



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Inspection report
Bromley College of Further
and Higher Education

Date of inspection: 9–13 December 2002

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Bromley College of Further and Higher Education
Type of college:	General further education
Principal:	Peter Jones
Address of college:	Rookery Lane Bromley Kent BR2 8HE
Telephone number:	020 8295 7000
Fax number:	020 8295 7099
Chair of governors:	John Charles
Unique reference number:	130430
Name of reporting inspector:	Robert Avery HMI
Date of inspection:	9–13 December 2002

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

Bromley College of Further and Higher Education is located in the London Borough of Bromley in outer southeast London. The borough is noted for its high environmental quality and diverse economy. Unemployment is very low at 2.5%. Bromley College of Further and Higher Education recruits students from a wide area; only 54% of students live in the borough. The college's curriculum covers 12 of the 14 areas of learning. Courses range from entry level to degree level in some areas. Many students enrol for courses in the foundation, business and information and communication technology (ICT) areas. The college is responsible for the management of approximately 75 modern apprentices in engineering and hairdressing. In 2001/02, the total number of students studying at the college exceeded 8,000. Some 1,900 students were aged 16 to 18. More than 2,700 students attended full time. Approximately 48% of students aged 16 to 18 live in areas of relatively high socio-economic deprivation and travel to the college from inner London boroughs. Some 25% of the college's students belong to a minority ethnic group, compared to 7% of the local population. Approximately 62% of all students studying at the college are female. The college's main campus is located just south of Bromley town centre. Additional accommodation is provided in the town centre and there are two smaller community centres in Beckenham and Penge. The college's mission is "to meet the needs of all members of the community, promoting lifelong learning and economic success through high quality teaching, guidance and support, in a learning environment that values everyone's potential".

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged the overall quality of the provision to be inadequate to meet the needs of all learners. Five out of the 13 curriculum areas and leadership and management were unsatisfactory. The remaining eight curriculum areas were satisfactory. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- above average overall retention and pass rates on many National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses for students aged 16 to 18 in 2002
 - good teaching on electrical installation, sports, leisure and tourism, and management and personnel courses
 - good information technology (IT) resources and specialist equipment in many areas
 - effective pastoral support services
 - effective links with employers in hairdressing, construction, business and engineering
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- well-managed work-based learning in hairdressing.

What should be improved

- well below average retention and pass rates on many courses
- quality of teaching and learning in most areas, particularly for students aged 16 to 18
- students' attendance and punctuality
- quality of accommodation and furnishing
- target setting and action planning for individual students
- take up of additional learning support by those students requiring it
- thoroughness and frequency of lesson observations
- thoroughness and effectiveness of self-assessment, target setting and action planning
- leadership and management in unsatisfactory curriculum areas
- accountability of staff at all levels.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	<p>Unsatisfactory. There are well below average pass rates on mathematics courses and on General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) biology and physics courses. Pass rates on the national certificate course are above average. Attendance at GCE and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) lessons is low. Overall teaching is satisfactory but mathematics teaching is unimaginative. Too many lessons are unsatisfactory. Monitoring of students' progress on GCSE and GCE courses is inadequate. Management of GCSE and GCE courses is unsatisfactory.</p>
Construction	<p>Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on level 1 electrical installation courses are well above average. Retention on the construction foundation programme is well below average. Teaching on electrical installation courses is good. Students' practical work is of a high standard. Individual action planning for full-time students is ineffective. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate.</p>
Engineering	<p>Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates on many courses are well below average. Teaching in many lessons is mundane and unsatisfactory in a significant minority. There are productive links with industry and work-based learners are supported effectively. Quality assurance procedures are poorly implemented. Progress reviews and individual learning plans are ineffective.</p>
Business, administration, management and professional studies	<p>Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on management and personnel courses are above average. Teaching on management and personnel courses is good. Lesson planning in some other subjects is poor. Students are well supported during lessons. Assessment of students' progress is insufficient. Quality assurance and coordination of the area are unsatisfactory.</p>

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Information and communication technology	<p>Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), European computer driving licence and NVQ IT courses are above average. Pass rates on GCSE and GCE A-level courses are well below average. Teaching on courses for adults is good, but is undemanding in lessons for students aged 16 to 18. Students demonstrate a high standard of practical skills. Attendance and punctuality are poor among students aged 16 to 18. Leadership and management are satisfactory.</p>
Sports, leisure and tourism	<p>Satisfactory. Pass rates on NVQ courses are above average. Retention rates on some full-time courses are well below average. Teaching in many lessons is good. Students' attendance at many lessons is poor. Most students' coursework is of a high standard. There is a broad range of enrichment courses provided for students.</p>
Hairdressing and beauty therapy (including work-based learning)	<p>Satisfactory. Pass rates are well below average on NVQ level 2 hairdressing, NVQ level 3 beauty therapy, anatomy and physiology courses. Teaching in practical lessons is good. Students use IT well in their work. The individual learning needs of students are not always met in theory lessons. Students' attendance to lessons is poor. Tutorials are effective. Work-based learners are well managed. Quality assurance procedures are poorly implemented and are ineffective, but overall management of the area is satisfactory.</p>
Health and social care	<p>Satisfactory. Pass rates on national certificate and NVQ level 2 courses are very high. Pass rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses are below national average. Teaching in the majority of lessons is good. The work set for more able students is insufficiently demanding. Arrangements for key skills development are effective. Resources to support practical activities on childcare courses are inadequate. Leadership and management are satisfactory.</p>
Media and music	<p>Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates on most courses are well below average. Some teaching is unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention is given to the broad range of students' abilities. Students' attendance at lessons is very poor. Many arrive late to lessons. Specialist resources for media and music are of good quality. Part-time teachers in music provide good professional support for students. Assessment practices on vocational media courses are poor. Management of music is good, but that for media is unsatisfactory.</p>

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Humanities	Unsatisfactory. Retention rates are falling and are low on many courses. Pass rates on many courses are well below average. Most teaching is satisfactory but much teaching fails to address the broad range of students' abilities. Students' attendance and punctuality are poor. Learning support materials are of good quality. Quality assurance arrangements are ineffective. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
English and English as a foreign language	Satisfactory. Pass rates on GCE AS and A-level English courses were well above average in 2002. Retention rates on GCSE English and some English as Foreign Language (EFL) courses are well below average. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and teaching on GCE A-level and EFL courses is good. Students' attendance at many lessons is poor and many arrive late. On EFL courses, students' progress is monitored effectively. Assessment on English courses is weak. There are good specialist resources for EFL students.
English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Retention rates are above average on one-year full-time and part-time short courses. Pass rates are well below average on part-time short courses. Most teaching is at least satisfactory, with frequent use of real-life examples, but teaching is insufficiently demanding in some lessons. Students' attendance at some lessons and support sessions is low. Provision is responsive to the needs of the community. Quality assurance procedures are poorly implemented. Leadership and management are satisfactory.
Literacy and numeracy (basic skills)	Unsatisfactory. Literacy and numeracy support on most vocational courses is ineffective. Individual learning plans on vocational courses are ineffective. Teaching of basic skills is unsatisfactory, whereas that on discrete literacy and numeracy courses is good. Students' attendance at lessons is low. Support provided in one-to-one sessions is good. The strategy for basic skills and the management of the provision are underdeveloped.

How well is the college led and managed?

The leadership and management of the college are unsatisfactory. A new principal took up post in March 2002 and has started to identify and redress weaknesses in the management and performance of the college, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact of the actions taken on raising standards. There are significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of many curriculum areas. The proportion of uninspiring and unsatisfactory teaching in some curriculum areas is high. Students' attendance at many lessons is poor. The college has been successful in widening participation in education and training but has been slow to develop strategies to support the diverse and demanding needs of individual learners. Student absenteeism is not effectively addressed and support for literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is not co-ordinated effectively. Quality assurance procedures are not proving to be effective in identifying significant weaknesses and raising standards across the college. Self-assessment is often insufficiently critical and the lesson observation scheme fails to identify significant weaknesses in teaching and learning in some areas. Curriculum managers do not take sufficient responsibility for the actions required to improve retention and pass rates.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college's mission statement emphasises the commitment to widening participation and its strong focus on the social inclusion of an increasingly diverse student body. There has been a significant increase in entry and foundation level programmes, and provision is offered in most curriculum areas at all levels to encourage progression. Enrolments by students from areas of relatively high deprivation are increasing. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds enrolling at the college exceeds significantly the proportion within the local community. Community based provision and courses in English for speakers for other languages (ESOL) are expanding. There is a strong network of support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college has not ensured the coherent development of its basic skills strategy; has not used analysis of students' achievement and retention by gender and ethnicity undertaken in September 2002 to review its provision; has not developed teaching and learning strategies which more closely meet the needs of its increasingly diverse population of students; and has been slow to develop action plans and staff training programmes in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

The effectiveness of arrangements for guidance and support vary considerably. The college's development plan identified many of the improvements that need to be undertaken to develop a more coherent and comprehensive support and guidance service across all college sites. Arrangements for pre-entry advice and guidance are good at the main site but are less comprehensive at other sites. During the admissions process, insufficient subject advice is provided to students in some areas of learning. Many students value the course induction

arrangements introduced in September 2002. Individual learning plans do not identify personal targets, given students' earlier achievements or information from initial assessments. There is very low take-up of additional learning support. A new scheme has been introduced at the start of this academic year to provide basic skills support within the curriculum. However, the support offered tends to be too general and does not address specific basic skill needs. Tutorials do not identify sufficiently the learning needs of students, and individual target setting and progress monitoring are unsatisfactory. Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality are ineffective. There are effective support arrangements for students with additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are very good career, welfare advice and counselling services for students.

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

- welcoming atmosphere
- friendly, approachable teachers and support staff
- gym facility
- good specialist equipment available in lessons
- students' common room
- marked work returned promptly by some teachers.

What they feel could be improved

- poor attendance and punctuality of their peers
 - restricted variety of teaching and learning methods
 - some undemanding lessons
 - too few car parking spaces
 - restricted opening hours of refectory
 - high cost of refectory food
 - too cold or too hot classrooms.
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Other information

The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (local LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole

Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16–18	48	40	12
19+ and WBL*	63	27	10
Learning 16–18	44	41	15
19+ and WBL*	63	30	7

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards

1. Over the last four years (1998/99 to 2001/02) there has been little change in the overall proportion of students who complete their courses successfully. There is significant variability in the performance of students on different courses within and between different curriculum areas. In making judgements about the achievements of students, inspectors took into account, where it was appropriate to do so, those students who attend the college from areas of relatively high social deprivation. The overall retention rate on level 1 provision has remained close to the national average for students aged 16 to 18 over the last four years, but in 2002 fell significantly on courses for adults to well below the national average. Overall retention rates on level 2 courses have improved by only a few percentage points, and in 2002, were close to the national averages. On level 3 courses, overall retention rates indicate a better trend of improvement. In 2002 these were close to the national average for students aged 16 to 18, and several percentage points above the national average for adults.

2. Overall pass rates on level 1 and level 2 courses have remained close to the national averages. However, in 2002, overall pass rates on level 3 courses fell significantly to well below the national averages. Students' attendance to many lessons is consistently low. During the inspection, average attendance was low at 63%.

16 to 18 year olds

3. Retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 paint a mixed picture. Overall, retention and pass rates on NVQ courses at levels 1 to 3 have improved from below average in 1999. In 2002, they were above average on many courses, including the level 1 IT course

and the level 2 courses in motor vehicle service and repair, business administration, and care. Retention rates on many GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses are near the national averages, although the pass rates on many of these courses have been below average for the last two years. Pass rates on level 3 vocational courses in science, business, ICT, and travel and tourism are above average. However, between 1999 and 2001 the retention rates on two-year GCE A level and one-year GCE AS courses were well below average, and in 2002 fell significantly on GCSE courses to well below average. Although pass rates on some GCE AS/A-level courses have improved from 1999 to 2002, many remain below the national averages. For example, the pass rates on GCE AS biology, mathematics, physics, IT, and psychology courses are well below average. In contrast, the pass rates on GCE AS/A-level courses in English language and English literature have been consistently above average. The analyses of students' achievements at the college compared to their prior attainment, undertaken by an external organisation, indicate that most students do as well as predicted on GCE A-level courses. Teachers rarely use the analyses to set demanding performance targets for individual students and to guide lesson planning. Students' poor attendance and lateness prevail in many lessons for students aged 16 to 18.

4. The proportion of modern apprentices in hairdressing who complete successfully the full framework in the contracted period is much worse than expected. However, many complete the vocational elements of their programmes within the specified time. In engineering, the completion rate of apprentices and trainees has been well below average, often due to poor achievements in key skills.

Adult learners

5. The majority of adults study for vocational qualifications. Many adult students enrol on short courses. Overall, pass rates are well below average on these courses and are below average on part-time short courses in ESOL. On courses of longer duration, such as those leading to NVQs and other vocational qualifications, retention rates have improved from well below average in 1999 on many level 2 and level 3 courses, and were either close to or above the national averages in 2002. The pass rates on NVQ courses at level 1 and level 2 have remained close to the national averages but are unsatisfactory at level 3. Overall, pass rates on other vocational courses at level 1 and level 2 show little improvement over the last four years (1999 to 2002), being consistently near the national averages. At level 3, the overall pass rates have fallen over this period and were significantly below the national averages in 2002. Many adults on the electrical installation part 1 part-time course achieve the expected qualification, but many of those studying at part 2 fail to do so. The pass rates on personnel and management courses are above average, but are well below average on the certificate in marketing course. In 2001, the pass rate on the access to nursing course was well below average. Retention rates are below average on courses leading to qualifications in English as a foreign language (EFL). The average attendance of adult students to lessons during the inspection was slightly better than for students aged 16 to 18, but was low at 66%.

Quality of education and training

6. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 226 lessons. In 7 of the 13 curriculum areas inspected, teaching in more than 10% of the lessons observed was less than satisfactory. In too many lessons, particularly in science and mathematics, engineering, media and music, humanities and literacy and numeracy, students make insufficient progress and the standards achieved are often unsatisfactory. There is too little good or better teaching in many curriculum areas. Teaching in fewer than 54% of the lessons observed was better than satisfactory. Overall, teaching in lessons attended predominately by students aged 16 to 18 is of a lower quality than in lessons attended predominately by adults. During lessons, adults often make better progress and achieve higher standards than students aged 16 to 18 and above those expected. Much of the poor teaching, learning and attainment occurs in lessons on level 3 courses, but is notably better on level 1 and level 4 courses. In practical lessons, teaching, learning and attainment are better than in theory lessons because teachers provide realistic activities which students readily appreciate. Weaknesses in teaching include poorly planned lessons, which fail to meet the needs of individual students; mundane and unimaginative teaching, which fails to interest and inspire learners; insufficient checking of students' progress; some lessons in which teachers talk for excessive periods without directing questions at students, resulting in them becoming inattentive; and a lack of variety in teaching and learning methods. Students arrive late to many lessons and disrupt the learning of those present. Teachers often fail to ask students the reasons for their lateness.

7. Much teaching on electrical installation, sports, leisure and tourism, management and personnel, and EFL courses is good. In these lessons, teachers plan their lessons well, use a range of teaching and learning methods effectively, and thoroughly check students' progress through effective questioning and monitoring work done in the lesson. In some leisure and travel lessons, teachers use IT effectively to enliven their lessons, but IT is used insufficiently in some business studies lessons. Students on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses use IT effectively in their coursework. On many courses, key skills are taught in discrete sessions, and attendance at these lessons is poor. Some students attend key skills lessons which are pitched at a level too advanced for them. Teachers of key skills often focus on the completion of assignments rather than checking on students' actual performance and there is insufficient time provided for students to develop their key skills to a standard expected of them.

8. Approximately 75% of all teachers hold teaching qualifications and others are studying to achieve a suitable qualification. Most teachers are suitably qualified and experienced in their subject specialisms. Teachers in hairdressing and beauty therapy have good commercial experience, and those in construction have appropriate up-to-date industrial qualifications and experience. Managers have endeavoured to recruit additional full-time teachers in areas such as construction, science and mathematics, English, ICT, basic skills and childcare, but this has proved to be difficult.

9. The quality of accommodation and furnishing varies considerably across the college. There are some well-maintained and appointed rooms on the main site, although a significant

number of lessons in science, mathematics, ESOL, engineering, and humanities are held in poor quality, hutted temporary accommodation. Classrooms in the hutted accommodation are poorly decorated, furnished and inadequately heated. These weaknesses were identified during the previous inspection. At the town centre site rooms are well decorated and equipped. Most accommodation is accessible by students with restricted mobility.

10. In most curriculum areas, students are able to use a good range of modern specialist facilities during their lessons. These include a new, well-equipped language laboratory, a 'travel shop' with industry standard IT facilities, and modern workstations in the hairdressing salons. However, the specialist equipment in beauty therapy is outdated. In construction, materials for brickwork students are inadequate. Students on childcare courses have insufficient resources for practical activities. The college has a good stock of modern computers for students. However, the restrictions placed on the availability of computers in some rooms lead to some students being unable to gain access to computers at peak times. Managers are drafting an information and learning technology strategy with the intention of improving the availability of computers for students.

11. For most courses, library resources are adequate but there are insufficient textbooks for students studying English and IT. At the two community venues in Beckenham and Penge, students have poor access to textbooks. Students value the help and support given to them by library staff.

12. Assessment practice varies considerably across and within curriculum areas. Assessment on courses in science, sport, leisure and tourism, health and social care, and EFL is well organised, and assignments and tests are set regularly. Teachers provide clear, detailed and constructive feedback which shows students where they can improve. In mathematics, media, and English, assessment practice is unsatisfactory. Assignments are set too infrequently. Teachers provide insufficient feedback, weaknesses are not identified to enable students to form an accurate picture of their achievements, and poor spelling and grammar are often not corrected. Progress reviews are often undertaken during tutorial sessions but students' attendance at these is often poor. The documentation used to record progress is often poorly completed by teachers, lacking detail and failing to provide clear actions and targets for improvement. Assessment is satisfactory on work-based learning programmes.

13. At the start of the academic year the college revised its policy on the teaching and learning of key skills to align the delivery of the key skills curriculum more closely with the main courses of study. The new policy is yet to be fully implemented in all curriculum areas. In hairdressing, leisure and travel, and health and care, subject assignments are carefully designed to include development opportunities for key skills. In other curriculum areas, many students do not understand the relevance of key skills as the work is often not linked effectively to their main course of study. Students receive a well-structured induction to key skills and complete an initial diagnostic test. However, some tutors do not use the results of the tests to ensure individual learners work towards a level of key skills qualification suitable for them.

14. Students are able to study for a broad range of qualifications, from entry to HE level. A range of courses leading to GCSE, GCE AS and A level, and AVCE qualifications are offered as part of the college's Curriculum 2000 programme for students aged 16 to 18. Additionally, the college offers a substantial range of vocational courses. Many adults enrol on full-time, part-time day and evening courses. These include courses leading to NVQs, City and Guilds, Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national certificates and diplomas, and professional qualifications. College managers undertake a detailed needs analysis every three years, which is updated annually, to identify local community and business needs. Courses have been introduced since 1999 to widen participation in the community. The proportion of learners from areas of relatively high social deprivation has increased every year for the last three years (1999/2000 to 2001/02). The college has responded well to the demand for courses in ESOL, and has expanded the provision offered at local community centres. Some courses have been specifically introduced to meet the needs of employers. Examples include courses in pharmaceuticals, lift operations, hairdressing, and distance learning courses in care. The increasing range of qualifications offered by the college has led to significant growth in enrolments on both level 1 and HE courses. However, there is insufficient monitoring of students' progress from one level to the next. There is no systematic monitoring process for new courses which identifies criteria for evaluating their effectiveness.

15. The college works well with local special schools to provide courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a member of a collaborative borough partnership for 14 to 19 year olds, the college provides an effective learning programme for pupils who are at risk of being excluded from school.

16. There is a wide range of services and activities to guide and support learners. In September 2002, services for guidance and support were re-organised to eradicate the wide variations in practice, which characterise aspects of guidance and support. The college's development plan recognises many of the improvements that need to be undertaken to develop a more coherent and comprehensive support and guidance service across all college sites. There are inconsistencies in the arrangements for pre-entry advice and guidance that include open days and taster sessions. The services are good at the main site, although these are less comprehensive at other sites. There are some good publicity materials and helpful information is posted on the college's Internet web site. Taster sessions are organised for Year 11 school pupils. A call centre supports the enquiries and admissions team. Admissions tutors work with curriculum teams to interview all full-time students. During the course admissions process, insufficient subject advice is provided to students in some areas of learning. There are variations in the timing and use of information gained from initial assessment, which tends to take place during induction rather than prior to starting a course. As a result, some students are placed on courses inappropriate to them.

17. Arrangements for students' induction to courses were revised at the start of the academic year. A recent survey of students' views shows high levels of satisfaction with their induction programmes, but also identifies variations in practice across faculties. The results provide a sound basis for action planning to make further improvements. Individual

learning plans were introduced recently, though these are at an early stage of development. Learning support needs are assessed for full-time students during induction. There is a very low take-up of support and the college is exploring a number of ways to encourage participation. A new scheme has been introduced at the start of this academic year to provide basic skills support within the curriculum. Learning support tutors have been assigned to entry and foundation level courses. The support tutors have been concentrating primarily on motivating students to undertake support. The support offered tends to be too general and does not address specific basic skill needs. The college has not provided training to meet the significant needs of both teachers and support staff within these programmes.

18. A comprehensive cross-college tutorial system was introduced in September 2002 to support full-time students. However, tutorials do not sufficiently focus on the personal learning needs of students, and individual target setting and progress monitoring are unsatisfactory. Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality are ineffective. Although individual learning plans are being used in some curriculum areas, the lack of liaison and exchange of information between personal tutors and subject teachers reduces their effectiveness. The college recognises the need to standardise tutorial practice for part-time students. The college has a programme of enrichment activities and a youth work team to enhance curriculum activities and to encourage more student involvement in the college. However, many students are not aware of the enrichment programme; it is not emphasised sufficiently during induction. The students' representative council was established in the autumn term to further improve students' involvement in college activities.

19. There is a strong network of support for students with additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include physical and sensory disabilities, challenging behaviour and learning difficulties. In the current academic year, 116 students have been identified with additional support needs. Some of these experience multiple disabilities. Of these, 19 students receive individual learning and personal support, 13 students have been assigned note takers, and 24 students receive dyslexia support. There is an insufficient number of staff to support the range of additional learning needs which have been identified. The college is experiencing a significant increase in requests for learner support funding. These include access for college grants for students aged 16 to 18, educational maintenance allowances and applications from adults for access funds and childcare support. Approximately 30% of full-time students receive some form of financial support.

20. There is very good personal guidance for students. Students have access to careers welfare advice, counselling and youth worker support, and have benefited from a small mentoring programme started last year. Students value the range and quality of personal support offered by staff in the college.

Leadership and management

21. Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. A new principal took up post in March 2002 and has started to identify and redress weaknesses in the management and performance of many areas of the college's provision. The actions being taken are appropriate but were introduced very recently. Communication across the college has

improved and staff are informed and consulted about issues and developments. A college intranet has been established which has created a ready access to policies and information, and encourages greater communication between staff. Procedures for identifying poorly performing courses and action planning for improvement have been implemented. Prior to this inspection, consultants carried out a detailed analysis of expenditure and staff deployment. There are, however, significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of many curriculum areas, and provision in 5 of the 13 curriculum areas inspected is unsatisfactory. In some faculties, particularly those responsible for basic skills and GCSE and GCE A-level provision, curriculum leaders do not have clear strategies nor have established demanding targets to improve standards. Managers often fail to rigorously monitor and assess sufficiently the quality of provision.

22. Since the last inspection the college has changed its mission and has been successful in widening participation in education and training. Enrolments have grown consistently and the curriculum offer has been broadened, with a significant increase in entry and foundation level programmes. Enrolments from areas of social deprivation and from minority ethnic groups have increased. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has expanded and the college has been successful in working with local schools to develop provision for some 250 pupils aged 14 to 16.

23. Effective partnership arrangements have been developed which are supporting the strategy to widen participation. However, managers have been slow to develop teaching, learning and support strategies to meet the increasingly diverse and demanding learning needs of students. There is no effective central monitoring of students' attendance by the senior management team. Poor attendance and late arrival to lessons are not addressed effectively. Learning support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL is not co-ordinated effectively. The college was taking action to strengthen tutorial and support arrangements at the time of the inspection on the basis of a successful pilot scheme.

24. The college has clear policies on equality of opportunity and race equality, and training is provided for staff to ensure that discriminatory or oppressive behaviour is eliminated. The college's equal opportunities committee monitors policy implementation. However, there is insufficient use of achievement and retention analyses by gender and ethnicity to review provision.

25. Quality assurance procedures are often poorly implemented and are not leading to overall improvements in performance in many curriculum areas and across the college as a whole. Self-assessment for curriculum areas is often insufficiently thorough or critical, and was identified as a weakness during the last inspection. Action planning and target setting are undertaken at an aggregated level by area managers who fail to identify demanding targets and actions to improve standards for individual courses. Course managers do not take sufficient responsibility for the actions required to bring about improvement to retention or pass rates. The overall self-assessment of the performance of the college does not give sufficient consideration to the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievements. There are established procedures for observing the quality of teaching and learning in lessons,

but observations are undertaken too infrequently; teachers are only observed once every two or three years. Lesson observations are not conducted with sufficient rigour and significant weaknesses in teaching and learning are often not identified. The college assessment of the quality of teaching and learning did not identify the high percentage of less than satisfactory teaching observed by inspectors in some areas.

26. The college does not have a policy for linking the outcomes of lesson observations to the appraisal of teachers. Clear targets for improving performance are not set through the appraisal process for either teachers or managers. Teachers and managers are provided with good opportunities for training and professional development, but the effectiveness of quality assurance and appraisal procedures hampers the effective design and targeting of staff development programmes.

27. Governors have been effective in monitoring the finances of the college and controlling expenditure. They work well with senior managers and set and review strategic objectives on an annual basis. These objectives have varied little year on year and do not sufficiently take account of the outcomes of self-assessment. The new principal and the governors have established an effective working relationship, and the corporation has agreed to carry out a fundamental review of the strategic aims and organisational structure of the college in 2003. The corporation has recognised that it has not given sufficient attention to monitoring the academic performance of the college. Although governors receive information on enrolments, retention and pass rates regularly, the data provided on pass rates have only accurately represented the performance of the college late in the academic year. The reliability and timeliness of centrally held data on pass rates has improved recently. Governors have not clearly defined the reports they require from managers to maintain an effective overview of the performance of the college.

28. The college has met its targets for enrolment and has maintained cash reserves since incorporation, although there were operating deficits for the three years prior to the inspection. Managers have been cautious about spending to improve the quality and appropriateness of teaching accommodation, and have been slow in developing an accommodation strategy. A detailed strategic review and identification of the facilities required for providing the curriculum have not been carried out. The college has, however, leased accommodation to support its strategy for widening participation and developing community-based learning. Responsibility for budgets is delegated within the college to 'area' leaders, and budget holders are provided with helpful information on expenditure. The senior management team carefully monitors the cost of the curriculum provided by different teams in relation to the income generated. Action is taken to ensure that costs are controlled but insufficient consideration is given to the effect of poor retention on the cost of courses when teaching hours are allocated. The college has sensible procedures for allocating budgets for materials and the capital equipment required for teaching different aspects of the curriculum.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Science and mathematics

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

Strengths

- above average pass rates on the national certificate science courses
- improved retention on GCE AS courses
- good teaching on some science courses
- well-equipped science provision
- broad range of vocational courses in science.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in mathematics and biology and physics courses
- poor progression from GCE AS to GCE A2 courses
- poor attendance and punctuality on GCSE, GCE AS and A2 courses
- much unimaginative teaching in mathematics
- inadequate monitoring of students' progress on GCSE and GCE A-level courses
- unsatisfactory management of GCSE and GCE courses.

Scope of provision

29. The college has a broad range of level 2 and 3 vocational science courses. These include the part-time and full-time first diploma, national certificate and national diploma courses in applied science, the national certificate, national diploma and NVQ level 3 in pharmaceutical sciences. Over 110 students are enrolled on these courses. Students are able to progress to HE science courses within the college. The college also offers GCSE science and GCE A-level biology, chemistry, and physics courses, attracting some 100 enrolments. Most students studying science courses are students aged 16 to 18. GCSE and GCE A-level mathematics courses are offered in the evening and as full-time courses. Evening courses are attended by mainly adults, and approximately 150 students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on the full-time courses.

Achievement and standards

30. Pass rates on the GCE AS biology, mathematics and physics courses are well below average. On the GCSE science and GCE AS chemistry courses, pass rates are close to the national averages. Students' attainment at entry to their courses indicates that science students do about as well as would be expected, but on the GCE AS mathematics course, students do less well than predicted. Only one third or less of the students who start GCE AS mathematics and science courses complete the two-year GCE A-level courses, which is well below the national average. Pass rates on the national certificate science and pharmaceutical science courses are consistently above average. On the national diploma courses, pass rates are above average, but retention rates are below the national average. The number of students progressing from vocational science courses to HE is high. Students' attendance to GCSE and GCE AS and A2 lessons is low and many students arrive late for lessons.

31. On science courses, most students enjoy their studies and their practical skills are good. On the national certificate courses, students make good use of their work experience in explaining hazard symbols and giving examples of chemical hazards. However, on the GCSE science course many students struggle to use concepts such as neutralisation and displacement, and only gain confidence in the use of scientific vocabulary through skilled teaching involving practical examples and repetition of the basic ideas. In GCSE mathematics, most students are able to complete simple ratio calculations but only a minority give written details of their working.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics (A*-C grades)	2	No. of starts	90	83	121
		% retention	77	72	68
		% pass rate	32	37	28
GCSE science (A*-C grades)	2	No. of starts	49	39	31
		% retention	51	72	73
		% pass rate	24	61	38
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	*	17	23
		% retention	*	65	83
		% pass rate	*	64	53

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	31	44
		% retention	*	42	64
		% pass rate	*	62	18
National certificate science	3	No. of starts	41	20	28
		% retention	63	80	93
		% pass rate	96	94	96
National diploma science	3	No. of starts	21	19	28
		% retention	62	53	57
		% pass rate	92	100	79

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

*course not offered

Quality of education and training

32. Overall, the standards of teaching and learning in science and mathematics are satisfactory. However, whilst much of the teaching of science is good, in mathematics the teaching is never better than satisfactory and in too many lessons is unsatisfactory. In many science lessons, teachers make good use of models, demonstrations and references to current applications to inspire their students. Science teachers often integrate theory with practical work effectively. In some science lessons, teachers do not check students' learning sufficiently frequently. Specialist external lecturers contribute to teaching of life science courses such as pharmaceutical science, thereby ensuring up-to-date and industrially relevant teaching. Much teaching of mathematics is unimaginative. Teachers do not always explain the solutions to problems clearly, and in other lessons, students spend excessive periods of time copying formulae or diagrams before they have the opportunity to attempt questions themselves. Teachers of mathematics make little use of IT, models or other learning aids to enliven their teaching. In many science and mathematics lessons, teachers take insufficient account of the range of students' abilities when planning their lessons. In some GCE AS and A2 lessons observed, almost half of the students were absent and the late arrival of students to lessons disrupted the learning of others. The teaching time allocated to GCE A-level science and mathematics is low and there are no science workshops or formal arrangements for teachers to support individual students' needs. The large numbers of students in GCE AS

biology and some GCSE mathematics lessons make it difficult for teachers to provide effective support for individuals.

33. Teachers are well qualified in their specialist subjects. Teachers on science courses participate in a range of professional development activities. Science students benefit from the wide range of specialist equipment available. There are ample numbers of computers for the number of students. Life science courses are enhanced by the strong links between the college and local industry and hospitals across the south east of England. A few science laboratories are in poor decorative condition. Some mathematics lessons are taught in poor quality temporary accommodation; there are no subject-related wall displays and equipment related to mathematics.

34. Assessment procedures on life science courses are well established and consistently applied, and there is rigorous internal verification. On these courses, teachers provide helpful comments on students' assignments and make good use of academic tutorials to monitor students' progress. On GCE A-level science courses there is considerable variation in the amount of work set by teachers and the level of detail provided on marked work; those on the first year of the course receive too few assignments. Students commencing study of GCSE mathematics are not given an initial assessment of mathematics skills. There are very few recorded marks for mathematics assignments, and little evidence of regular setting of mathematics homework. Although students on GCE AS and A2 courses are set targets by personal tutors, these are of limited use in monitoring progress on a day-to-day basis, since they are not conveyed to subject teachers.

35. The wide range of life science vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 meet the needs of local employers, whilst pharmaceutical services options attract students from hospitals across the south east of England. The recent introduction of the first diploma and NVQ level 3 courses has widened provision. Both in mathematics and science, a range of GCSE and GCE courses is available but there is no mathematics provision below level 2. Most adult students are enrolled on life science vocational courses, where both academic and pastoral support is strong. In contrast, the GCSE and GCE students in science and mathematics are not well supported: systems for monitoring attendance and lateness are ineffective, whilst there is insufficient monitoring of academic progress against course requirements. Students' action plans do not relate to personal targets and focus insufficiently on how to improve areas of weakness in their learning.

Leadership and management

36. Leadership and management of science and mathematics are unsatisfactory. Life science vocational courses, which represent a small part of the provision, are well managed, but management of the GCE and GCSE courses in mathematics and science is unsatisfactory. There are detailed quality assurance procedures for life science vocational courses, but the self-assessment report is not sufficiently rigorous in identifying areas for improvement. The arrangements for managing GCSE and GCE courses in science and mathematics have resulted in improved retention on GCE AS courses, but have not brought about changes to teaching styles or methods to improve attendance or raise achievement in examinations. The

self-assessment report lacks rigour, makes very little reference to science and none to mathematics, gives no analysis of examination results or comparison with previous achievement, and does not set overall targets for retention and pass rates. The current arrangements, by which FE science provision is taught by one group of teachers but managed within two different areas, are ineffective in supporting students' learning and raising standards.

Construction

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

Strengths

- well above average retention and pass rates on level 1 electrical installation courses
- much good teaching on electrical installation courses
- good standards of students' practical work
- good progression rates from level 1 to level 2 courses.

Weaknesses

- well below average retention on the construction foundation programme
- poor practical resources for brickwork students
- ineffective individual action planning for full-time students
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements.

Scope of provision

37. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time construction courses. These include the foundation construction award, the GNVQ foundation course in construction and the built environment, intermediate construction awards, NVQs at level 2 in wood occupations and trowel occupations, and the BTEC national certificate in construction. Part-time courses in electrical installation include the City and Guilds part 1 and part 2 courses in electrical installation, and inspection and testing courses. A foundation construction award for school pupils aged 14 to 16 is also offered. At the time of inspection there were over 260 students enrolled on construction courses. Of these, 96 were attending full time and were mostly students aged 16 to 18. Some 150 students enrol on the part-time electrical installation courses and most are adults. The college also provides off-the-job training for 74 electrical installation modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

38. Retention and pass rates on most courses are close to the national averages. In 2001/02, the retention rate on the GNVQ foundation course declined, and in the year of inspection, the retention rate on the construction foundation programme was poor: 25% of students starting the course had withdrawn and 11% had transferred to other construction programmes. The retention rate for the electrical installation part 1 courses has improved and is now well above the national average. Pass rates for this course have consistently remained

well above the national average. Most students are enthusiastic about their work, particularly the practical aspects. Attainment in most lessons is about average and some practical work is of a professional standard. Many students who successfully complete either the GNVQ foundation or construction award progress to the intermediate construction awards. Similarly, many students who successfully complete the part 1 electrical installation course progress to the part 2 course.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation construction and the built environment	1	No. of starts	22	10	39
		% retention	64	80	54
		% pass rate	64	50	52
GNVQ advanced construction and built environment	1	No. of starts	22	10	39
		% retention	64	80	54
		% pass rate	64	50	52
NVQ trowel occupations (construction)	1	No. of starts	32	12	***
		% retention	91	83	***
		% pass rate	48	80	***
City and Guilds 2360-01 electrical installation part 1	1	No. of starts	108	87	77
		% retention	57	**	85
		% pass rate	93	84	88
NVQ wood occupations (construction)	2	No. of starts	29	15	20
		% retention	**	**	85
		% pass rate	75	68	94
City and Guilds 2360-01 electrical installation part 2	2	No. of starts	80	80	77
		% retention	79	86	87
		% pass rate	29	35	50

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ advanced construction and the built environment	3	No. of starts	25	17	13*
		% retention	56	76	69*
		% pass rate	62	77	67*

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

*national certificate in construction for students completing in 2002

** unreliable data

*** data unavailable

Quality of education and training

39. Most teaching in theory and practical lessons is satisfactory or better, and is good on the electrical installation courses. Schemes of work, course theory and practical handbooks, assignments and practical project work are well developed and are of good quality. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subjects and inspire students to learn. A variety of teaching methods and techniques are used effectively to stimulate and maintain the interest of students. Students' understanding is carefully checked through skilful questioning. When students miss lessons they are able to work through the topic covered from the course handbook. Practical projects in the craft subjects are designed to allow students to develop their skills progressively. In all courses there is an appropriate emphasis on health and safety with students working safely and keeping their work areas clean and tidy. There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their key skills whilst studying vocational subjects.

40. Most teachers have relevant industrial experience and qualifications, although only 30% have a teaching qualification. Most workshops and teaching rooms are of a satisfactory standard. The restricted space in the brick workshop prevents students from undertaking large scale project work and limits their experience of the elements of the course requirements. Additionally, the poor and variable quality of bricks available for students makes it difficult for them to produce work of a good standard. Some theory lessons take place in accommodation too close to students undertaking the other activities. The smallness of the workshops and availability of sufficient teachers prevent additional courses being offered.

41. Most internal verification is satisfactory, but is weak in electrical installation: there are inadequate procedures to confirm that teachers' judgements on standards meet those expected by examining authorities. Students understand the assessment arrangements of their courses. Assessment for NVQs includes evidence gained in the workplace and assessors from the college visit the students there to undertake observations. Teachers provide regular and thorough feedback on practical exercises, project work and assignments. Tutorial arrangements for full-time students are ineffective. Students do not value the tutorials and

attendance at these sessions is often poor. Many individual learning plans are incomplete, and do not contain personal targets or record progress towards those set. Tutors fail to monitor sufficiently the progress of those students identified as in need of additional learning support.

Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Formal meetings of staff take place monthly. Links with industry and other colleges are effective. New courses have been introduced recently to support changes to qualifications and to better match the learning needs of students.

43. However, the evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of courses and setting of targets for retention and achievement are insufficiently developed. There has been no observation of recently appointed teachers and there is insufficient scrutiny of teaching plans or lessons. Staff shortages have prevented teacher training and some other development activities. Some weaknesses identified during the previous inspection relating to students' poor attendance at lessons and unsatisfactory aspects of accommodation have not been adequately addressed.

Engineering

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

Strengths

- well above average pass rates on motor vehicle NVQ level 2 and repair and maintenance courses
- effective support for work-based learners
- productive links with industry.

Weaknesses

- well below average retention and pass rates on many courses
- much ineffective teaching
- ineffective individual learning plans and progress reviews
- poor implementation of quality assurance.

Scope of provision

44. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in motor vehicle engineering, mechanical engineering and electronic engineering, from level 1 through to HE. At the time of inspection, 292 students were enrolled on engineering courses, with 146 on motor vehicle courses, 76 on mechanical engineering courses and 70 on electronic engineering courses. Of these, 65 students are undertaking programmes at level 1, 109 at level 2 and 118 at level 3. Approximately half of the students attend full time. The college manages the training programmes of 21 apprentices, the majority at foundation level. Many more apprentices from other training providers attend the college for theory lessons.

Achievement and standards

45. Retention and pass rates on many courses are well below average. The retention rates on the City and Guilds level 1 progression award in motor vehicle servicing and repair have been consistently below the national averages, and pass rates are declining. The retention rates on the City and Guilds level 1 electronic servicing course are well below average. On the national diploma course, the retention rates have fallen and the pass rates are below average. However, the retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 2 motor vehicle service and repair, and level 1 City and Guilds motor vehicle repair and maintenance courses are well above the national averages. Most students' attendance to lessons is satisfactory, but many students arrive late to lessons and disrupt the learning of others. The standard of most students' work matches course requirements. Students on the level 2 motor vehicle progression award and the City and Guilds repair and maintenance courses are able to

undertake routine servicing tasks competently with the minimum of supervision. Many students on level 3 courses demonstrate a lack of understanding of the prerequisite principles and have difficulty with simple tasks, such as using functions on their calculators. Most students organise the work within their folders in an illogical manner. In recent years, the achievement of modern apprenticeship and national traineeship frameworks has been poor, often due to low achievement of key skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds motor vehicle repair and maintenance	1	No. of starts	62	33	39
		% retention	74	58	77
		% pass rate	61	84	87
City and Guilds progression award motor vehicle	1	No. of starts	*	28	31
		% retention	*	50	49
		% pass rate	*	79	60
City and Guilds electronics servicing part 1	1	No. of starts	16	21	18
		% retention	81	57	56
		% pass rate	38	33	60
NVQ motor vehicle service and repair	2	No. of starts	31	24	33
		% retention	77	63	79
		% pass rate	41	80	92
City and Guilds computer-aided engineering part 2	2	No. of starts	18	31	60
		% retention	89	90	27
		% pass rate	100	54	41
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	12	10	21
		% retention	75	80	90
		% pass rate	**	**	79

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	39	34	22
		% retention	54	59	36
		% pass rate	**	**	63

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

*course not offered

** unreliable data

Quality of education and training

46. Teaching in the majority of practical lessons is satisfactory or better. However, in a significant minority of theory lessons in mechanical and electronic engineering, teaching is unsatisfactory. Often, in the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers give out instructions for particular tasks in an unenthusiastic and monotonous manner. Teachers fail to check students' understanding of explanations and principles during the introduction of a topic, resulting in students struggling to complete subsequent exercises. In an electronics lesson, students were unable to solve a series of set problems involving negative numbers, as they had not understood the basic principles involved. In many of the unsatisfactory lessons, the learners are passive and unquestioning. The standard of teaching on higher level motor vehicle courses is good. During these lessons, students make good progress, motivated by effective teaching and learning methods and thorough checks on the extent of their learning. In a lesson on fuel injection, the teacher made effective use of an interactive computer-based presentation to help students develop a sound understanding of the principles of fuel injection systems.

47. Teachers are suitably experienced and qualified to teach their subjects. Overall, the range and quality of specialist equipment available to students is satisfactory. There is a wide range of tools and equipment in the motor vehicle workshops which includes some modern fault diagnostic equipment. Resources in the motor vehicle section have been enhanced by the donation of a new vehicle and several major vehicle components. A modern facility for the training of lift service engineers has been established through sponsorship by a leading lift manufacturer. Other areas are less well equipped. The facilities for teaching practical electronics are rudimentary. For example, students on electronic engineering courses are not provided with tools such as clamps to hold their work during soldering exercises. Assessment opportunities are suitably planned and carried out, both within the college and the workplace, according to awarding body requirements. Internal verification of assessment is adequate. On the electronic servicing course, teachers do not provide information to students on how their work will be assessed when setting assignments in practical lessons. Teachers also failed to provide students with advice on ways to improve their performance.

48. Students' individual learning plans are inadequate. Where they exist, many lack clear individual learning targets. Students do not always attend progress reviews with tutors, and where these do take place, action planning is insufficiently demanding. Work-based learners are provided with effective support by the college and employers. The range of engineering courses meet the needs of most students, and managers have recently introduced a training programme for lift service engineers to meet an identified need. There are insufficient work experience opportunities for full-time students.

Leadership and management

49. Management of engineering is satisfactory. There are productive links with industry. Timetabling of courses is effective and staff are kept informed and involved through a planned programme of regular meetings. However, quality assurance procedures are poorly implemented. Targets for retention and pass rates are not set for individual courses. Curriculum managers pay insufficient attention to improving retention and achievement and raising standards overall. In the self-assessment report for engineering, strengths are overstated and some key weaknesses are not identified. Planned key action points have not been fully implemented. Many of the weaknesses identified during the last inspection report are yet to be addressed.

Business, administration, management and professional studies

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

Strengths

- above average retention and pass rates in management and personnel programmes
- good teaching on management and personnel programmes
- broad range of courses
- effective support for students during lessons.

Weaknesses

- poor lesson planning by some teachers
- insufficient assessment of learning
- ineffective quality assurance
- weak management co-ordination.

Scope of provision

50. The college offers a broad range of courses in business, administration, management and professional studies. Courses offered at the main college site are mostly for students aged 16 to 18 and include GNVQs at foundation and intermediate levels, AVCE, GCE AS and A levels in business studies, and business administration courses at levels 1 to 3. At the college's town centre site, part-time courses for adults include accounting from levels 2 to 4, and marketing, personnel and management courses from levels 2 to 5. The programmes offered are in response to market demand and offer good career progression routes in personnel practice, accountancy, marketing, and legal services.

Achievement and standards

51. The retention and pass rates on the NVQ level 4 management course and the level 3 certificate in personnel practice have been consistently above the national averages. The retention and pass rates on many other courses are at or close to the national averages. The pass rates on the GNVQ and AVCE courses are also close to the national average. In 2002, the pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course fell significantly to 57%; well below the national average achieved in the previous year. Teachers make little effective use of the data available on the prior achievements of students and challenging targets are rarely set for individuals. The standards of work achieved by some students do not fully reflect their abilities. Students' attendance at many lessons is low.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business, administration, management and professional studies, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	33	28	45
		% retention	73	75	78
		% pass rate	96	71	57
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	33	29	21
		% retention	70	97	71
		% pass rate	83	13	73
NVQ business administration secretarial	2	No. of starts	31	39	24
		% retention	84	85	75
		% pass rate	62	76	94
GNVQ advanced/AVCE business	3	No. of starts	56	41	34
		% retention	64	78	71
		% pass rate	86	*	81
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	47	34	49
		% retention	94	94	93
		% pass rate	100	100	90
Advanced certificate in marketing	4	No. of starts	22	32	25
		% retention	91	97	92
		% pass rate	20	42	30
NVQ management	4	No. of starts	28	29	31
		% retention	89	90	97
		% pass rate	92	88	89

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

*unreliable data

Quality of education and training

52. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, although in a small minority of lessons it is less than satisfactory. Teaching on management and personnel programmes is good and tutors encourage students to use their knowledge and experience from the workplace to help develop the skills of the whole group. Many teachers convey their enthusiasm for their subjects and use a variety of methods and activities to encourage and interest learners. In a level 3 business administration lesson, students worked effectively in small groups to prepare an 'idiot's guide to setting up a business'. They demonstrated eagerness for the task and made good progress. In the weaker lessons, activities are poorly planned, with students being asked often to repeat work previously undertaken, and fail to challenge students sufficiently. In some lessons, teachers fail to use information and learning technology to enliven teaching and learning. Teaching on some lower level courses fails to take account of the diverse range of needs and learning styles of students. Many lessons are too slowly paced and some teachers do not ask demanding questions to encourage students to realise their full potential.

53. Most teachers are well qualified with appropriate professional qualifications, but few have recent, relevant work experience. There are good IT facilities for students. On the main college site, some classrooms are in poor decorative order and do not have appropriate furniture or lighting for using computers. The range of books and journals available at both sites is adequate. There is a developing college intranet site for teachers, but it does not indicate which source materials students should use when undertaking assignments.

54. The internal verification of assessment for management courses is good. Some teachers set homework too infrequently. Where homework is set, it is marked and returned promptly with detailed constructive comments on where marks have been lost and advice on how to improve. In lessons, much of the assessment and questioning does not adequately test the learning and understanding of all students.

55. Students are provided with a wide range of effective support. Students speak enthusiastically about the pre-entry advice and guidance they receive. Induction programmes ensure that students are enrolled on the courses appropriate to them. Helpful additional learning support is provided during lessons by learning support assistants. Effective in-class support is provided for visually and hearing impaired students. Some course handbooks are very comprehensive and include detailed course requirements, book lists and assessment procedures, whereas others are merely no more than photocopies of the examining body syllabus and requirements.

Leadership and management

56. There is a lack of co-ordination for the curriculum area as a whole. Teachers at the two sites work very independently of each other and do not share good practice. Strategies to improve the quality of provision overall are lacking. Quality assurance procedures are not

systematically implemented. Lesson observations are undertaken infrequently and the outcomes insufficiently used to inform action planning. Newly appointed, inexperienced part-time teachers receive inadequate support. Managers do not have confidence in the student data supplied centrally and spend a disproportionate amount of time checking and making corrections. The self-assessment reports lack rigour and action plans do not provide a clear focus on how to raise standards. Equality of opportunity is effectively addressed and students from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and abilities are provided with appropriate levels of support.

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- above average retention and pass rates on the AVCE and NVQ 'using IT' courses
- well above average pass rates on the European computer driving licence (ECDL) course
- effective teaching on courses for adults
- high standard of students' practical skills.

Weaknesses

- well below average pass rates on GCSE and GCE A-level courses
- much undemanding teaching for students aged 16 to 18
- poor attendance and punctuality of younger learners
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

57. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time, day and evening ICT courses. These include GCSE and GCE AS and A levels, the GNVQ intermediate course, AVCE, first and national diplomas, NVQ level 1, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), ECDL, City and Guilds courses and short introductory IT skills courses. Students are able to progress to higher level courses within the college. There are nearly 400 full-time students and approximately 1,400 part-time adult students studying ICT at the college.

Achievement and standards

58. The retention and pass rates for some courses are high, but on others are low and are unsatisfactory. On AVCE and NVQ IT courses are above average, whereas the pass rates on ECDL are well above average. Students are particularly successful on vocational courses such as the AVCE, NVQ, ECDL and short CLAIT courses. The retention and pass rates on most full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18 are close to the national averages. There have been well below average retention and pass rates on the GCSE and GCE A-level courses for the last three years (1999/2000 to 2001/02). In 2002 only 6 of 30 students who started the GCSE IT course achieved a grade C or higher, and the pass rate on the introductory IT skills course for adults was well below the national average. Many adult learners are confident, articulate and well motivated. Most adult students achieve high standards of practical work during lessons. Many students aged 16 to 18 attain a satisfactory

standard of work. Students' written work does not always demonstrate a clear understanding of key concepts. Attendance at lessons is poor among students aged 16 to 18 and many arrive late to lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communication technology, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ using IT	1	No. of starts	39	15	21
		% retention	87	53	81
		% pass rate	65	75	88
City and Guilds 7261 Certificate in IT applications (one year)	1	No. of starts	*	148	610
		% retention	*	52	58
		% pass rate	*	47	49
OCR CLAIT (short course)	1	No. of starts	203	73	92
		% retention	96	92	88
		% pass rate	27	82	77
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	35	36	37
		% retention	97	83	84
		% pass rate	68	69	65
GCSE IT (A*-C)	2	No. of starts	20	10	31
		% retention	60	60	52
		% pass rate	0	33	40
National diploma IT	3	No. of starts	24	28	26
		% retention	58	71	69
		% pass rate	82	81	85

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
AVCE ICT (single award)	3	No. of starts	*	26	31
		% retention	*	100	87
		% pass rate	*	65	73
GCE AS IT	3	No. of starts	*	38	28
		% retention	*	39	68
		% pass rate	*	53	47

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

*qualification not offered

Quality of education and training

59. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. Teaching is good on courses for adults. In the good lessons, clear objectives are set and a variety of activities provide a demanding and rich learning experience. Students are clear about what they are doing and why. However, much of the teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18 is dull and undemanding. Teachers fail to maintain students' interest or spend too long on the same activity, resulting in students becoming inattentive. Learning activities do not stretch the students sufficiently and teachers give too few opportunities to extend students' thinking. In one lesson, all students were given the same task irrespective of their previous knowledge of the topic; many learnt little that was new. In another lesson, students spent too long copying materials from the board and the teacher spoke for excessive periods, insufficiently checking students' understanding. Development opportunities for key skills are insufficiently included in vocational lessons and students often fail to see the relevance of the subjects when key skills are taught separately.

60. Most teachers are well qualified in their subjects and those without teaching qualifications are given the opportunity to study on courses provided by the college. There are sufficient computers with up-to-date software, although in a few lessons, some students had to share computers, resulting in a few students making poor progress. There is good technical support at the main college site and at the two community learning centres. A few teaching areas are cramped or are poorly laid out, adversely affecting learning, as students are unable to see teachers' instructions. Teachers and students make effective use of on-line learning materials which include tests, review notes, assignments and discussion forums. Students are able to access materials using computers at college, at home or via a mobile phone.

61. Assessment is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies. However, on GCE AS and A2 courses, teachers have not remedied the weaknesses in

the quality of marking identified by the external moderator. Teachers give regular, constructive verbal feedback to students, but written comments on assignment work are often too brief and do not help students improve.

62. Overall, guidance and support provided for students are satisfactory. At one community learning centre the IT 'taster' sessions included assessment of students' individual needs, detailed guidance on the various module options available, and how students could combine their IT course with courses in basic skills or ESOL. Most tutorial support on full-time courses is effective. The progress of students is regularly monitored and action plans are agreed with students. On courses provided for adults at the community learning centres, teachers monitor students' progress insufficiently.

Leadership and management

63. Five course teams working across all three faculties teach ICT courses. Communication within each course team is good, but less effective between the teams. The management of most courses is satisfactory but is unsatisfactory on the GCSE and GCE AS and A2 courses, where implemented action plans have failed to raise standards. Action has been taken since the start of the autumn term to improve the attendance of students aged 16 to 18, but it is too early to assess the effectiveness of these measures. The views of students are taken into account during course reviews and these have led to measurable improvements in aspects of course organisation and delivery. Findings from lesson observations are not used effectively to share good practice and raise standards of teaching and learning. Managers make, for example, insufficient use of performance data in setting targets and monitoring improvements. The self-assessment report for the ICT curriculum area does not focus sufficiently on teaching and learning.

Sports, leisure and tourism

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

Strengths

- above average pass rates on NVQ courses
- good teaching in many lessons
- broad range of enrichment courses for full-time students.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance on many courses
- well below average retention rates on GNVQ and AVCE full-time courses
- falling pass rates on some courses.

Scope of provision

64. The college offers a wide range of courses in sport, leisure and travel for students attending full time and part time. There are 400 full-time and 190 part-time enrolments to courses. Full-time courses include NVQ level 1 sport and recreation, NVQ level 2 sport coaching, the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, AVCEs in travel and tourism and leisure and recreation, and the BTEC national certificate. Part-time courses include the Association of British Travel Agents certificate (ABTAC) and British Airways fares and ticketing courses. Full-time students are able to study for additional qualifications, and these include sports coaching, first aid, and the community sports leaders award. A broad range of sports activities are available to students studying courses within the curriculum area and for those studying on other courses within the college.

Achievement and standards

65. The pass rates on some short courses and the NVQ level 1 and level 2 courses are above average. However, the pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate, fares and ticketing, and certificate of tour operators courses have fallen over the last two years (2000/01 and 2001/02) from above to below average. The retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses are below average. As recognised in the self-assessment report, the attendance of students at lessons is poor, averaging 56% for the lessons observed by inspectors. The college has introduced procedures to reduce absenteeism in October 2002, but these are not proving to be effective. Most students' coursework is of a good standard. On AVCE courses the prior achievements of students are used to inform the setting of individual performance targets. However, the monitoring and recording of students' performance against these targets are inconsistently applied; some records are not updated by teachers, and some students fail to attend the review sessions.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sports, leisure and tourism, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ sport and recreation	1	No. of starts	42	19	20
		% retention	71	53	85
		% pass rate	83	80	88
BA air fares and ticketing	1	No. of starts	11	30	20
		% retention	82	83	60
		% pass rate	78	76	67
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	28	21	15
		% retention	64	67	47
		% pass rate	89	57	71
Intermediate certificate of tour operators	2	No. of starts	16	15	30
		% retention	81	87	80
		% pass rate	92	100	67
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	*	30
		% retention	*	*	43
		% pass rate	*	*	83
AVCE leisure and recreation	3	No. of starts	*	*	19
		% retention	*	*	61
		% pass rate	*	*	70

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

* qualification not offered

Quality of education and training

66. Much teaching is good or better, and the remainder is satisfactory. Teachers structure their lessons well and use a variety of methods effectively. They are knowledgeable about the requirements and specifications of their courses. The best teaching is characterised by good use of role play in appropriate settings, a wide variety of interesting and relevant materials being available for students, effective use of resources in the travel classroom, and effective strategies to cater for the wide range of students' abilities in most lessons. IT is often used effectively in lessons.

67. Teachers are experienced and suitably qualified in their subjects, and most possess a teaching qualification. The specialist resources for tourism courses are good and for sport courses are satisfactory. The travel shop is well equipped with computers, industry-standard software and travel guides. The majority of the sports facilities used by students are off site and students have to make their own arrangements for travel to attend these lessons. The leisure facilities hired by the college are of a good standard and timetables are arranged to allow time for travel. Many of the sports theory lessons are held in temporary accommodation at the college's main site and the classrooms are cold and drab. IT facilities are readily available and in sufficient quantity.

68. Arrangements for assessment are good and procedures are implemented consistently. Procedures for the internal verification of assessment are effective. Students understand the assessment requirements of their courses. Teachers provide helpful written feedback on students' work, related to grades likely to be given by awarding bodies. On the AVCE travel and tourism course, students' work is marked with great attention to detail and teachers indicate what could be done to achieve higher grades. Marked work is returned promptly. Students value the verbal and written feedback provided by teachers and the careful scheduling of assignments. Tutorial sessions are well planned but attendance to these is often poor. Additional learning support is available for those identified as needing it, but few students attend support sessions.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers within the area meet each month and work well within teams, but good practice is rarely shared between the teams. Most staff are involved in the annual self-assessment of courses but it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the actions (implemented at the start of this academic year) identified to rectify weaknesses in retention, pass and attendance rates.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy (including work-based learning)

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

Strengths

- good teaching in practical lessons
- effective use of IT by students in their work
- effective tutorial provision
- good quality work stations in hairdressing
- good management of work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- well below average pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing, NVQ level 3 beauty therapy, anatomy and physiology courses
- insufficient attention given to individuals' learning needs in theory lessons
- low completion of apprenticeship frameworks
- poor attendance to lessons
- ineffective quality assurance.

Scope of provision

70. Full-time and part-time courses are offered in hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies, and qualifications range from levels 1 to 3. The college is responsible for the management of the training programmes for over 50 hairdressing apprentices. The apprentices are based with a number of employers and attend college one day a week. Approximately 160 students are enrolled on full-time courses and most are students aged 16 to 18. Over 200 students attend part time and the majority are adults. The college is developing further the evening and weekend provision for adults, and some courses are provided to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for speakers of other languages.

Achievement and standards

71. Pass rates on many courses are close to the national averages. However, the pass rates on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing, NVQ level 3 beauty therapy, and anatomy and physiology courses are well below the national averages. Retention rates on most courses match the national average, although they are well below average on the full-time diploma in

holistic therapies. The number of hairdressing apprentices completing the full framework within the contracted period is much less than expected, although most trainees achieve the vocational qualification within the specified time. Students demonstrate a high standard of competence in their work. Most students organise their work well and their portfolios are of a high standard. There are effective work experience arrangements for full-time hairdressing students. Students whose first language is not English make good progress towards their qualifications. Many students fail to attend lessons regularly. During the inspection the average attendance to lessons was poor at 56%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	102	64	60
		% retention	90	83	88
		% pass rate	80	85	83
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	56	77	63
		% retention	80	83	66
		% pass rate	55	71	34
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	23	20	11
		% retention	43	95	73
		% pass rate	88	100	63
Salon hygiene for hairdressing	2	No. of starts	**	40	25
		% retention	**	100	100
		% pass rate	**	60	60
Anatomy and physiology	3	No. of starts	*	*	16
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	19

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Diploma in holistic therapies	3	No. of starts	14	14	10
		% retention	50	93	50
		% pass rate	100	46	75

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

*course not offered

**unreliable data

Quality of education and training

72. Overall, teaching is satisfactory or better. The best lessons are well planned and practical lessons are structured to meet the broad range of students' abilities. In the commercial salons, teachers have skilfully developed a range of tasks to ensure that all students make good progress. The more able students are able to develop additional skills to those normally expected. Teachers provide effective demonstrations of hairdressing and beauty therapy techniques to develop students' awareness of the standards required by the industry. Students' progress is checked and assessed at frequent intervals. Students regularly update their portfolios. However, teachers' planning is less effective in theory lessons and teaching often lacks imagination and innovation. In these lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to the individual learning needs of their students. The teaching of IT key skills in the learning centre is effective: students are able to access IT facilities easily and the IT hardware and software provided in the reception area are of a commercial standard. The tasks given to students are highly relevant to their courses and they use the skills acquired competently in their assignment work.

73. Teachers demonstrate up-to-date expertise in their subjects and many benefit from a range of professional development opportunities. The workstations in the hairdressing salons are of a high standard and reflect best industrial practice. The salons are spacious and effectively utilised, although the décor of all salons is shabby and uninspiring. Beauty salons are cramped and much of the furniture is badly worn. The spa area in beauty therapy is modern and of a commercial standard. The salon client base is insufficiently well developed.

74. Students understand the assessment requirements of their courses. Assessment opportunities are well planned by teachers. Teachers provide helpful feedback to students about their work, helping them to make progress. Internal verification of assessment is valid and effective, and recommendations made by external verifiers are acted upon. Assessors from the college monitor effectively the progress made by apprentices whilst they are in the workplace.

75. Thorough guidance is provided to students about what to expect on their courses. The additional learning needs of students are identified through diagnostic tests, but teachers

often do not use the test results when planning their theory lessons and learning support assistants are not deployed effectively. The tutorial programme is well planned, but attendance at these sessions is often poor. During the tutorial session, progress reviews, action planning and target setting are undertaken effectively.

Leadership and management

76. The overall management of the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers work well as a team to ensure that commercial standards in the salons are consistently applied. Timetables are sensitively designed to accommodate the needs of adult students with childcare responsibilities. Collaboration between the college and employers is good and provides extensive work placement opportunities for students. Management of work-based learning is good. Apprentices receive effective support and the monitoring and recording of individuals' progress is efficient. Quality assurance to determine effectiveness of provision and its strengths and weaknesses is unsatisfactory and ill defined. Target setting to improve retention and achievement lacks rigour and has failed to provide overall improvement. Lesson observations take place too infrequently to improve standards of teaching and learning.

Health and social care

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

Strengths

- very high pass rates on the national certificate and NVQ level 2 care courses
- effective teaching in many lessons
- effective arrangements for development of key skills on full-time courses
- good range of provision providing progression opportunities.

Weaknesses

- below average pass rates on diploma in childcare and education, GNVQ foundation and intermediate health and social care courses
- falling retention rates on diploma in childcare and education course
- insufficiently demanding work for more able students in some lessons
- inadequate resources to support practical activities.

Scope of provision

77. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time programmes at the main site and community venues. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 years. Students have access to a range of curriculum enrichment activities; for example, students on childcare courses are able to gain certificates in first aid and food handling. All full-time students have planned work experience programmes. Most adult students study part time. Courses are offered at level 1 to 4 in childcare and education, and health and care. Access to HE courses are offered in social work, teaching and nursing. Childcare courses lead to awards in childcare and education, and pre-school practice at certificate and diploma level. Short courses include childminding practice. Foundation and intermediate level GNVQs are offered in health and care, and level 3 courses comprise national certificate and diploma courses. NVQs in care are offered at level 2 and 3 for employed students. Students are able to study through distance or supported learning. The certificate in community mental health provides a specialist programme for those interested in this field.

Achievement and standards

78. Pass rates are inconsistent. The pass rates on approximately 50% of courses are below the national averages, whereas on other courses, the pass rates are at or significantly above national averages. Pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses have been consistently below the national average, but the pass rates on the NVQ level 2 course in

care have been consistently very high at 100%. The retention rates on some courses have declined, although in 2002 most matched the national average (at least) on the majority of courses. Most students demonstrate knowledge and skill expected for the level and stage of their courses. Students develop teamwork skills and are able to research and present their findings competently. Students on health and care courses develop key skills to an appropriate standard. Many students progress to courses within the college or to relevant employment. Attendance to some lessons is low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	14	19	14
		% retention	86	74	79
		% pass rate	58	50	55
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	18	16	18
		% retention	78	88	72
		% pass rate	21	64	34
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	23	26	42
		% retention	91	96	86
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	32	23	14
		% retention	81	91	69
		% pass rate	71	78	33
National certificate caring services	3	No. of starts	12	14	12
		% retention	58	71	67
		% pass rate	0	100	100

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	79	38	178
		% retention	74	69	88
		% pass rate	100	66	*
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	32	23	14
		% retention	81	91	69
		% pass rate	71	78	33
National certificate caring services	3	No. of starts	12	14	12
		% retention	58	71	67
		% pass rate	0	100	100
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	79	38	178
		% retention	74	69	88
		% pass rate	100	66	*
Diploma in pre-school practice	3	No. of starts	20	21	17
		% retention	95	95	88
		% pass rate	89	100	100

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

*incomplete data

Quality of education and training

79. In many lessons teaching is effective. Teachers use a broad range of teaching and learning methods effectively to promote and extend students' learning. For example, in a lesson to review anti-discriminatory practice in childcare settings, students imaginatively made and created an identity for a 'persona' doll. They demonstrated their understanding of a range of cultures by providing a name and history for each doll matching respective ethnic groups. The cloth dolls were to be used to teach children to respect and value differences between individuals and cultures. Teachers plan work effectively to enable students to develop key skills during lessons and through vocational assignments. Students are encouraged to develop wider key skills, for example, in working with others and improving

their own performance, although these skills are not accredited. In the less effective lessons, teachers often posed questions requiring a lengthy answer and failed to check sufficiently the understanding of students. The work set for the more able students is insufficiently demanding.

80. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their subjects. Effective use is made of visiting speakers and educational visits to supplement and enliven teaching and learning. Specialist resources to support practical activities are insufficient and students on childcare courses have to make use of equipment loaned by the college's nursery to supplement play materials. Most rooms are fit for purpose, although the rooms used in the hatted accommodation are in a poor decorative condition. The library has an adequate range of texts and periodicals available for students.

81. Assessment is well planned and implemented. Assignments are demanding, vocationally relevant and motivate students well. Students understand how marks are to be awarded. Teachers provide constructive written feedback and ensure that students are able to improve their work. However, spelling and grammatical errors are not always corrected. Internal verification of assessment is systematic and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Students' progress is carefully monitored against agreed performance targets.

82. Support and guidance for students are good. Thorough counselling and guidance ensure students enrol on courses appropriate for them. Formal and informal tutorials provide personal and academic support. Results of the initial assessment of students' knowledge and skills during induction are used to prepare individual learning plans. Students' progress is monitored during termly review meetings with their tutors. Progress reports are sent to the parents of students aged 16 to 18. Learning support assistants provide additional support in some lessons, although they are not involved in lesson planning to gauge where and how they could be deployed. As a result, time is often wasted at the beginning of lessons to agree their role with the teachers.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The relatively high turnover of teachers during the last few years has contributed to low retention and pass rates on some courses. The results of appraisal interviews are used to plan staff development activities. Part-time agency teachers are paid to attend team meetings and their up-to-date vocational experience is highly valued by college staff and students alike. The curriculum team leader encourages effective communication between the curriculum teams and senior managers. Curriculum teams regularly review and update the self-assessment action plan. For example, the range of courses has been amended to address students' needs whilst meeting sector requirements. Procedures to address students' poor punctuality and attendance have been introduced at the start of the autumn term, but have yet to demonstrate improvements.

Media and music

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

Strengths

- above average pass rates on the GCE AS media course
- good quality specialist equipment in media and music
- good professional expertise of music teachers.

Weaknesses

- well below average pass and retention rates on most courses
- very poor attendance and punctuality
- insufficient attention given to the broad range of students' abilities
- inadequate technical support for music courses
- poor assessment practices on vocational media courses.

Scope of provision

84. The college offers courses in media studies, media communication and production, film studies and video production, and contemporary and popular music. Qualifications include Open College Network (OCN) units, GCSE, GCE AS and A levels, and the BTEC national certificate. Many students study towards level 3 qualifications. The GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses in media were discontinued in September 2002 and the latter has been replaced with the BTEC national certificate in media course. At the time of inspection, total enrolments to courses were approximately 150, and the majority of students were aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

85. The retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate and GCSE media studies courses are significantly below the national averages. In 2002, only 5 of the 12 students who started the OCN course in contemporary and popular music achieved the qualification. However, in the same year, all students who completed the GCE AS media studies course achieved the qualification and the pass rate was above average. The number of students enrolled on other courses is low. Many students attend lessons infrequently. During the inspection, the average attendance of students to lessons was very poor, at 46%, and some students arrive late to lessons, disrupting the learning of others.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	12	26	31
		% retention	25	56	52
		% pass rate	0	29	25
GCSE media studies	2	No. of starts	21	10	25
		% retention	52	40	24
		% pass rate	73	50	20
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	*	25	29
		% retention	*	56	76
		% pass rate	*	71	100
OCN contemporary and popular music	3	No. of starts	*	*	12
		% retention	*	*	75
		% pass rate	*	*	55

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

*course not offered

Quality of education and training

86. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some is good. In a few lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. Lesson planning is often inadequate. The variety of teaching methods used in many lessons is narrow and fails to meet the individual needs of students. Tasks set during lessons are often unimaginative. In one lesson, where students were to present their video work, the poor preparation and late arrival of many students prevented the planned activity from taking place and the teacher abandoned the lesson. In the better lessons, students respond enthusiastically to set tasks and make good progress. In a lesson on film techniques, students responded well to questioning and used technical terminology appropriately.

87. Teachers are adequately qualified to teach their subjects. The part-time teachers in music are experienced professional musicians, currently working in the industry, and students benefit from the up-to-date advice and guidance given to them. The music and media areas provide a good range of specialist equipment for students. The music facilities include well-

equipped rehearsal rooms and recording facilities. Technical support in the media section is good. Students and teachers use a comprehensive booking system to use the equipment. Technicians provide good support for students during video production. However, there is little technical support for music students who wish to further develop their skills at times outside of their lessons. The library has a limited range of contemporary media books. Students on the OCN contemporary and popular music course are provided with excellent course handbooks and learning materials.

88. Assessment arrangements on the vocational media courses are poor. Formative assessments are set too infrequently and are not identified in schemes of work. There are significant delays in the marking and return of some students' work on the national certificate course. On music courses, teachers carefully record the progress made by students as they use complex equipment. Teachers have worked well to provide opportunities for students to develop their key skills whilst undertaking vocational assignments, but most students do not value or appreciate the relevance of key skills lessons.

89. The diagnosis of students' additional learning needs is undertaken during the induction to their courses. However, those students identified as requiring additional learning support often do not receive it. During the tutorial sessions on both media and music courses, tutors meet with individual students to review their progress. Action planning is good, although on the infrequent occasion where information is available on students' prior attainment, tutors rarely use it to set individual performance targets.

Leadership and management

90. The management of music provision is good. However, the management of media courses is undertaken by two faculties and is unsatisfactory. Overall co-ordination is ineffective. There are inconsistent practices in assessment and the monitoring of students' progress, and there is some unnecessary duplication of teaching and learning materials. There has been a successful collaboration initiative with some local schools for 14-16 year olds in video production, music and visual arts. Many of the weaknesses identified by inspectors are acknowledged in the self-assessment report, but some of the actions taken to remedy the weaknesses have been undertaken since the beginning of term, and it is too early to assess the impact of these on improving the quality of provision.

Humanities

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

Strengths

- well above average pass rates for GCE A-level psychology in 2002
- good learning support materials.

Weaknesses

- falling and well below average retention rates on many courses
- well below average pass rates on GCSE courses
- much teaching which does not meet the broad range of students' abilities
- students' poor attendance and punctuality
- ineffective quality assurance.

Scope of provision

91. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in the humanities for students aged 16 to 18 and adults at level 2 and level 3. These include GCE AS courses in history, psychology, sociology, law and citizenship, and GCE A-level courses in psychology, sociology and law. An access to HE course in law and the GCSE course in humanities are also offered. At the time of the inspection, enrolments to courses by students aged 16 to 18 were approximately 270. Enrolments to full-time and part-time courses by adults were 72. In 2001, the college's enrolment data for this area of learning included many students aged 16 to 18 enrolled on additional qualifications in other curriculum areas.

Achievement and standards

92. In 2002, the pass rate on the GCE A-level psychology course was well above average, at 100%. However, pass rates on most other courses are significantly below the national averages. Retention rates have fallen since 1999 and were well below average in 2002 on many courses. The pass rates on GCSE subjects have fallen over the last two years and are poor. On GCE AS citizenship and law courses, some students achieve a high standard of work. Many students achieve no more than what is predicted from their attainments prior to starting their courses at the college. Attendance of students to lessons is consistently poor. During the inspection the average attendance of students to lessons was 55%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE sociology	2	No. of starts	**	9	20
		% retention	**	78	45
		% pass rate	**	43	38
GCSE humanities	2	No. of starts	11	6	16
		% retention	82	50	50
		% pass rate	67	33	13
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	37	19	29
		% retention	71	53	75
		% pass rate	60	56	100
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	18	14	6*
		% retention	56	71	83
		% pass rate	50	44	60
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	**	32	45
		% retention	**	72	69
		% pass rate	**	48	65
Access to law	3	No. of starts	**	10	16
		% retention	**	60	62
		% pass rate	**	60	60

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

*for courses completing in 2002, GCE A2 courses replaced two-year GCE A levels

**course not offered

Quality of education and training

93. Most teaching is satisfactory although a small proportion is unsatisfactory. Teaching is often unimaginative and fails to challenge and inspire students sufficiently. Students often arrive late to lessons and adversely affect the learning of others present. For example, in a psychology lesson, three students had to wait nearly half an hour for five other students to arrive before the lesson commenced. Unsatisfactory lessons are not well planned for content or structured for deployment of time, and do not include a sufficient variety of activities at levels which suit the broad range of students' abilities. Too often students are unclear about the aims and purpose of their lessons. Teachers rarely make use of visual aids and other learning resources to enliven teaching and learning. The best lessons are characterised by teachers building on and consolidating previous learning, checking and confirming learning throughout the lesson, and skilfully presenting complex ideas. In one lesson, students debated the set topic of maternal deprivation; discussion was lively and students were thoroughly involved, making thoughtful challenges and critically analysing each other's arguments. The implementation of a programme to develop students' key skills is at an early stage of development.

94. Teachers are well qualified in their specialisms and some have teaching qualifications. Others are studying for a teaching qualification. Course handbooks provide helpful and supporting information for students. Students use the handbooks effectively on sociology and psychology courses. Much teaching takes place in hutted accommodation. The rooms are poorly decorated and unwelcoming. Students' work, posters and information are rarely displayed. IT resources are centrally located and are adequate for students' needs. There are sufficient copies of journals and key texts available for students in the college's library. Adult students receive considerable support from library staff and it is not uncommon for them to proof read students' assignments, assist with literature searches and provide help with the development of IT skills.

95. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Most marking is adequate and some is good, indicating performance against examination requirements. For example, on the access to law course, teachers provide comprehensive comments on students' work, carefully highlighting good examples and areas for improvement. Helpful comments are provided on the correct use of terminology and case law. On most courses, tutorial records contain only very general details and do not adequately record information on students' learning needs and their progress towards personal targets.

96. There is satisfactory support in lessons for those students identified with additional learning needs, although learning support assistants and subject teachers rarely work together when planning lessons. Support arrangements for visually impaired students are good. Students speak highly of the support they are given in applying for university places.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership and management of the provision are unsatisfactory. Strategies to improve teaching and learning are unclear, do not contain targets or timescales, and have had little impact on standards. Quality assurance procedures are undertaken insufficiently rigorously or systematically. Staff development lacks focus on what is required to improve teaching and learning. The lesson observation scheme is rarely implemented and the monitoring of students' overall performance lacks rigour. Targets for retention and achievement are not set for each qualification. Course teams review their courses insufficiently. Teachers are not aware of their specific role in improving the quality of learning. Most teachers do not encourage students to use feedback from marking of assignments to improve performance and do not check that suggestions have been taken on board. The self-assessment report for humanities fails to identify students' low achievements on some courses and weaknesses in teaching.

English and English as a foreign language

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

Strengths

- well above average pass rates on GCE AS and A-level English courses in 2002
- good teaching on GCE AS and A-level English language and EFL courses
- good accommodation and specialist resources for EFL
- effective monitoring of students' progress on EFL courses.

Weaknesses

- well below average retention rates on GCSE English and some EFL courses
- poor assessment practice in English
- poor attendance and punctuality on many courses
- inadequate management of resources in English.

Scope of provision

98. There is a broad range of courses in English and EFL. Courses include GCSE English and GCE AS and A2 in English language and English literature. GCSE English and GCE AS and A2 English literature are offered in the evening for adults. At the time of inspection, approximately 86 students aged 16 to 18 and 23 adults were studying English. Some 145 students, mostly adults, were enrolled on EFL courses. Qualifications range from entry level to level 4 and are accredited by the University of Cambridge local examinations syndicate (UCLES). The certificate in English language teaching to adults (CELTA) is available as an evening course. An EFL summer school is run annually. EFL courses meet the local needs of European Union nationals working part-time in Bromley, and European Union and eastern European au pairs.

Achievement and standards

99. In 2002 the pass rates on the GCE AS and A-level qualifications in English language and English literature were well above the national averages. The GCSE English pass rate has improved steadily over three years, reaching the national average in 2002. Retention rates on some courses are low and on the GCSE English course are significantly below the national average. Retention rates on GCE AS and A2 English courses are above average, but on the GCE AS English literature course, they were well below the national average in 2002. On EFL courses the retention rates vary considerably, and in 2002, they were below the national average on some qualifications. Some students do not make the progress expected of them when taking account of their attainment prior to starting their courses at the college.

100. Attendance and punctuality are poor in many English lessons. When students arrive late, they often disrupt the learning of others present. Students' attainment is good on the GCE AS and A2 English language courses where they develop effective critical skills. In EFL lessons, students express themselves confidently on a range of topics using formal and informal language, master increasingly complex grammatical structures, and acquire new vocabulary.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and English as a foreign language , 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	62	79	102
		% retention	76	65	58
		% pass rate	17	27	48
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	*	25	28
		% retention	*	68	75
		% pass rate	*	88	95
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	*	20	18
		% retention	*	74	78
		% pass rate	*	100	93
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	*	26	13
		% retention	*	65	77
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	*	20	17
		% retention	*	74	82
		% pass rate	*	100	86

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
UCLES certificate in advanced English	3	No. of starts	24	15	22
		% retention	83	100	50
		% pass rate	40	53	100

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

*course not available

Quality of education and training

101. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Schemes of work and lesson plans show careful attention to meeting learners' needs through a range of activities, including more demanding exercises for the more able and additional support for those who need it. In one English language lesson, students were invited by the teacher to read through an investigation on the language of graffiti by another student and to ascertain to what extent the work met the assessment objectives. The students quickly identified the shortcomings of the assignment, noting its failure to achieve its aims fully. They demonstrated an excellent understanding of the assessment process and confidently used appropriate linguistic terminology. In EFL lessons, teaching is good with well-chosen activities, taught at a brisk pace. Small group work is used effectively and students learn much from working with each other. In the unsatisfactory English lessons, teachers fail to provide students the opportunity to develop responses to questions. There was a lack of variety in teaching methods and many students failed to make sufficient progress.

102. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Accommodation and specialist resources used for EFL courses are good. There are dedicated classrooms with specialist display materials and a new language laboratory, which is also available to students on other courses. The laboratory is equipped with computers and a range of learning resources including CD-ROMs. Students are able to use the laboratory for private study one evening a week. The resources available to students studying English courses are poor. Rooms used for teaching and learning lack displays of subject-related material. The library bookstock for English language lacks a number of key texts, while the bookstock for English literature is outdated.

103. Students on all courses are made fully aware of the requirements for external assessment. On EFL courses, students are given regular detailed feedback on marked work by means of carefully completed feedback sheets. There is some poor quality marking and feedback on English courses that does not always meet the standards required by awarding bodies. The feedback sheet used by teachers gives insufficient scope to write comments which address the marking criteria and tell students what they need to do to improve.

104. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Students value the process of induction and the continuing academic and pastoral support they receive. In EFL there is careful monitoring of students' progress and there are regular opportunities for informal meetings and support. Individual learning plans have detailed personal profiles and targets, and these serve as a focus for discussion in tutorials. There is a good range of curriculum enrichment activities for English students. These include visits to theatre performances and workshops. The college runs a Black history week and the English teachers and students contribute effectively. Students on EFL courses are able to participate in trips arranged both in England and abroad.

Leadership and management

105. There are weaknesses in leadership and management. The staffing and accommodation for English courses are managed inadequately. There is insufficient communication between English teachers and library staff to ensure that the library has the requisite quality of stock. Procedures to improve poor attendance and punctuality are not working. Overall, management and quality assurance roles are satisfactorily defined. However, there is no identified leadership role at course team level and management and quality monitoring of teaching lack rigour. The grades awarded in the college's self-assessment report were overgenerous.

English for speakers of other languages

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

Strengths

- above average retention on one-year full-time and part-time short courses
- good use of real life examples in lessons
- effective learner-centred scheduling of lessons
- responsive community provision.

Weaknesses

- insufficiently demanding teaching in some lessons
- well below average pass rates on part-time short courses
- low attendance to some lessons and support sessions
- poorly implemented quality assurance procedures.

Scope of provision

106. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time ESOL courses from pre-entry to level 2. Additionally, ESOL courses are offered which include IT and numeracy. Provision has expanded rapidly over the last three years (1999/2000 to 2002/03). At the time of inspection, 242 students were enrolled on ESOL courses. Of these, 17% are students aged 16 to 18 who attend full-time courses. Courses held during the day are offered at the main college site. Evening and weekend courses are offered at an outreach centre. The college has established a partnership with the Bromley refugee network recently and 11 students are currently enrolled on courses at two community centres. In September 2002 the college introduced courses which combine ESOL studies with vocational programmes. Currently, 12 students are enrolled on the ESOL and business administration course, and 6 students are studying on the ESOL and hairdressing course. The small number of students whose first language is not English and who are enrolled on other vocational courses may attend support sessions in ESOL.

Achievement and standards

107. Most ESOL courses are accredited by the college. Some students study for qualifications accredited by the OCN, but enrolment and performance data relating to these courses were not available to inspectors. The pass rates on short courses are well below average but are close to national averages on the one-year full-time courses. Retention rates on full-time one-year and part-time short courses are above average. Students are well motivated, participate well in lessons and work productively in pair and group work. There is

a focus on the development of independent learning skills in many ESOL lessons. This is reinforced in the workshop sessions where students are able to further develop their skills. The written work of most students is at least to the standard expected. Some students make slow progress in developing their speaking skills in terms of fluency and accuracy because teachers provide few opportunities for practice. Attendance to lessons is low and many students arrive late to lessons. During the inspection the average attendance to lessons was 64%. Measures to improve attendance and punctuality have been introduced in September 2002, but these are not yet leading to improvements. Courses are structured to allow students to progress from one level to the next. However, teachers fail to closely monitor and record the number of students who progress to a higher level.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
ESOL part-time short course	E, 1 and 2	No. of starts	168	8	43
		% retention	79	75	95
		% pass rate	82	13	54
ESOL full-time short course	E, 1 and 2	No. of starts	*	68	135
		% retention	*	84	85
		% pass rate	*	93	87
ESOL full-time one-year course	E, 1 and 2	No. of starts	*	204	182
		% retention	*	91	82
		% pass rate	*	90	89

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

*course not running

Quality of education and training

108. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but in a minority of lessons, particularly at the outreach centre, teaching is less than satisfactory. Most lessons are well managed and maintain the interest of students. Teachers often use real life examples effectively. During one lesson a recycling theme was used to help students gain oral practice in the use of 'some' and 'any' whilst describing the contents of their refuse bins. Reading and listening activities followed using an article on recycling from a local newspaper. In the less successful and few unsatisfactory lessons, teachers failed to challenge students to extend their skills. In these

lessons, teachers do not provide students with sufficient time to practice their speaking skills and they do not correct grammatical and pronunciation errors sufficiently frequently.

109. In the additional learning support sessions for speakers of other languages, students' attendance is low and teachers monitor students' progress insufficiently. However, some of the work undertaken by students during these sessions and formal lessons is well linked. For example, during one session, students were able to develop scanning and skimming skills using the job vacancy section from a local newspaper. They were then able to apply these newfound skills during a formal lesson. All full-time students have at least one lesson held in the IT workshop and language laboratory. IT is used successfully during lessons for students studying ESOL and hairdressing. In one lesson, students demonstrated that they could use the Internet effectively to find suitable part-time work and skilfully composed letters of application.

110. Teachers are well qualified. Almost all have EFL teaching qualifications. However, some teachers have received insufficient training to help them take account of the needs of ESOL students. Learning materials are satisfactory. Students on the main college site have access to a language laboratory, but students at the community and outreach centres do not. There are few displays of students' work at any of the centres. At the main site, many classrooms are drab and furnishing is poor. In the outreach centre, students benefit from well-furnished and attractively decorated rooms.

111. Assessment and internal verification procedures are unsatisfactory. There are no agreed criteria for marking students' work and there is much inconsistency in methods and recording systems, especially on entry level courses. Some teachers fail to correct verbal and written errors on some students' work and do not offer constructive advice on how to improve. In a few instances work had not been marked.

112. Students receive good advice and guidance to help them enrol for an appropriate course. The initial assessment procedures and induction programmes that include taster sessions enable students to be placed on courses suitable for them. An individually negotiated learning plan, cross-referenced to the national ESOL curriculum, is developed for each student. Students with physical disabilities are well supported. The provision of additional learning support for ESOL students is insufficient; at the time of the inspection 27% of students requiring support were waiting to receive it.

Leadership and management

113. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. The college has responded rapidly to meet the increasing demand for ESOL courses. Lessons are carefully scheduled to take account of students' childcare responsibilities and work commitments. Managers have responded well to the views of students by establishing a range of ESOL vocational courses recently. The college operates a full-time extended ESOL curriculum programme for 14-16 year old pupils on behalf of the local authority. A summer school programme has been developed. Co-ordination of the ESOL curriculum team is good. Teachers work as a team effectively. Course files are well maintained. However, quality assurance procedures are poorly implemented. Targets for retention and achievement are not set. Course reviews lack

rigour and action planning is weak. The self-assessment report for ESOL provision overplays strengths and fails to identify some significant weaknesses. The lesson observation scheme is poorly implemented. Throughout the previous academic year (2001/02), managers failed to observe any lessons. There are no systematic arrangements for managers to monitor the performance of recently appointed teachers.

Literacy and numeracy (basic skills)

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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning on discrete literacy and numeracy courses
- effective one-to-one basic skills support.

Weaknesses

- ineffective basic skills support on most vocational courses
- ineffective individual learning plans on vocational courses
- poor attendance and punctuality
- underdeveloped strategy and management arrangements for basic skills.

Scope of provision

114. Basic skills provision includes discrete literacy and numeracy courses, one-to-one support in workshops, and basic skills support within vocational courses. At the time of the inspection, 86 students were enrolled on discrete courses, 78 students were receiving individual support, and 118 students studying on vocational courses were receiving basic skills support. The college's 'curriculum access tutor' (CAT) scheme, offering basic skills support on vocational programmes, was introduced at the start of this academic year. Vocational programmes involved in the scheme include sport, leisure and tourism, business administration, construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and social care, and ICT. The college also provides three and six hour basic skills and ICT taster courses to attract new learners to the college. These include a basic skills assessment as part of the introductory session.

Achievement and standards

115. The attainment of basic skills students in some of the vocational areas is below expected standards. Tutors are failing to provide sessions on specific basic skills needs, which are critical if students are to achieve their primary learning goals. There is little reliable data available to exemplify achievement of qualifications. Attendance and punctuality are low. Some students on vocational courses were up to half an hour late for lessons and teachers did not question this lateness. The standard of some students' work in discrete and individual support lessons is good. Students make good progress and develop a range of basic skills alongside developing personal skills, becoming confident learners and developing an understanding of their learning needs. They make good progress in relation to their prior achievements.

Quality of education and training

116. The teaching of basic skills through the college's 'CAT' scheme within a range of vocational programmes is unsatisfactory. Schemes of work and lesson plans fail to identify how teaching and learning of specific basic skills is to be addressed. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed and do not identify short-term targets. Support is too general and does not provide students with specific strategies to help them develop their basic skills. The support offered is currently too closely allied to supporting course retention and completion, rather than with offering specific support based on close identification of learning needs. In some lessons the basic skills learning support tutors spend too much time dealing with the poor behaviour of students. There is little joint planning of teaching between the basic skills learning support tutors and vocational teachers, and little joint evaluation of the lessons. In contrast, there is much good teaching and learning on discrete literacy and numeracy courses. The lessons are well planned and based on detailed schemes of work, which are clearly referenced to the new national curriculum. The best lessons are lively and students are effectively challenged. In one stimulating lesson, the students chose to work on the topic of prostitution and drug abuse, planned the key points, and recorded their unrehearsed discussion live in a recording studio. On the following day they reviewed the tape critically and were able to comment on their performance and progress, and were able to suggest improvements to their work. In a good numeracy lesson, the teacher effectively supported a large, mixed level group of 17 women students, to recall and consolidate previous learning.

117. A variety of rigorous assessment methods are used to identify basic skills needs. The results are analysed and disseminated to relevant staff. Learning objectives are set on the basis of assessment results but these are not sufficiently specific to the individual. There is insufficient ongoing assessment of progress and inadequate feedback offered to students receiving basic skills support on vocational courses.

118. Although there is a sufficient number of qualified basic skills teachers, most hold qualifications at a basic level. However, development opportunities are available to enable teachers to improve their basic skills teaching qualifications. Learning materials are satisfactory and well used, and computers are effectively used in some vocational sessions. There is a shortage of a dedicated base room for basic skills and insufficient time has been made available for teachers and basic skills learning support tutors within the 'CAT' scheme to plan basic skills support in vocational courses.

Leadership and management

119. The college recognises the strategic importance of basic skills in meeting its mission. However, the management arrangements for basic skills provision and the basic skills strategy are underdeveloped. Although the 'CAT' scheme, introduced in September 2002, is a fundamental part of the basic skills strategy, the resource and training implications of the scheme have been underestimated. The roles of staff are poorly defined and there is much confusion between additional learning support and basic skills support staff as to what they are expected to do. Different aspects of basic skills provision are managed separately

and whilst basic skills staff on the 'CAT' scheme report to the student progression manager, other basic skills staff report to the basic and key skills manager, who is not part of the college senior management team. Managers and staff do not share a common understanding of the implications of the basic skills strategy and little sharing of good practice takes place. Targets for recruitment, retention, attendance and achievement are not set at course level. The self-assessment report did not adequately describe the provision and was not sufficiently evaluative.

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

Level	16–18	19+
1	26	16
2	30	22
3	14	14
4/5	0	5
Other	30	43
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2001

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments
Science and mathematics	706	1,135	12
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	118	304	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	167	351	3
Business administration, management and professional	258	1,967	14
Information and communication technology	526	3,281	25
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	157	284	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	141	246	3
Health, social care and public services	167	1,156	9
Visual and performing arts and media	116	51	1
Humanities	1,034	518	10
English, languages and communication	418	370	5
Foundation programmes	1,026	859	12
Total	4,834	10,522	100

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	599	520	449	551	542	636
	Retention rate	80	83	74	72	85	74
	National average	81	80	79	79	79	77
	Pass rate	67	73	70	66	68	72
	National average	60	65	69	61	65	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	700	807	723	590	684	804
	Retention rate	68	67	72	76	69	83
	National average	76	77	76	80	79	78
	Pass rate	72	65	65	65	77	71
	National average	65	66	69	62	65	70
3	Starters excluding transfers	650	570	897	704	837	845
	Retention rate	58	61	70	68	74	77
	National average	75	76	78	79	79	79
	Pass rate	53	66	58	70	70	70
	National average	73	75	77	63	66	70
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	7	3	3	450	481	450
	Retention rate	*	*	*	74	87	91
	National average	84	80	83	84	80	84
	Pass rate	*	*	*	44	41	48
	National average	65	65	57	58	57	54

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

**numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

Sources of information:

- 1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.*
- 2. College rates for 1999 to 2001: College ISR.*

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	47	42	11	91
Level 2 (intermediate)	53	37	10	70
Level 1 (foundation)	71	24	5	38
Other sessions	48	26	26	27
Totals	53	35	12	226

