes and have them corrected. They are responsive and readily adopt teachers' suggestions. Practical work in science laboratories is carried out safely. Well-organised handouts, including practical schedules and extensive collections of problem papers, are available in most subjects. Students are set work on a regular basis. Teachers mark it carefully and include helpful comments.

54 Students have difficulty maintaining their concentration in the longer lessons. Some teaching is dull and unimaginative and, for the students, there is extensive copying of notes. In some of the weaker lessons, students were poorly motivated and some were reluctant to respond to teachers' questions. In mathematics, students are not given enough encouragement to develop their own solutions to problems. Original approaches devised by the students themselves were rarely seen. Additional work is not readily available to stretch the more able students in science lessons.

55 GCE AS and A level mathematics topics are taught in a thorough way and teachers give clear and careful explanations. Students are rarely allowed to take the initiative in developing ideas. They are told how to do things, rather than being required to think for themselves. Learning objectives are not clear enough in some lessons. Teaching in GCSE mathematics is consistently satisfactory. Courses are carefully structured, well planned and pitched at an appropriate level for the students. Students make good progress and feel increasingly

confident about their mathematical abilities.

56 Written work is set and marked at regular intervals, but teachers do not make enough use of assessment to systematically address difficulties encountered by individual students. Adult learners in evening GCSE classes make good use of workbooks. There is no use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning in mathematics, but occasional practical activities help to strengthen learning in aspects of applied mathematics.

57 Teachers are well qualified. Most of the full-time science staff have higher degrees, teaching qualifications and industrial or research experience. Those teaching on vocational programmes have appropriate awards and the course leader is a qualified verifier. Most part-time staff are qualified and experienced teachers. All mathematics teaching is undertaken by experienced, specialist staff.

58 Laboratory accommodation is poorly furnished and unwelcoming for students. Although the one biology laboratory has been well refurbished recently, both chemistry and physics laboratories have outdated and worn laboratory furniture. There is only one technician to service five laboratories on two floors. Much of the scientific apparatus is old and shortages of equipment adversely affect the way in which even small groups of students are taught. There are not enough computers in laboratories to permit appropriate teaching of data capture and analytical techniques. There are no modern textbooks to support the teaching of new GCE A level science courses. Library resources are poor. There are multiple copies of out-of-date books, many of which are never used by students.

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Leadership and management

59 Science and GCSE mathematics courses are co-ordinated effectively. There is a consistent approach to work across classes. Courses are reviewed annually, but the evaluation is not rigorous enough, particularly in judging the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Action plans are produced but there are no target dates and milestones by which identified weaknesses are to be remedied. Although science and mathematics teachers take action to address some of the identified weaknesses, others, particularly those requiring substantial expenditure, are often not remedied. Review documents show the same weaknesses recurring in successive years.

Curriculum Areas

Construction

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

Strengths

- broad range of provision
- good practical tuition
- effective support for those with special learning needs
- rigorous assessment and verification procedures
- high levels of achievement on level 1 courses.

Weaknesses

- ineffective methods for teaching theory
- inadequate supply of consumable materials
- weak support for developing key skills
- lack of work experience opportunities
- low levels of achievement on level 2 courses.

Scope of provision

60 The construction school offers a wide range of craft courses. Some specialist provision, including plastering and wood machining, is designed to meet local needs. Most courses are offered flexibly with learners making arrangements to attend college in line with changing work patterns. For example, two learners who work in Germany attend the college in short blocks and a New Deal client attends at times which fit around her child-care commitments.

Achievement and standards

61 Learners' practical work is of a high standard throughout the school of

construction. Many of those on level 1 courses have previously been excluded from school and enrol at the college with no qualifications, having completed taster courses. Letters from external agencies confirm that many of these learners make significant progress, not only vocationally, but socially. Achievement at level 1 has risen over the past three years and is currently 11% above the national average, with 74% of those completing the course achieving a qualification. Retention and achievement rates on level 2 courses are below the national average for construction.

Quality of education and training

62 Practical tuition is very good. Tutors have a high level of occupational competence and frequently relate workshop activities to situations that occur in the workplace. Workshops often contain learners working at different levels and on different programmes. Tutors operate to concise schemes of work and use appropriate strategies to move learners towards the short-term and long-term targets which have been set for them. Learners are clear about what they have achieved and what they need to do to complete the qualification. Tutors' feedback on assessments is constructive. Employers value the practical training which students receive at the college and confirm that students are capable of working to high occupational standards.

63 Some students' learning is impeded by the lack of good learning resources. Learners often spend an excessive amount of time copying material provided by the teacher. Handouts are rarely used. Some rooms used for theory sessions contain no relevant construction information or materials. Most theory rooms are a considerable distance from the practical workshops, making switches between theoretical and practical work laboured and lacking in spontaneity.

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64 The supply of consumable materials is sometimes poor. The process of ordering supplies is cumbersome and sometimes materials for practical sessions run out. For instance, in the plastering section, learners who are near to completing their qualification sometimes have to repeat tasks because appropriate materials for the work outstanding are not available. Staff in construction are well qualified. All have appropriate trade qualifications and 68% have teaching qualifications. Four members of staff are currently working towards a teaching qualification. Classes are small and lecturers often share practical duties in the same workshop. Theory sessions often benefit from having a member of the additional learning support team present to assist those with literacy or numeracy difficulties. Practical workshops are spacious and well lit. A recent refurbishment project has been completed and most crafts now benefit from new or extended accommodation.

65 The learning centre has an adequate supply of construction text books and computers are readily available for students to wordprocess their work or to access the Internet for research.

66 Feedback to employers on learners' progress is not systematic. It also varies in quality. Some employers receive regular reports; others have difficulty in obtaining information on students' progress and attendance. Exercises and assessments in key skills are not related to work in construction. Many learners cannot see the relevance of key skills to the world of work. Assessment and verification procedures are rigorous. A total of five hours a week is set aside for a team of four tutors to carry out verification duties. Verification timetables are prominently displayed and all tutors are kept up-to-date on the latest standards and communications from the awarding body.

67 The identification of additional support needs is not systematic. The process often relies on tutors identifying needs in the classroom when learners have already enrolled on a specific course. Where learners in construction receive additional support, it is often effective. Many learners who have not succeeded in compulsory education have made good progress in vocational training. Learners can also attend the basic skills unit for individual tuition. There is effective informal communication between the basic skills unit staff and the staff in the craft section. Basic skills staff frequently visit staff rooms and workshops to update tutors on learners' progress and to remind learners of their appointments. The construction tutors share assignments and learning materials with basic skills staff to ensure they are occupationally relevant. Specialist support for students with hearing impairments is available. Signers sit in with learners in theory sessions. Written materials have also been adapted for learners with dyslexia.

68 For many students there is not enough opportunity for work experience. Several complete their qualification having had no experience of the workplace. The links with the enterprise unit are weak. There are several instances in which part-time students whose fees are paid by employers have no knowledge of the modern apprenticeship scheme. The lack of interaction with employers limits the college's ability to promote employment and work experience opportunities.

Leadership and management

69 Course management in construction is effective. Several new systems have been introduced since the recent appointment of a new head of school. Course review procedures have been improved. Course teams now analyse performance on all programmes and draw up action plans to address areas of poor performance. Regular staff

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meetings enable staff to influence the direction and focus of the school. New systems for quality assurance and tutorials have recently been introduced but the effectiveness of these has yet to be established. Practices still vary. There are no formal mechanisms for sharing the good practice that exists.

Curriculum Areas

Electrical Engineering

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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses
- well-planned enrichment activities on full-time courses
- wide range of courses and flexible attendance patterns
- good development of practical skills
- up-to-date and industrially relevant equipment.

Weaknesses

- inappropriate teaching methods in many classes
- low pass rates in 1999/2000
- unsatisfactory accommodation
- inadequate tutorial support.

Scope of provision

70 The college has a wide range of electrical engineering courses, extending from foundation to higher levels, providing clear progression routes for learners. Courses meet the needs of new and established local industries. Several courses have flexible arrangements for attendance to enable students with irregular work patterns to study at times which suit them. The college is involved in a number of local and regional initiatives with industrial partners but it does not have an industrial advisory board for electrical engineering. Enrichment activities on full-time courses are well planned. For example, national diploma students are to visit Sweden this year and are receiving language tuition in preparation for this. Many technician students benefit from taking a City and Guilds of London Institute

practical course in addition to their BTEC qualification.

Achievement and standards

71 Retention rates on most courses have been above the national average for the past three years. On advanced technician courses, retention rates have steadily risen over the same period. Some pass rates are declining. In 1999/2000, all levels and types of courses had overall pass rates which were significantly below the national average. The college recognises that pass rates are unsatisfactory, and has introduced a number of strategies to address this. These include: ensuring that students are not entered for inappropriate qualifications and paying more attention to improving examination technique. Interim performance of students suggests that end-of-course results for this year will be better than last. Students show good practical skills when working in laboratories and workshops. Many use information technology in producing their assignments, but their files contain mainly handwritten notes. On some courses, there is little evidence of students using information technology. Students are generally punctual for lessons.

Quality of education and training

72 Most teachers make good use of question and answer techniques. Questions are directed at individuals in order to ensure that all take part in the discussion and to enable the teacher to check what each has learned. However, much classroom teaching is unsatisfactory. There is often too narrow a range of teaching methods and methods are sometimes inappropriate. Students spend far too much time copying notes and diagrams from whiteboards and overhead projector slides. In theory lessons, teachers fail to exploit the value of visual aids or to introduce practical activities, which would have helped to illustrate some

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of the more difficult concepts. Lack of planning is affecting the quality of teaching and learning. Although the majority of teachers use schemes of work and lesson plans, these are not always thorough. Some lesson plans show that little consideration has been given to teaching methods, the duration of activities or the resources required. In one engineering science class, the teacher's lesson plan was simply a list of topics to be covered during the lesson. Many handouts have been in use for several years and their technical content is out of date.

73 Teachers generally provide appropriate written feedback on assessed work. Students receive clear specifications for each assignment, but the criteria to be used in assessing the assignment are not clear enough. Opportunities for assessing key skills in vocational assignments are being missed. Internal verification is working well on most courses but, in some areas of work, there is a shortage of suitable staff qualified as internal verifiers. Teachers have assessment schedules for their courses, but these are not shared with their students.

74 Students report that they are well supported by their course leaders, and that they can contact staff easily, if they have a problem. Relations between staff and students are very good. However, the majority of full-time students do not receive adequate tutorial support and neither they, nor their course leaders, have time allocated on their timetables for tutorials. Most full-time students have an individual meeting with the head of department once a term, but this is limited to pastoral matters. There are no formal tutorials for part-time students. Systems for monitoring students' punctuality and attendance are not fully developed. The college has a formal procedure under which teachers inform course leaders that they have a concern about a particular student, but this is not generally used by electrical engineering staff.

75 Much of the electrical engineering and electrical installation equipment is industrially relevant and up-to-date. The instrumentation laboratory, for example, is well equipped, and the school has some good simulation equipment, for example for process plant operation. Some equipment is not yet in commission following its relocation from the Marton site, and some of the mechanical engineering equipment used by electrical students is out of date. A third of the staff have no teaching qualification or assessor award. Most accommodation at the Douglas Street site is unsatisfactory. Public areas and general teaching rooms are drab and many of the rooms are poorly decorated. Much of the furniture is old and unsuitable. Very few rooms have appropriate wall displays. Several rooms used during the inspection were too small or too large for the classes occupying them. There is a shortage of small tools and consumables which is restricting students' progress. Information technology facilities in the electrical engineering area are out of date.

Leadership and management

76 Self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous. The self-assessment report failed to identify some significant weaknesses and overstated some strengths. Some course teams do not meet regularly and part-time staff on these courses tend to work in isolation. Few full-time students and none of the part-time students are set targets against which their progress can be measured.

Curriculum Areas

Mechanical Engineering

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

Strengths

- retention rates above the national average
- high proportion of students achieving the qualification for which they are aiming
- high standards of practical work
- well-managed assessment in the workplace
- wide range of courses.

Weaknesses

-
- some low pass rates
- narrow range of teaching methods and some uninspiring teaching
- inadequate monitoring of progress of full time students
- lack of equipment and drab accommodation in some areas
- poor implementation of college quality assurance systems.

Scope of provision

77 The college provides a wide range of mechanical engineering craft and technician courses for employed, unemployed and full-time students. These provide good opportunities for progression from foundation to higher levels and modes of attendance which suit the student. Courses are offered in a wide variety of engineering disciplines and are well matched to the needs of the region. For example, pipe-work, fluid power and heating and ventilation courses are available. Qualifications leading to NVQ level 2 manufacturing qualifications may be taken through work-based training and

assessment. Full-time students benefit from the opportunity to take additional qualifications and enrichment activities. For example, they take NVQ qualifications and computer-aided drawing courses and have the opportunity to take part in a European exchange.

Achievement and standards

78 Overall, the standard of work produced by students is appropriate to the requirements of the courses they follow. Standards of presentation vary. Some work is enhanced by the use of IT. Students work well in the workshops. The log books in which they write up their practical tasks, however, are often not detailed enough. Students on some courses achieve a consistently high standard. For example, on the fluid power courses the combined theoretical, practical and investigatory work is excellent. Retention rates are generally above the national average. A high proportion of the students who start their courses achieve their target qualification. Pass rates are above the national average on those courses which recruit the majority of the students. Pass rates for work-based training are higher. Some of the full-time and part-time courses taught at the college, however, have persistently low pass rates. The national certificate and diploma courses and several craft courses at level 2 have persistently low pass rates, though there is some indication that they are beginning to rise. In fabrication and welding and motor vehicle engineering the attendance rate, at 62%, is poor.

Quality of teaching and learning

79 Overall, the teaching is satisfactory. However, much of it is not particularly imaginative. Students' experience is mainly restricted to listening and taking notes. Not enough use is made of visual aids and handouts. Many of the handouts which do exist are badly

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designed; for example, they are verbose or fail to allow space for students to add their own notes. Teachers make too little effort to help students by combining aspects of practical and theoretical work. Some theory lessons are dull affairs and fail to rouse students' interest. Teachers draw effectively on their industrial experience to stimulate students' interest. In a fabrication and welding lesson, the students wrote a program, undertook a computer simulation exercise to test it and then used the program to cut a component on the computer-controlled gas cutter. The teacher provided appropriate support and the students worked well, producing work of a high standard. The average number of students in the lessons inspected was low, at 7.9. This allowed teachers time to help individual students with their written work.

80 Employees who are being assessed for NVQs while at work receive good support from the college. The college assessors are based full-time in the workplace and are regularly available to provide advice and assessment. Assignment work on many of the college-based courses is poorly managed. Assessment schedules are not always adhered to and completed work is often not returned to students promptly. Much of the feedback from teachers is superficial. Individual meetings between students and their course tutor do not take place on schedule and, when they do, little attention is given to progress and action planning. There is no regular timetabled period for group tutorials. Tutorials happen from time to time. Students receive satisfactory careers education and guidance, and sessions on drugs awareness have also been provided.

81 Most teachers hold assessor qualifications but few hold verifier qualifications. Few teachers have a teaching qualification and few full-time teachers have recent experience of working in industry. There have been some instances in which it has not proved

possible to find cover for absent colleagues. This has sometimes led to students having no teaching in particular subjects for extended periods of time.

82 Some subject areas are well equipped. For example, for fluid control there is a wide range of good equipment which is easily accessible to students. There is an adequate range of equipment in the engineering workshops. Much of it is old but it is still serviceable. Motor vehicle equipment is also ageing but is just adequate for the courses provided. Some subjects are poorly provided for. For example there is insufficient equipment in aero-engineering and plant engineering. Much of the general engineering equipment is stored in small rooms and is not easily accessible to students.

83 Some class and laboratory accommodation is good. For example, the fluid control laboratory is spacious and well laid out to facilitate joint practical and theory work. The computer assisted design (CAD) fabrication and welding facilities are also spacious. Some accommodation is drab. For example, some classrooms and workshops and some laboratories suffer from clutter, such as piled chairs, and there is dust on equipment. Few rooms have displays on the walls. An exception is the heating and ventilation workshop which displays charts of students' progress, the course guidelines and the tasks which the students have to undertake. The mechanical workshop does not have space in it to enable students to write their log books. They have to go to the library to do this.

Leadership and management

84 Curriculum managers are aware of the issues identified during inspection. However, under current operational planning procedures there is no plan which addresses them adequately. There are regular school staff meetings but course

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team meetings do not take place regularly. The college's quality assurance procedures are not implemented effectively. Annual course reports are often completed in a cursory fashion and evaluations do not rest on a wide enough body of evidence. Evidence from external verifiers and students' views, for example, are often not considered and analysis of students' achievements is often omitted. Student representatives are rarely appointed and where there are representatives they are uncertain of their role. The self-assessment report does not adequately reflect the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, although it identifies courses on which there are poor levels of achievement.

Curriculum Areas

Business Administration and Information Technology

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

Strengths

- good and improving pass rates on administration courses
- high retention rates
- effective teaching in workshop sessions
- good levels of participation by adults and of progression to higher level courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on some IT courses and for modern apprentices
- inadequate preparation of students for key skills qualifications
- ineffective management of quality assurance
- poor access to resources.

Scope of provision

85 Provision in business administration includes one full-time course and a number of single-subject secretarial awards, mainly for part-time learners. A few modern apprentices are enrolled for NVQs in administration and a much larger number of adults undertake ICT courses in outreach centres in the local area. The provision of basic ICT courses attracts a lot of unemployed adults, many of whom progress to higher level IT qualifications. The provision for full-time learners in information technology includes GCE A level computing and GNVQ at levels 1 to 3. In response to an issue identified in its self-assessment report, the college has introduced a pre-foundation level course.

Achievement and standards

86 Most students develop an appropriate level of understanding and skill in practical computer workshops. However, the standard achieved in mock GNVQ intermediate examinations is low. GCE A level computing projects are well documented and well presented. The performance of learners is good in some areas but poor in others. Retention rates are high on most courses. There are some good and improving pass rates in business administration single-subject awards. Most are now at or above the national average. For example, the pass rate for text processing part 1 has risen from 49% in 1998 to 83% in 2000. The national average is 73%. Pass rates on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses are low and declining. Over the last three years retention and pass rates on the GNVQ information technology courses at intermediate and advanced levels have risen, and are above the national average. At foundation level rates are falling and are now below the national average. At GCE A level the retention rate is falling, but pass rates are rising and are now above the national average. Most modern apprentices are failing to achieve their learning goals.

Quality of education and training

87 Most teaching is at least satisfactory and nearly two-thirds of it is good. Schemes of work are available for all courses but some are not detailed enough. Practical sessions are taught effectively and students learn purposefully. Individual students are able to learn and progress at a pace that suits them, tutors are supportive and resources are good. Classroom teaching is less effective than practical teaching in workshops. Teachers do not make enough use of teaching aids where these would be helpful for learning. Students on the GNVQ advanced course in IT benefit from a ten-week work

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placement in an appropriate business organisation, but the secretarial students have only one week, which is not long enough.

88 Teachers mark assignments carefully and provide helpful comments. The arrangements for internally verifying the portfolios of modern apprentices, however, have not been implemented. Modern apprentices receive little teaching in administration theory or key skills, and their internal progress reviews are not conducted in the workplace. They are currently unable to complete their modern apprenticeships owing to the unsatisfactory arrangements for developing skills. There are good relationships between college staff and the modern apprentices, and pastoral support for the apprentices is strong.

89 Additional learning support is provided for full-time students but there has been a significant delay in making satisfactory arrangements for support in English. The termly reports from additional support staff to tutors are too infrequent to enable tutors to monitor the effectiveness of the support. Full-time students have a weekly tutorial which they value.

90 Staff are appropriately qualified. Most hold teaching qualifications. The self-assessment report recognised the need for them to update their commercial and industrial experience but there are no clear strategies in place to address this. Students have good access to ICT and Internet facilities in the learning centre. The business administration students have no access to a practice office and this is having an adverse effect on their learning. The ICT equipment in the outreach centres is appropriate for course requirements though the desks are quite cramped in some locations.

Leadership and management

91 The leadership of this area changed at the start of the current academic year. Team meetings are held regularly but insufficient attention is paid to monitoring the achievement of targets. Teams are not involved in target-setting. Quality assurance procedures are carried out inconsistently. Some course reviews are rather sketchy. Course teams fail to check that agreed actions have been carried out and that objectives have been accomplished. They also fail to ensure that planned actions are linked to named individuals and deadlines. The rationale for allocating resources within the school is not clear. Communications between full-time staff is good.

Curriculum Areas

Business and Management

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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning on the part-time management courses
- high pass rates on the part-time management courses
- teachers' effective support for individual students
- effective guidance on assessment.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on many full-time courses
- GNVQ students' low levels of motivation and attainment
- insufficient use of IT in teaching and learning
- lack of an overall curriculum strategy to improve the attainment of GNVQ students.

Scope of provision

92 The college offers a broad range of business and management courses (full time and part time). Full-time courses include: AVCE, GNVQ at foundation, intermediate and advanced level, GCE AS and A level business studies and an Access to Higher Education course with business options. There are also part-time professional and management courses including a Certificate in Management Studies, which has been adapted to fit the training needs of managers from Middlesbrough Borough Council. The vocational training services unit of the college also offers in-company training for managers at NVQ levels 3 and 4.

Achievement and standards

93 Part-time adult students achieve high standards. On the management and professional courses, students' project work is of an exceptionally high standard. Students are able to apply management concepts to the analysis of work-based problems. Results have been good, with pass rates of around 90 per cent on the Certificate in Management and the Institute of Supervisory Management courses. Students display confidence and a high level of ability in making presentations and writing formal reports. Group work is a major feature of the course. Students demonstrate good leadership qualities and learn to delegate effectively. The portfolio work of management trainees following the work-based NVQ in management is of a high standard. On the part-time accountancy courses, students display enthusiasm and commitment. Their assignment work is well presented and shows meticulous attention to detail.

94 In contrast, the standards achieved by many full-time students on the GNVQ and AVCE courses are unsatisfactory. There is a wide ability range on these courses. The assignment work of the best students is well presented and carefully researched. However, the low standards of attainment of many of the students are reflected in poor results in continuous assessment and external tests. Over the last three years, retention rates on the full-time courses have been mixed. They have been low on the GNVQ advanced course, where only 57 per cent of students completed the course in 1999/2000, and above average for general further education colleges at GNVQ foundation and intermediate levels. During the inspection, poor attendance and punctuality were a feature of the GNVQ courses at intermediate and advanced level. There is also a wide ability range on the GCE AS and A level courses. Although the work of the most able students is good, many students are

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struggling with the level of the course. The majority of students enter the course having just achieved the minimum entry qualifications of five GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and mathematics. Results at GCE A level were poor in 1999/2000, with a pass rate of only 50 per cent.

Quality of education and training

95 There is a marked contrast between the quality of teaching and learning experienced by part-time adult students and full-time GNVQ students. Adult students pursuing management and professional qualifications enjoy teaching and assessment which are directly relevant to their employment. For example, students on the part-time Certificate in Management course complete projects based on real problems from the workplace. Assessment of their projects is carefully staged and involves students making presentations to their peers, developing appropriate research methods and writing up their findings in report format. They are well supported in these tasks by lively teaching, which encourages the development of appropriate management skills. For example, at the start of the course, students are provided with an attractive booklet on study skills which contains comprehensive advice on learning styles, making presentations, managing projects and writing reports. There is much group work and teachers draw extensively on the occupational experience of students. Students participate in lively and well-structured exercises and develop confidence in presenting and defending their ideas.

96 Many full-time students following vocational courses have poor study habits and low expectations of success. Individual teachers use a range of teaching methods to motivate them but sometimes have little success. Students are easily distracted and do not apply themselves to

the tasks set by their teachers. As a consequence, they are not learning effectively and standards of achievement are often low. There is not enough use of ICT in teaching and learning. The lack of ICT resources located close to the classrooms used for business teaching inhibits the use of ICT as an everyday tool. There are some good computing facilities in the learning centre located in the South Block of the college. These are occasionally used for teaching and they provide a useful resource for students wishing to use wordprocessing and other software to produce their coursework. Students following GCE AS and A level business studies enjoy working through case studies and simulations. There is a wide range of ability in the classes. The stronger students develop good analytical skills and are able to apply economic concepts to practical examples. Weaker students struggle to relate theory and practice and make little progress in lessons. There is not enough use of examples drawn from local businesses in the teaching and assessment of students. For example, GNVQ students were using the college as an example of a business organisation rather than drawing upon the wide range of local businesses.

Leadership and management

97 Leadership and management have not been successful in raising the low levels of achievement of GNVQ students. The school self-assessment report is a self-critical document. It recognises the poor attainment and low expectations of full-time students. Individual course coordinators are also aware of the problem of raising the performance of students with low expectations. They have discussed the issue extensively at course team level. However, the school as a whole has not developed a coherent strategy for improving attainment. Leadership of the part-time management courses within the school is good. The courses are meticulously planned and benefit from the

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contributions of part-time teachers with current experience of business and the public sector. There are regular meetings of course teams and school groups. At a school level, there are targets for improving retention and achievement but these do not feed into review and evaluation at course level.

Curriculum Areas

Leisure and Tourism

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on nearly all courses
- effective development of students' personal skills
- well-planned and monitored work experience
- good level of support for individual students
- wide range of enrichment activities.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention on some courses
- some ineffective teaching and insufficiently demanding tasks in lessons
- inadequate monitoring of students' progress in key skills
- unsatisfactory attendance at some lessons
- insufficiently rigorous course reviews.

Scope of provision

98 Leisure, tourism and travel courses are offered at pre-entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. These meet the needs of students and industry and provide good opportunities for students to progress. Pupils aged 14 to 16 from a local school attend college to study for the recently introduced pre-entry award. Programmes are designed to enable full-time leisure and tourism students to take additional qualifications for tour management, resort representatives and travel agents. There are flexible arrangements to enable part-time students to attend at times that are

convenient to them but few take advantage of this opportunity. Open days and taster sessions enable students to make an informed decision about which course to take. An effective induction programme is used for team building and to introduce students to their studies and to the college.

Achievement and standards

99 Pass rates on GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism have been consistently above the national average over the last three years. However, over the same period, retention rates have been erratic and have often fallen below the national average. The proportion of students gaining high grades is very low. The pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate has significantly improved; 91% of students achieved the award in 2000. Retention rates, however, have declined from 95% in 1999 to 65% in 2000. GNVQ foundation was introduced in 1999 and only three of the six students originally enrolled completed and achieved the qualification. Since November, 18% of students have left the AVCE travel and tourism course which was introduced in September 2000. Retention and pass rates on other vocational qualifications that students study in addition to their main qualification is mixed. The pass rate on the Association of British Travel Agents primary certificate improved considerably in 2000 to 84%, which is significantly above the national average. The retention rate, however, is slightly below the national average. Pass rates on the Certificate in Tour management and the Certificate for Resort representatives are high but retention is poor on the resort representatives' course. At the time of the inspection, college data indicated that in-course retention was improving on most courses. GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism were the exceptions.

100 There is considerable variation in the standard of students' written work. In the best examples students' work is well

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organised and well presented and shows a good level of independent research. Some students make good use of IT for assignments and produce work of a high standard but many still submit handwritten work, and some of the work is poor. Students generally do not understand how key skills relate to their leisure and tourism studies.

Quality of education and training

101 Most teaching is relevant to current industry practice. Schemes of work ensure that the syllabus is covered. Lesson plans, however, are not always clear about intended learning outcomes. Some lessons are not well planned and the time allocated to activities is often inappropriate. In the less successful lessons, teaching was dull and teachers did not demand enough of the students. Students' interest and concentration often wavered. There was some unproductive use of time with students copying from overhead transparencies, many of which were of poor quality.

102 In the more successful lessons, different activities such as group work, role-play and presentations were used as appropriate to maintain students' interest and help them learn. Students worked co-operatively and were developing their personal skills through giving presentations and chairing groups. Key skills are not taught and assessed within the vocational area. The arrangements for monitoring students' progress on key skills are inefficient. Formal reporting procedures between key skills staff and leisure and tourism staff are inadequate. In an AVCE lesson most students did not have the skill to use a calculator properly and had problems calculating a percentage. At the time of the inspection, the average level of attendance at lessons observed was low at 71%.

103 Assignments are related to the leisure, tourism and travel industry. Visits

to United Kingdom tourist destinations and attractions and study trips to Spain and France are used effectively for assessment and to enhance students' learning. Closely monitored work experience is integrated well with the other elements of intermediate and advanced courses. Students value the experience they gain and it gives them the opportunity to explore employment prospects in the industry. The majority of students' work is of an appropriate standard for the level of the award.

104 Students speak highly of the individual support they receive from their teachers. All students are allocated a personal tutor and have weekly timetabled tutorials. Student absences are routinely followed up. Students' progress is rigorously monitored and the students regularly update their action plans in consultation with their tutors. Most tutorial and progress reports are well documented. Parents and guardians receive progress reports twice a year and are invited to attend open evenings at the college.

105 All teachers have specialist qualifications in leisure, tourism or travel and have recent experience in the industry. However, some have little expertise in some aspects of the courses that they teach. Contacts with industry are maintained through the network of work experience providers. Overall, the learning resources are good. The travel office has 15 computers with an adequate range of specialist software and training packages. However, the office does not provide a good learning environment. It is generally untidy, there are not enough computer chairs and the window blinds are inadequate. There is an appropriate range of books in the library but there are few journals and magazines. Some travel guides are out of date.

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Leadership and management

106 Communications within the school are good. There are regular team meetings and student representatives often attend. The minutes of team meetings show that students causing concern are identified and that appropriate action is taken. Most course files are well-organised and detailed. The end-of-year course reviews pay scant attention to the quality of teaching and learning and analysis of students' achievements. Target-setting is not well developed. The self-assessment report is insufficiently self-critical and evaluative. Action plans do not include clear strategies for improvement. The outcomes of lesson observations have not been used effectively to bring about improvements in teaching and learning.

Curriculum Areas

Care, Childcare and Courses for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (Grade3)**.

Strengths

- pass rates above the national average for some care courses
- good tracking of students' progress in care and childcare
- good formal and informal support from tutors
- effective promotion of independence for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Weaknesses

- low levels of attainment on some courses
- ineffective quality assurance
- inadequate access to IT
- inadequate provision of additional learning support for some students.

Scope of provision

107 There is a satisfactory range of full-time and part-time care and childcare courses extending from level 1 to higher education. Courses for students with learning difficulties are available on a full-time and part-time basis, and are mainly accredited. Although most courses operate at the college's main site, there is a growing number of outreach centres in the community. A summer school enables potential students to sample courses for which they may wish to enrol the following year. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 has widened students' choice. For example, students on the AVCE take an additional qualification in psychology, and

all students have access to a programme of enrichment activities.

Achievement and standards

108 Students' written work in care and childcare usually meets course requirements. Some practical and craft work is of a high standard. Most students are able to demonstrate an appropriate level of attainment in their work and in contributions to lessons. In most lessons, students show an awareness of the importance of professional care values, and the need for commitment and integrity in their work. Many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop greater confidence in themselves and improve their social skills. They work well together in groups and, in many cases, support each other's learning. Individual learning plans are not well developed.

109 The pass rates for the GNVQ foundation and advanced courses in health and social care were well above the national average in 1999/2000 at 92%. At intermediate level, students performed less well with a 64% pass rate. The pass rates for full-time childcare courses are on a par with the national average. Overall, levels of retention are satisfactory on full-time programmes, but there has been a significant drop-out from full-time courses during the current academic year. Most NVQ candidates and students on counselling courses complete the course, but some NVQ candidates do not achieve the qualification in the expected time. Rates of progression to higher education from level 3 courses are low. Of the students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who took the City and Guilds level 1 skillpower programme, 80% completed the course, and all achieved full certification in 1999/2000. Of the 33 students on the course, seven progressed to GNVQ foundation level programmes in the college, two went to other training providers and most of the others continued in the college's entry-level provision.

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Quality of education and training

110 Most schemes of work and lesson plans are well constructed and meet course requirements. The better lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were in the practical areas such as performing and creative arts, relaxation and cookery. In a number of lessons, teachers made effective use of their own and their students' life and work experience to enrich activities. Most teachers of care and childcare use well-produced handouts to help students learn.

111 In some of the less effective lessons, activities were not demanding enough to maintain the interest of the students. Some lessons were conducted at too slow a pace or were presented in an uninspiring way. Teachers failed to engage the interest of the more reluctant students. Some activities and tasks provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were inappropriate. For example, in a number of lessons, work sheets were used with students who did not have literacy skills. The key skills of communication, application of number and information technology are not sufficiently integrated into the vocational aspects of care and childcare courses, and students often fail to appreciate their relevance.

112 Assignments and assessments for care and childcare students are carefully designed to cover course requirements. Most students' portfolios of work are of an appropriate level for the course. Assignments are generally marked conscientiously and returned promptly, with supportive comments from teachers. The tracking of students' progress in care and childcare courses is generally highly effective. Assessment of the accredited achievements of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is thorough, but tends not to reflect those individual learning goals which do not form a part of the accreditation. Work experience for

childcare students is well managed and effective. There are few opportunities for students on other courses to participate in monitored work placements.

113 Most students receive adequate pre-course information. Nevertheless, some students, particularly entry-level students, are recruited to programmes that do not meet their learning needs. Tutors generally provide good formal and informal support. Students have an individual tutorial at least once a term, and group tutorials are used to cover aspects such as health and welfare issues. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also benefit from the highly effective support provided by skilled and dedicated support workers.

114 Teachers generally have appropriate qualifications. Some care and childcare teachers have current or recent professional experience. Teachers who work with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often have appropriate experience and basic qualifications, but few have relevant specialist qualifications. Much of the accommodation for practical subjects is good. Some general classrooms are shabby, with poor furniture and a lack of blinds. There is inadequate access to IT facilities for students and teachers, and there are few examples of IT being used by students to produce their assignments.

Leadership and management

115 Staff work well together in teams, and there is effective informal communication. Course reviews give insufficient attention to the quality of teaching and learning, student retention and achievement. There is no systematic monitoring of progress in reaching targets and performance. Although many lessons have been observed and graded internally there is not a clear process by which the outcomes of these observations contribute to improvements in teaching. Course team

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meetings are generally held termly, but the outcomes of the meetings are not adequately recorded. The college has established some productive working relationships with a number of outreach centres, and with the local hospital. However, links are not always used effectively to plan provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a need for a cross-college initiative to ensure that provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is integrated more effectively with other aspects of college provision.

Curriculum Areas

Art, Design and Music

Overall provision in art, design and music is **satisfactory (Grade 3)**

Strengths

- high standards of work in art and dance
- some good teaching
- good support for individual students in lessons
- teachers with recent vocational experience and secure knowledge of their subject
- many opportunities for students to engage in performance
- students' effective progress in lessons.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates in some areas
- too little discussion in practical classes
- lack of up-to-date technical resources, including ICT
- widely dispersed, untidy accommodation with poor access for students with restricted mobility
- lack of strategic direction for the programme area
- lack of rigour in self-assessment and course review.

Scope of provision

116 Provision in the arts caters for some 400 students. GNVQ/AVCE and BTEC national diploma courses are offered in art and design, popular music, music technology, performing arts and media. There are also GCE A/AS level courses in art, photography, music, dance, drama and media. Intermediate level work includes full-time vocational courses in performing arts, art and media. Students may gain additional qualifications in sound

recording, music theory, digital imaging and television production. One-year adult courses at level 3 are available in some areas. An enrichment programme enables students to take part in various performance events. All arts courses are based at the Marton Campus.

Achievement and standards

117 In art and design, standards are above average and rising. GCE A level coursework is a particular strength. Most art students are confident about what they have learned and they work at, or above, the level expected. Their subject knowledge and understanding are good, and they make good use of resources. Similar standards are achieved on the AVCE art and design course, but standards on the GNVQ intermediate course are not as high. Students achieve high standards of performance in dance, with students at all levels able to grasp challenging new sequences quickly. Drama students display good background knowledge and are confident in forming judgements and marshalling evidence to support their views. In all media programmes, the standard of work is adequate but students rarely use their technical understanding creatively. Standards in popular music and music technology are average. Across the provision, attendance at lessons is low and punctuality is sometimes poor.

118 On national diploma courses, standards in music and music technology are average or below. Retention rates for popular music are well below the national average. On BTEC first diploma courses, students studying drama and dance do markedly better than the small number enrolling in music. The number of students qualifying in graded music exams at level 2 slightly exceeds the low national average. Achievement rates in dance are high at all levels; in 1999/2000, all GCE A level dance students achieved grade E or above. GCE A level theatre studies results

Curriculum Areas

are poor. GCE A level art matches the national average and the pass rate in GNVQ advanced art and design are well above average. Retention rates on level 3 media programmes are less than satisfactory. Pass rates are high on the AVCE media programme but low on the GCE A level communications media course. Pass rates on level 2 media programmes are low. The low retention rates in music have recently been addressed by the introduction of one-year level 3 courses for adults and stricter entry requirements.

Quality of education and training

119 Most teaching is good or better. Teachers are well prepared and methods of teaching are appropriate. Music teachers have a wide range of industrial experience which they put to good use in the classroom. Teaching in dance and drama is challenging and, where appropriate, closely linked to the new course specifications. Art teachers have a very good grasp of their subject. Their teaching is well planned, and they challenge students to think for themselves. Students on the GCE A level and AVCE courses in art are highly motivated and work hard. Lessons are well conducted despite poor resources. Students make good progress in practical lessons in popular music and music technology. Most teaching in media is sound. Teachers succeed in stimulating interest and they make appropriate demands on the students. In some cases, students' work lacks sparkle and the students' tend to rework familiar conventions. Some teachers in practical subjects fail to encourage students to think about, and discuss, what they are doing and why.

120 Performances in and out of the college provide valuable additional experience for students in music and the performing arts. Groups of students regularly take performances to other European venues. Teachers set

assignments which encourage students to conduct their own research. Assessment arrangements in all areas of work are satisfactory and students regularly receive critical evaluations of their work in oral and written form. Supported by regular tutorial sessions, assessment helps students to build on what they have learned. Students' progress is carefully monitored. Internal verification ensures that tutors grade appropriately and that they reflect critically on their decisions.

121 There is good individual support for students from specialist staff and, in art, there is good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff and students get on well together. Staff are well qualified and many, particularly in music, have continuing industrial experience. Accommodation and resources are poor. Specialist rooms are widely dispersed, and accommodation is drab and untidy. Many of the teaching rooms are unfit for the purpose for which they are used. There is no access to much of the arts accommodation for students with restricted mobility. Although some equipment is of industry standard, the lack of sufficient up-to-date technical resources, such as digital editing and colour printing, inhibits learning in all areas. In some cases, staff and students bring in their personal equipment to compensate for the inadequacy of resources.

Leadership and management

122 Leadership and management are sound at school and course leader level but there is not enough sense of strategic direction. There are regular, minuted school meetings. Existing resources are deployed effectively. Efforts are being made to encourage more male students to take up dance. There are examples of race issues being dealt with sensitively in media projects. Courses are reviewed annually, but the reviews are not always detailed enough and do not adequately

Curriculum Areas

identify and address weaknesses. Self-assessment reports are insufficiently rigorous. Weaknesses in resources are over-emphasised and there is a failure to identify, celebrate and share good practice across the provision.

Curriculum Areas

Humanities: English, Modern Foreign Languages and Social Sciences

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

Strengths

- much well-planned and varied teaching
- high retention rates in some subjects
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- good use of learning resources in lessons.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates
- poor attendance and punctuality
- adverse effects of small classes on teaching and learning
- ineffective co-ordination of subject areas
- some mundane teaching.

Scope of provision

123 Provision in humanities is wide-ranging. It includes: modern foreign language courses in Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch; social sciences courses in psychology, sociology, history, geography and law; teacher training courses; and courses in English language and literature. Most subjects are offered at GCSE and GCE AS/A level, and most students are 16–18 years old, studying full time. A few subjects are available in the evenings and on Saturday mornings.

Achievement and standards

124 Students' written work is generally good. Coursework in English and some social science subjects is usually of a high

standard, although little of it is wordprocessed. In English, students produce good notes and well-organised files and teachers monitor these on a regular basis. Some students find it difficult to adjust to the more formal writing required for GCE AS level work. Students participate well in group activities and when questioned show good knowledge and understanding. Students' oral skills are generally underdeveloped and, in some lessons, students are unresponsive in discussion. Many students are developing good critical and analytical skills. Attendance and punctuality in some lessons were poor; for example, average attendance at GCSE English lessons during the inspection was 59%.

125 Retention rates are good on foreign languages courses for beginners, GCE A level history, law, English language and literature and social science GCSE courses. They are average in all other subjects except for GCE A level English literature and GCSE English language, where rates are below average. Pass rates in GCE A level sociology, geography, GCSE law and the City and Guilds 730 Further and Adult Education Certificate are good. Pass rates generally, however, are below the national average. Many students who embark upon a foreign language course fail to achieve a qualification. Levels of achievement on intermediate courses are in line with what might be expected from students' qualifications on entry to the course. The levels of achievement of GCE A level students with high entry qualifications are below expectations.

Quality of education and training

126 Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. With few exceptions, they plan their courses and lessons well, and show a good awareness of individual students' strengths and weaknesses. At best, as in some English lessons, teachers' methods of working are

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appropriate and effective. They include well-judged inputs from the teacher, penetrating questions, and class and group discussion. Audio and video recordings are used to good effect. In most lessons, teaching materials, including texts and handouts, are well chosen. In several lessons, teachers used imaginative approaches to help students consolidate their knowledge and prepare for forthcoming examinations. A few lessons in French and English involved students in effective use of the IT resources to carry out research on set texts and to search French websites for information.

127 In some of the weaker lessons, teaching methods were inappropriate, teaching lacked flair or the lessons moved at too slow a pace. Key skills were not being developed effectively. In some foreign languages lessons, teachers and students spoke too much in English. In many lessons, small classes restricted methods of working and reduced the possibilities for learning through interaction with others. Classes observed contained, on average, six students. In some, there were only one or two students.

128 Students have good opportunities for curriculum enhancement. English students go on theatre trips, and attend talks by visiting authors. Language students take part in study visits to France and Spain. English teachers have a scheme for rewarding good work and effort by awarding book tokens.

129 Students' work, including extended coursework, is marked in detail, often using awarding bodies' criteria. As a result, students are made well aware of their strengths and weaknesses and the progress they are making against targets.

130 Teachers know their students well and, helped by the low numbers in many classes, they identify and cater for their learning needs. Relationships between teachers and students are friendly and productive, and help to promote a good

climate for learning. There is insufficient pre-enrolment guidance for 16–18 students, which means that some of them make unsuitable choices of subjects. Adult students have good opportunities to discuss their proposed courses with subject specialists before enrolling. Induction arrangements are good and students receive helpful subject support in individual tutorials. The quality of higher education information and guidance is good.

131 Most subjects are taught by small teams of well-qualified and experienced teachers. In modern foreign languages, a lack of full-time teachers restricts curriculum development and, in the social sciences, the significant turnover of staff has adversely affected students' learning. Specialist subject classrooms provide a good environment for learning. Not all subjects have an adequate range of texts and equipment. Good use is made of resources produced by teachers, and of authentic foreign language materials. The college's learning centre provides a basic stock of books to support courses and subject staff usually supplement this by making available small collections of reference materials.

Leadership and management

132 English teachers meet regularly as a team. Their work is co-ordinated by the head of school, who is also an English specialist. Teachers of foreign languages, who all work part time at the college, find it difficult to meet and share good practice. The absence of a curriculum manager for social sciences has led to difficulties in this area; for example, not all staff have had an appraisal, meetings are not held regularly and there is no operational plan.

133 The self-assessment report draws on the outcome of lesson observations. The report identifies the main strengths and weaknesses of provision. However, the self-assessment is carried out at

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school level and does not distinguish sufficiently between subjects. Course reviews place insufficient emphasis on retention and achievement. Subject teachers are insufficiently involved in self-assessment.

Curriculum Areas

Basic Skills

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

Strengths

- some effective teaching of basic skills.

Weaknesses

- inadequate management and co-ordination of basic skills
- unsatisfactory arrangements for initial assessment and the planning of learning
- unsatisfactory monitoring of students' progress
- insufficient liaison between additional support teachers and course teams
- low attendance at additional support lessons.

Scope of provision

134 Basic skills includes provision for literacy and numeracy below level 2. There are a small number of day-time lessons in basic skills at the Longlands site. Basic skills teaching is also offered to individual learners and small groups of learners to support their work on other courses. Some basic skills classes take place in a community centre near to the Longlands estate and are run by a local charity. There are no arrangements with local employers to offer basic skills in the workplace.

Achievement and standards

135 Students are hardworking and keen to progress, but levels of achievement are adversely affected by inappropriate external awards, ineffective initial assessment and inadequate

individual learning plans. The college is moving towards the use of individual learning plans to record achievement. There is also increasing use of Open College Network (OCN) units to ensure that accreditation matches the progress of individual learners more effectively.

136 Initial assessment of learners is not systematic enough. Existing methods of assessing learners' skills on entry are too dependent on the expertise of the individual teachers. Individual learning plans often record what students have done rather than what they have achieved. They are not active documents, negotiated, planned and reviewed with individual learners. Learners' portfolios of work show fragmented activities and uneven development. Worksheets, though successfully completed, provide little indication of what has been learned. There are some examples of the effective use of drafting to improve work and correct errors in personal writing. The effectiveness of additional support in improving retention and achievement on learners' main programmes is not systematically monitored. Attendance at additional support lessons is poor.

137 Retention rates are generally close to or above the national average. Where students are entered for externally accredited awards, pass rates are low. The pass rate on the Associated Examination Board (AEB) literacy achievement tests in 1999/2000 was 52% compared with a national average of 69% and on the City & Guilds 3750 Numeracy Stage 2 awards it was 30% compared with 65%. Reliance on external awards, and ineffective planning of individual learning, means that basic skills learners are making inadequate progress and their levels of achievement are unsatisfactory.

Quality of education and training

138 Teachers are friendly and encouraging and their relationships with

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learners are good. Some experienced teachers are providing good support for individual learners' needs. This is particularly true of dyslexia support, where skilled and effective teaching helps learners gain an understanding of the mechanics of language. One teacher, offering literacy support to a mature learner in a patchwork and quilting class, showed great skill in matching the work to the interests of the learner and giving her confidence to begin to write using a computer. Too much practising of skills at the expense of developing knowledge and understanding, causes some learners to become demotivated. Some teachers are too ready to explain things to students instead of allowing them to think for themselves. Other teachers place a strong emphasis on learning strategies encouraging learners to understand how they learned and which approaches were most helpful to them.

139 Much of the teaching, however, fails to meet learners' needs. There is little variety in methods of working. Teaching methods are often inappropriate and the work is not demanding enough for the students. In group activities, learners work as individuals and frequently waste time waiting for help from the teacher when they get stuck. There are few volunteer tutors, so learners are dependent on the class teacher for information and advice.

140 Learners work extensively with worksheets, some of poor quality. There is little use of objects and items. Learners in receipt of additional support may borrow laptop computers but there are no computers available in the college's basic skills teaching room. Computers are available at the community centre, but their different configurations cause problems for learners and teachers. Basic skills teaching accommodation is unsatisfactory. The specialist teaching room is also used as a staffroom. Some additional support teaching takes place in the college's learning centre. The centre is adequate for this in most cases, though some

learners are self conscious about using basic materials and resources in public. There are no fiction books for basic skills readers in the Longlands library, although that is where basic skills classes take place. The majority of teachers are full time. Most have teaching qualifications, but few have advanced basic skills qualifications. The college has just introduced an initial certificate in teaching basic skills. Twenty-six teachers from other areas of the college are currently enrolled.

141 There is some effective informal communication between additional support teachers and course teams, particularly in construction, but liaison is generally unsatisfactory. Additional support teachers and course teams are often not sufficiently aware of each other's activities. Support teachers usually work reactively, following the pace of the course, rather than the progress of the learner. There is no planning to ensure that support is fully integrated with other aspects of learners' work. In some cases, support is arranged at times which are not convenient for learners. The community centre course has been successful in widening participation but inadequate arrangements for pre-course advice and guidance and for induction contribute to the poor levels of retention.

Leadership and management

142 Provision is poorly co-ordinated. Despite clear ideas from middle managers, the basic skills area has not kept up with national developments. Frequent changes to the structure and management of basic literacy and numeracy provision have not been helpful. There have been delays in replacing key staff. A basic skills policy has only recently been written and approved, and it has not yet been implemented. Key cross-college working groups are not yet meeting. The area has been neglected in terms of accommodation and resources. Basic

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skills issues have not been related to the whole curriculum. The basic skills national initiative has not yet made an impact and a number of weak practices and procedures have still to be addressed. Course teams meet regularly, but action points and timescales are not always clearly identified. Target-setting at course level is not well established. Course reviews are of uneven quality.

143 Teachers and managers show awareness of and sensitivity to equal opportunities issues. However, physical access to basic skills rooms at Longlands is difficult for those with restricted mobility and there is a lack of suitable accommodation for teachers and learners to work together privately and confidentially.

College Data

Part D: College Data

Table 1. Enrolments by level of study and age, 1999/2000

Level	16–18 %	19+ %
1	37%	25%
2	37%	38%
3	23%	13%
4/5	0%	6%
Other	4%	19%

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001

Note: The percentages in column 19+ have been rounded up and hence do not add up to 100%

Table 2. Enrolments by curriculum area and age 1999/2000

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total enrolments %
Science	545	573	10
Agriculture	4	9	0
Construction	241	255	4
Engineering	889	1,448	21
Business	145	761	8
Hotel and Catering	726	362	10
Health and Community Care	572	912	13
Art and Design	392	538	8
Humanities	929	705	15
Basic Education	165	1096	11
Total	4,608	6,659	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001.

College Data

Table 3. Retention and achievement

NVQ level (long courses)	Retention & pass rate	16–18			19+		
		1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
1	Starters excluding transfers	596	1,019	1,044	1,084	960	971
	Retention rate (%)	79	87	86	91	81	82
	National average (%)	77	75	N/A	75	73	N/A
	Pass rate (%)	68	60	73	54	70	64
	National average (%)	47	56	N/A	54	58	N/A
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,730	1,544	1,446	1,858	1,470	1,965
	Retention rate (%)	82	83	80	89	91	87
	National average (%)	74	72	N/A	75	75	N/A
	Pass rate (%)	59	70	75	54	77	79
	National average (%)	55	63	N/A	59	62	N/A
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,093	1,124	1,037	678	626	676
	Retention rate (%)	71	78	82	73	86	86
	National average (%)	75	74	N/A	75	75	N/A
	Pass rate (%)	62	69	62	52	64	60
	National average (%)	57	62	N/A	59	63	N/A
H	Starters excluding transfers	6	9	6	114	90	127
	Retention rate (%)	83	89	100	70	84	85
	National average (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	80	79	N/A
	Pass rate (%)	60	83	33	50	31	46
	National average (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	48	55	N/A

Note: Summary of retention and achievement for the last 3 years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (i.e. General FE and tertiary colleges with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas)

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 1996/97 to 1988/99: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000
2. College rates for 1997/98–1998/99: *Benchmarking Data 1996/97 to 1998/99: Retention and Achievement Rates*, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000
3. College rates for 1999/2000: provided by the college in spring 2001

College Data

Table 4: Summary of grades awarded to teaching, learning and attainment by inspectors

Aspect & learner Type	Graded good or better (grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16–18	38%	44%	18%
19+ and WBL*	56%	28%	16%
Learning 16–18	36%	42%	22%
19+ and WBL	58%	22%	20%
Attainment 16–18	36%	44%	20%
19+ and WBL	52%	30%	18%

Key: Inspectors grade three aspects of lessons: teaching, learning and attainment. The range of grades includes: excellent (grade 1), very good (2), good (3), satisfactory (4), unsatisfactory (5), poor (6) and very poor (7).

*WBL= work-based learning.

