

# **Lewisham College**

***This file contains:***

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



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS  
IN EDUCATION

# **Inspection Report**

## **LEWISHAM COLLEGE**

**Dates of inspection: 5-9 November 2001**

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**Reference: HMI 395**

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## Contents

Section	Page
<b>Basic information about the college</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Part A: Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Information about the college	4
How effective is the college?	4
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas	6
How well is the college led and managed?	9
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?	9
Students' views of the college	9
Other information	11
<b>Part B: The college as a whole</b>	<b>12</b>
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors	12
Achievement and standards	12
<b>Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas</b>	<b>21</b>
Sciences and mathematics	21
Construction	26
Engineering	30
Business	34
Trade union studies	39
Information and communication technology	42
Hospitality and catering	46
Sports, leisure and travel	50
Health and social care	54

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---

Visual arts	58
Performing arts	62
Humanities	66
English	70
English as a second language	75
Learning difficulties	77
Basic skills	81
<b>Part D: College data</b>	<b>84</b>
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age	84
Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age	84
Table 3: Retention and achievement	85
Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection	86

**Basic information about the college**

Name of college:	Lewisham College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Ruth Silver CBE
Address of college:	Lewisham College Lewisham Way London SE4 1UT
Telephone number:	0208 692 0353
Fax number:	0208 694 9163
Chair of governors:	Douglas Hands
Unique reference number:	130415
Name of reporting inspector:	David Martin
Dates of inspection:	5-9 November 2001

## Part A: Summary

### Information about the college

Lewisham College is a large general further education (FE) college in the London borough of Lewisham. It has two sites: the long-established campus on Lewisham Way, close to the centre of Lewisham, and a newer campus in nearby Deptford, which opened in 1996. There is strong competition locally to recruit students onto post-16 courses. Within a few miles of the college, there are four other general FE colleges, a Catholic sixth form college, a city technology college and a number of school sixth forms, some of which are grouped in consortia.

Lewisham College provides courses in all the areas of learning funded by the Learning Skills Council (LSC). Most are vocational courses. In 2000/01, the college had 12,840 students, of whom 80% were aged 19 or over. The average age of students was 29. Some 31% of all students studied full time, 43% part time and 26% in the evenings only. The largest proportion, 37%, studied at entry level or for qualifications at level 1, 31% studied at level 2 and 33% at levels 3 and 4, or above. Some 52% of students were male. Students from minority ethnic groups comprised 60% of the student body.

Students are drawn primarily from north Lewisham and the boroughs of Southwark and Greenwich, areas that are among the most economically and socially deprived in the country. Some 75% of the college's students live in wards designated as amongst the 20% most deprived in England, and 25% are from wards amongst the 10% most deprived. Unemployment in the area is 11.7%, which is about three times higher than the average for Greater London. There are very few major employers in the area from the private sector. Lewisham residents are heavily dependent on the central London labour market and 45% are employed in relatively low-skilled work. The educational achievements of school-leavers in Lewisham are significantly below the national average. In 2000, only 34.8% of Year 11 students from Lewisham schools gained five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades at C or above, compared with 49.2% nationally.

The college's mission is to be **♣** a force for change which will energetically promote and support economic, employment, cultural and individual development for all in our local and regional communities<sup>Ⓒ</sup>.

### How effective is the college?

The quality of education and training is outstanding in information and communication technology (ICT), trade union studies and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SLDD). It is good in engineering, hospitality, technology and manufacturing, sports, leisure and travel, visual arts, performing arts, humanities, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and basic skills. The quality is satisfactory in sciences and mathematics, business administration, management and professional studies, health and social care, and English and communications. In construction, the quality of education and

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training is unsatisfactory. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below:

***Key strengths***

- equality of opportunity and respect for individuals
- effective development of students' confidence and self-esteem
- extensive range of courses, appropriate to the needs of the local community
- very good support for students
- very good resources to support learning
- outstanding provision in ICT, trade union studies and for SLDD
- very good teaching in the visual arts
- excellent specialist accommodation and resources in performing arts
- good leadership and management
- good governance.

***What should be improved?***

- some unsatisfactory teaching
- unsatisfactory provision in construction
- opportunities to share good practice in teaching
- attendance rate and record of punctuality of students
- some poor pass and retention rates
- reliability of student pass and retention data.

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
Sciences and mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The curriculum is responsive to the needs of students. Support for students is very good. Some pass and retention rates are good and have improved in the last three years. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but much is unsatisfactory and dull. Students' attendance and punctuality are often poor.
Construction	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Just over two thirds of teaching is good. Students receive high levels of support from their teachers. Retention and pass rates are often below national averages. The assessment of modern apprentices' workplace activities is insufficiently thorough. Key skills are not adequately taught.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates, overall, are above national averages. There is good teaching, course management, specialist accommodation and equipment. Students develop high levels of practical competence. There are some poor records for attendance and punctuality, and key skills for motor vehicle students are underdeveloped.
Business administration, management and professional	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Achievements are generally satisfactory. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and some is good. Teachers provide high levels of individual support to students. There is a broad and flexible range of provision. Co-ordination of the separately organised provision for business is underdeveloped.
Trade union studies	<b>Outstanding.</b> The enthusiastic and very well qualified teachers provide good learning opportunities in lessons. Programmes of study meet the career needs of students and are often tailored to the demands of specific industries. Pass rates are high. Retention rates are also high, with the exception of one course.
ICT	<b>Outstanding.</b> There is very good teaching. Resources to support learning are outstanding. Coursework is of a high standard. Assessment practices are thorough and feedback from teachers is helpful. There are good pass rates, and achievement on many courses for adults is outstanding. Management is highly effective.

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Hospitality	<b>Good.</b> Students often achieve well in examinations and develop good practical skills. There is good teaching in practical lessons. Students are well supported in their learning by staff and benefit from good physical resources. Internal verification and assessment are inadequately planned. There are some poor attendance rates.
Sports, leisure and travel	<b>Good.</b> The area provides good teaching and good opportunities for learning. Resources are of a high standard and students receive effective guidance and support. Imaginative programmes help to attract students. There is good leadership and teachers work as a team. Retention rates are low on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses. Students often arrive late and attendance rates are poor.
Health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a comprehensive range of well-structured programmes which helps students to progress. Course pass and retention rates are very varied. Teaching is mainly satisfactory. Students are supported effectively by a hard-working team of staff, who are well led.
Visual arts	<b>Good.</b> Most teaching and learning are very good or excellent. Key skills are inadequately integrated with vocational studies. There are good resources. Pass rates are often at, and sometimes above, national averages. There are some poor retention and attendance rates, and much student lateness. Leadership and management are good.
Performing arts	<b>Good.</b> Much teaching is good or better, although a substantial amount is only satisfactory. There are extensive qualification and performance opportunities. Work is of a high standard. Excellent specialist accommodation, equipment and teaching resources support learning. There are some poor attendance and retention rates.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> The provision has improved considerably since the last inspection. There are increased opportunities for students to find the course they want. Teachers actively promote students' self-esteem and confidence. Pass and retention rates are often good. Students are very well supported.
English and communications	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are some high examination pass rates, but retention rates are below national averages on most courses. The area is well led and there is a strong commitment to supporting learners and raising pass rates. There is some unsatisfactory teaching, attendance rates are poor and students are often late.
ESOL	<b>Good.</b> Courses are well planned and delivered. The programmes meet a wide range of students' needs in language and literature. Teachers form an effective team and provide good support to learners. There is insufficient monitoring and assessment of learning.

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Provision for students with learning difficulties	<b>Outstanding.</b> Provision is highly effective in meeting the individual needs of students. Most teaching is very good or outstanding. Students are challenged to progress and to succeed. Curriculum planning and content are subjected to rigorous and critical evaluation. There is strong leadership and management, and a commitment to continuous improvement.
Basic skills	<b>Good.</b> Basic skills are integrated into the main programmes of students. Additional support for basic skills is well managed and effective. Teaching is often good. Students' achievements are good. Individual learning plans are weak. Initial assessment for basic skills is underdeveloped.

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

Leadership and management are good at all levels of the organisation. Overall, the curriculum is well led and well managed. Governors have established a clear mission and strategic direction. They are knowledgeable about the college and its performance. The extensive range of quality assurance activities focuses closely on performance and helps governors and managers to assess overall achievement. However, there is too great a variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the college. Students' pass and retention rates are poor on some courses. Central data on pass and retention rates are often unreliable. The judgements in the college's self-assessment report sometimes overestimate the quality of the college's work, but also identify many strengths and weaknesses with which inspectors agreed. Equality of opportunity and respect for individuals are at the heart of the college's approach to its work. Resources to support teaching and learning are used efficiently and effectively.

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

The mission commits the college 'to energetically promote and support economic, employment, cultural and individual development for all in our local and regional communities'. The college pursues these objectives with enthusiasm. It has good data on the ethnic and gender breakdown of the student body and is well aware of the economic and social context in which it works. There is a regular review of all courses to ensure that the needs of local learners are met. Over a third of course provision is at entry level or level 1, reflecting the needs of the local community. These courses offer opportunities which are planned to encourage and provide for people who are considering re-entry to formal education. Tutors working within the student support systems give particular care and attention to such learners both before and after they have enrolled. The particular needs of adult students are successfully addressed. Provision and support for students with learning difficulties are outstanding.

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

There is very good support for students. Subject and pastoral support are thorough, for most full-time and part-time students. Tutorials provide a reliable context for advising students and monitoring their progress. Students with additional support needs are particularly well looked after. Work-based learners are well supported by their assessors. Advice, guidance and welfare services are good. They are well resourced and extensively used by students. Induction is effective, thoroughly planned and effectively carried out. In some areas of learning, target setting for students is inadequate and there is inconsistent implementation of the college's punctuality and attendance policy.

**Students' views of the college**

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

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**What students like about the college**

- knowledgeable, supportive and friendly staff
- good working environment
- encouraging and confidence-building atmosphere
- good resources, most with good access
- wide range of courses on offer
- good pastoral, additional learning and subject support
- helpful and thorough induction
- prompt return of helpfully assessed work.

**What they feel could be improved**

- price, range and quality of food in the college restaurant
- access to centrally provided IT facilities.

**Other information**

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

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## Part B: The college as a whole

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

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16–18	66	27	7
19+ and WBL*	63	30	7
Learning 16–18	61	31	8
19+ and WBL	64	27	9

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

\*work-based learning

### Achievement and standards

1. The college offers a wide range of vocational qualifications. It also offers academic qualifications for the General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A level), access to higher education (HE) and GCSE. In three of the areas of learning that were inspected, there is a small amount of work-based learning. Most of these learners are following advanced or foundation modern apprenticeships, which incorporate National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), or are following just NVQs. Most college students are aged 19 or over, on both full-time and part-time programmes. The college has developed a wide range of imaginative courses designed to meet the specific needs of groups of learners. For example, the 'Youth Access' course, the 'Springboard' programme and the Cisco academy. The college offers a second chance for many students who have missed opportunities to achieve qualifications at school. The college is successful in ensuring that students improve their personal and study skills, in addition to gaining accredited qualifications. Many courses increase students' self-esteem and confidence. The college provides opportunities to students to improve their employment prospects. For example, the 'City Bound' initiative, trains the unemployed for specific jobs in the city of London. Overall, there has been a gradual improvement in students' retention and pass rates in the last three years, from below to around the national average. However, the pass rate at level 2, for students aged 16 to 18, has declined over the last three years and is now well below the national average. This decline is also apparent for level 2 adult students. There is good progression both to more advanced courses within the college and to courses in other colleges. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about achievement and standards in particular courses.

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**16–18 year olds**

2. Retention and pass rates for level 3 courses have improved to above the national averages in 2000/01. There has been a significant improvement in the pass rates for GCE A-level subjects, with the exception of business studies. In 2000/01, 86% of learners aged 16 to 18 who completed their course passed the examination, compared with 55% in 1999/2000. In 1999/2000, the average point score for students taking two or more GCE A levels was 10.3, which was below the borough average of 14.6 and the national average of 18.5. The college's average point score was 11.1 in 2000/01. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses are slightly below national averages. Students in sciences and humanities achieve higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results.

3. Retention rates on GNVQ advanced and the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) programmes in 2000/01 for learners aged 16 to 18 are good. Pass rates are slightly below national averages. Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) pass rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are in line with national averages, with the exception of those in childhood studies, where retention rates and pass rates are below average. NVQ level 3 achievements are slightly above the national average. In sport and recreation, all students remained on the course and achieved their NVQ.

4. Pass and retention rates at level 2 declined to below the national average in 2000/01. GCSE retention rates were low. Only 60% of the students who started their studies completed the course. Pass rates improved, 95% achieving grades A\* to E in 2000/01. Of those who complete their course, pass rates at grade A to C improved from 43% in 1999/2000, to 54% in 2000/01, which is above the national average of 43% for colleges. GNVQ intermediate pass rates were below the national average in 2000/01 at 56%. The pass rate for GNVQ intermediate business was very low, at 41%. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 were good, at 84%.

5. In 2000/01, there were 106 young people undertaking work-based learning, largely in business administration/ICT, care and engineering. A low proportion of foundation modern apprentices complete their training. Of the 86 who started in the three years since 1998/99, 50% were still in training at the time of the inspection. Retention rates for 2000/01 are better. Of the 49 new starters in 2000, 71% were still in training. Pass rates have been poor. Of those who left early, only six achieved an NVQ level 2. Overall, 11 of the 86 starters had gained an NVQ level 2, but none had achieved their framework. There are low numbers of advanced modern apprentices. Of the 37 who started their programme in or since 1998/99, 38% had left by the inspection and none had achieved any qualification. The pass rate in work-based training for NVQ levels 1 and 2 is 31% over the three years since 1998/99; the retention rate is 54% for the same period.

6. Retention rates on level 1 courses declined in 1999/2000, but recovered in 2000/01 to above national averages. Pass rates have improved in the last three years to around the national average. Retention and pass rates on GNVQ foundation courses are above the national average. On NVQ level 1, only 60% of students who started their programmes



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completed them. However, the NVQ sport and recreation level 1 has good retention rates, and good pass rates for those who complete.

7. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. There is an appropriate range of accreditation and effective initial assessment. Pass rates are good. Most students achieve high standards. Students' progression to other courses in the college is good.

### **Adult learners**

8. Overall, adult students achieve better results than the college's students aged 16 to 18. A higher proportion also complete their courses.

9. There were improvements in level 3 pass and retention rates in 2000/01. Both rates are above the national averages, at 74% and 78% respectively. Access to HE courses have retention and pass rates above national averages. The pass rates for adults studying GCE A-level subjects improved to 79% in 2001, comparing favourably with a national average of 70%. However, the retention rate of 67% is low. The overall GNVQ advanced pass rate of 56% is poor. There are good retention rates on NVQ level 3 courses.

10. Many students on the access to HE programme remain on the course and are successful in gaining places at university. Students on many of the access programmes, including IT and music, are successful. Higher-level courses have had consistently high retention rates over the last three years. Pass rates have improved greatly in 2000/01, to 90%. Pass rates on trade union studies are 100%.

11. Pass rates on level 2 courses have declined by ten percentage points over the last three years, and are now just below the national average. However, GCSE rates have improved in 2000/01 to 96% for grades A\* to E. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 programmes are very good, at 90%. Retention rates have fallen, but they are consistently better than for students aged 16 to 18.

12. Level 1 pass rates have improved to just above the national average in 2000/01, although they are still 12 percentage points lower than in 1998/99. The pass rates for this large number of adult students are better than for students aged 16 to 18. Overall for this level, retention rates are just below the national average. They are good for the GNVQ foundation. There are also excellent pass rates of 93%. Pass rates on NVQ 1 are good. Most adults who attend classes to improve their literacy and numeracy make good progress. There are high pass rates on certificate courses and students' progression is well monitored.

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

13. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 306 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 64%, satisfactory in 29% and less than satisfactory in 7%. There was no significant difference in the quality of the teaching for different age groups. However, there are significant variations in teaching quality in different areas of

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learning. The percentage of good or better lessons observed ranged from 36% in sciences and mathematics to 86% in visual arts. The highest percentage of unsatisfactory lessons was in sciences and mathematics, at 24 %. Such unsatisfactory teaching requires urgent attention. The best teaching is in visual arts, in discrete provision for students with learning difficulties and in ICT. Students studying at levels 1 and 2 in the college receive better teaching than those at level 3. Both teaching and learning are better on GCE A-level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary-level (AS-level) courses than on some vocational courses at level 3. Learning in over a quarter of BTEC national diploma courses is less than satisfactory, although teaching on a small number of GNVQ advanced courses rates among the best in the college.

14. The planning of teaching is often good. There are examples of the recognition of students' individual needs and experiences in the use of differentiated teaching materials. However, initial assessments sometimes fail to identify students' vocational skills and prior experiences. Most practical activities on vocational courses are appropriately varied and interesting, and supported by good learning materials. Realistic industry standard examples are used on most vocational courses. Schemes of work, such as those for trade union studies, address teaching and learning activities that meet the needs of learners and employers. Although there are many examples of confident, enthusiastic well-motivated students working consistently and productively, students often have a poor record of attendance and punctuality.

15. Arrangements for work on key skills are satisfactory. There is a clearly defined policy for the entitlement, teaching and assessment of key skills. There are key skills co-ordinators in each area of learning. Most students on full-time courses are assessed for their competence in key skills and work at the appropriate level. In many areas, key skills are integrated into the courses and assignments, but in a few areas, they are not delivered in a vocational context. Key skills are especially well integrated into assignments in visual art and sciences and mathematics. Students on full-time motor vehicle courses are not offered the opportunity to work on key skills.

16. Teaching and learning activities are characterised by the mutual respect between teachers and students. The college provides a supportive learning environment, fostering students' personal development and promoting their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers employ a suitable range of techniques and most ensure that their lessons are pitched at an appropriate level. There is some good mixed-ability teaching and classes made up of disparate groups of students are successfully managed. Students with learning difficulties are well integrated into classes and receive suitable additional support. Practical work on vocational courses is usually appropriately varied, interesting and supported by good learning materials. It is particularly good in hospitality and motor vehicle engineering. Some teachers of theory classes fail to make well-judged demands on students or arouse their interest. Challenging and relevant assignments are set in health and social care, engineering and ICT. In the effective lessons, teachers begin by explaining to students the aims of what is to follow and subsequently check that these aims have been achieved. In a small number of lessons, in engineering and basic skills, for example, the teacher talks for too long and allows few, if any, opportunities for students to explore ideas amongst themselves. In other lessons,

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students are helped and encouraged to be independent learners and researchers. A significant number of lessons are dull and the teaching lacks gusto. There is insufficient checking that students understand the work and little consolidation of learning through the use of targeted questions.

17. Teachers are knowledgeable and well qualified. Some 73% of permanent teachers have a teaching qualification. Newly appointed teachers without such a qualification are required to gain one within two to four years. Some 66% of part-time agency staff, who teach 25% of total taught hours, have teaching qualifications. Teachers have good opportunities for staff development and industrial updating. Particularly good use is made of teachers' industry experience in the performing arts, visual arts, hospitality and in sports leisure and travel. In construction, the industrial experience of teachers is out of date. In basic skills there is an over-reliance on part-time agency staff. The annual turnover of teachers, at around 17%, has not significantly damaged the quality of teaching and learning. Only in health and social care does the turnover seem to have caused an unsettled period for the remaining teachers and for students. Technician support is good.

18. Teaching accommodation is of a high standard. Managers are committed to maintaining and improving teaching facilities, and providing an environment that reflects the college's commitment to equality and achievement. Significant emphasis is placed on security and students appreciate learning in a safe environment. All areas are maintained to a consistently high standard and the décor and cleanliness are outstanding. Teaching rooms are bright and well furnished. Some rooms used for ESOL are too small for the group sizes. Good learning resources and equipment in most areas support teaching and learning well. Practical facilities are often very good. For example, the dance and drama studios are excellent. There is an impressive range of facilities for visual arts, including good computer-aided design and IT facilities. Sports leisure and travel facilities are good, and include a sports hall, fitness room and dedicated classrooms. Accommodation for business-related courses reflects good commercial practice. There are excellent facilities for IT. Students with learning difficulties have excellent specialist resources, including a new independent living area and dedicated IT facilities provided with appropriate software. All college facilities, with the exception of the Lea House, which constitutes a small proportion (2%) of the floor area of the college estate, are accessible to students with limited mobility.

19. The college has 1,100 computers on the two main sites, giving a good ratio of 1 computer to 4.5 students. At busy periods, students do not always have ready access to computers. There are well-designed and well-used learning resource centres at the Deptford and Lewisham sites. They provide good working environments and good facilities, including open-access IT suites, and key skill support and research centres. They are well stocked with books, videos, audiocassettes, CDs and CD-ROMs. Stocks are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet the students' needs. Teachers at the centres are linked to different curriculum areas and support students in their research.

20. There are clear and up-to-date policies and procedures for assessment and internal verification activities which are not always consistently implemented. On most courses, assessment is fair and accurate and is carried out regularly, and there is regular reviewing and

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monitoring of progress. However, inadequate opportunity is taken to utilise students' activities in the workplace as part of their assessment and there is little gathering of evidence of the skills developed by students while they are at work. These shortcomings particularly apply to modern apprentices in construction and to students in health and social care. Assessment in some work-based provision is poor and there is little account taken of students' prior experiences. Many areas provide challenging and relevant assignments, and students receive constructive and detailed feedback on their assessed work, which helps them to improve. Internal verification sampling is not always planned effectively in hospitality. As a consequence, some aspects of the assessment process are overlooked.

21. The college offers an extensive range of courses that meets the needs and requirements of local people and employers. There are strong links with local schools and HE, both of which lead to the provision of good progression opportunities for students. Some areas of learning offer additional vocational units or qualifications to improve the students' employment prospects, for example, in sports and hospitality studies. There are few areas of perceived need which are not met. There is no part-time evening provision in sciences and mathematics, other than for GCSE mathematics. Where course enrolments decline, the college gives careful consideration to the introduction of alternative provision.

22. The college routinely reviews its study programmes to assess whether they meet the needs of the local community. It has pioneered a range of initiatives to widen the participation of local people in education and training. For example, the adult college, within the college, has introduced numerous opportunities for people to study close to their own homes at times that suit them. Over 50 short courses are offered in over 20 community centres. Since September 2000, over 980 students have enrolled for such courses. Some recent initiatives with major employers provide good opportunities for the long-term unemployed, whilst also addressing local skill shortages. The 'City Bound' project, developed in partnership with the Employment Service and employers in the finance and business sector, offers an intensive 16-week employability training programme. The college offers a programme for New Deal clients across a wide range of vocational areas, or placements with employers to develop vocational skills.

23. Students are well supported. The college has a comprehensive range of services and students make good use of them. The advice, guidance and welfare centres on the Lewisham and Deptford sites have very good resources and are adequately staffed. The centres are located in prominent positions and are easily reached by all students. Six of the staff team of seven are qualified counsellors. Each team member takes the lead on a particular area, such as housing, benefits and drug awareness. Students receive good pre-course guidance and advice. All courses have clearly identified entry criteria. Results from interviews and course-specific assessments are used effectively to guide students. All students undertake an initial assessment and there is particularly good support for those identified as having additional learning needs. Students with dyslexia are supported by well qualified and specialist staff. The college has an effective system for analysing the impact of the support. The college retained 84% of students receiving additional support in 2000/01. Achievements for students receiving support are also good. The college has an imaginative range of

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initiatives to further support students. For example, there is the 'Study Buddy' scheme which links students who have successfully completed their course with those requiring support.

24. Thorough induction takes place on all courses. A very good policy and tutor pack supports implementation. Financial assistance is available through the college access fund and hardship fund. Students receive help with transport costs and resources. The childcare funds have increased each year and are well used. Children are placed in the college nursery, with childminders or in local private nurseries that care for children under the age of two years.

25. Tutorial provision is very good. A tutorial policy and professional guidance notes for tutors support the conduct of tutorials. All students on courses of more than 250 hours have a weekly group tutorial and an individual tutorial once a term. Those on shorter courses are supported by the course tutor. All students speak highly of the value and effectiveness of tutorial and subject support. The setting of targets for students is inadequate in some areas. Some students, such as those following GCE A-level programmes, are set minimum target grades and others are set aims and goals specific to their courses. Students on some courses are not set any targets. There are procedures for recognising persistent lateness and non-attendance but the procedures are not consistently implemented in all areas of learning or on all courses. Access to careers guidance and information is good, particularly on the Lewisham site. In addition to college guidance staff, there are also the services of the external careers service. The college has its own 'Job Shop' which students find very useful in helping them to find jobs and information on careers.

26. The college relies heavily on positive recommendation from its existing and former students to promote its services to the public. It also provides a wide range of good publicity materials and promotional events to raise public awareness of the breadth of provision. These take account of the cultural diversity of the local community throughout the year. Promotional events are well supported by students, parents and employers. Their views about college provision are evaluated thoroughly to ensure that promotional materials and events are appropriate and effective.

### **Leadership and management**

27. Leadership and management are good. The college is well led and well managed. Senior managers and governors undertake their work with tremendous enthusiasm and commitment. Their approach permeates the college. Many staff speak of the friendly and supportive atmosphere that typifies the college for them. Managers and governors use their extensive and influential networks well to support and extend the work of the college and to develop its resources. There have been improvements in pass and retention rates over the last three years for course levels 1 and 3, but performances at level 2 have declined. Systems to measure and improve the quality of the college's work are extensive, but are hampered by the unreliable data on students' achievements. The college recognises this problem. Curriculum management is generally good, but the off-site, work-based learning provision is less well managed and monitored. There is considerable variation in the quality of teaching across the college.

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28. The college meets its mission to extend and improve the educational opportunities for the local and regional communities that it serves. Central to the mission are college policies and practices to ensure equality of opportunity. The commitment to these is evident at all levels of the organisation, including the governing body. It extends to the classroom, where teachers are often effective in promoting self-esteem and confidence in their students. The strategic plan is clear in stating intended outcomes. Its construction relies on a consultative approach that includes managers, governors and staff. Plans include development targets and are underpinned by sound financial proposals. There are many examples of the college extending a helping hand to its local area. None exemplifies this approach better than its recent support for the Local Education Authority, in continuing the education of 40 Year 11 students from a recently closed secondary school.

29. Overall, the curriculum is well led and managed. In some areas, such as visual arts and learning difficulties, management is particularly good. Managers have an open and positive approach, and demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of provision and students' performance. In many curriculum areas, staff work well together in teams to produce improvements. In a few areas of off-site provision, the college has recognised that it needs better oversight and has introduced a stronger quality assurance system to address this shortcoming. In some respects, this new system is not fully operational, for example, in the monitoring of equality of opportunity policies and practices.

30. Governors know the college well. Many of them spend a significant amount of time dealing with governing body business and supporting college work. They are very well informed and understand the context and communities in which the college works. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities that the college can create for local people. They strongly support the college's view that students are helped to progress, not only through the acquisition of qualifications, but by a range of other strategies. The work of the board is very well supported by the clerk and minutes and board papers are clear and well organised. Records of meetings clearly identify which items require decisions and what decisions are made by the board or committee. Agenda items for all meetings have a set of implication statements attached. These show where the item can be expected to have an impact in each of several areas of the college, such as students' pass rates, equality of opportunity or legal issues.

31. The college effectively ensures access to its provision for students with a wide range of abilities. For example, students with learning difficulties have excellent access to a good and extensive provision. These students are accorded the same full rights as any other group and are fully accommodated throughout the college. Managers have high expectations of the quality of provision and support for their learning difficulties. The college quality assurance systems have been adapted to meet the special design features of these courses and are implemented thoroughly.

32. The college was designated as a Beacon college in May 1999. It has effectively used the funding provided to disseminate good practice to other colleges. For example, it has held many open days. So far, staff from over 90 colleges have attended dissemination events.

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There are materials to support other colleges, a website, video and learning packs on teaching and learning, and an on-line computer support service.

33. There is an effective range of systems for reviewing and monitoring the quality of the college's work. Course reviews focus clearly on teaching quality and students' performance. Courses that underperform and fail to achieve their targets are subject to a detailed and demanding review process, known as the 'MOT'. The application of the MOT, for example, caused the college to replace GCE A-level provision for adults in the evenings with alternative courses. Teachers are observed in their lessons. New teachers are observed early in their time at the college. Opportunities for staff development are well used to help staff to improve their work. Systems to gather and analyse the views of students are comprehensive and effective. The college responds well to concerns raised by students. The college's self-assessment report sometimes over-estimates the quality of the college's work. It also identifies many strengths and weaknesses with which inspectors agreed.

34. The college's centrally held data often provide an inaccurate reflection of students' pass and retention rates. Teachers and managers describe the time consuming nature of reconciling their data with centrally held data. Middle managers use data held by their course teams as an alternative basis on which to assess the performance of students and courses. Such an approach does not establish a reliable foundation on which to make comparisons with national averages. Within these limitations, the setting of targets for improvement is effective and focuses clearly on performance. There is no consistent pattern of improvement across the college. The quality of teaching and learning varies considerably across areas of learning. Students' performance, especially in retention rates, also presents a varied profile, weakened by the unreliability of the data. In some courses, such as GCE A level, there have been significant improvements in achievement. In others, such as courses for level 2 qualifications, performance has declined.

35. The college is effective and efficient in its use of resources. With one exception, funding targets have been met or exceeded for the last six years. Systems which ensure the fair dispersal of resources to meet needs are understood by staff. Managers also have effective systems to enable them to monitor their expenditure. The college has made some significant improvements to its accommodation. It has moved out of smaller unsatisfactory sites and concentrated its work on major sites with good accommodation and resources. The college has used an independent consultancy to compare its performance in the effective utilisation of accommodation with national averages. In general, it has compared well with other colleges.

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

### **Sciences and mathematics**

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

#### *Strengths*

- significant added value at GCE A and AS levels
- good pass rates for GCSE mathematics
- good provision at entry level
- very good support for students
- responsive leadership of the school, leading to improvement.

#### *Weaknesses*

- low retention rates on GCE A-level and GCSE courses
- poor student record for attendance and punctuality
- much dull, uninspiring and unsatisfactory teaching.

#### *Scope of provision*

36. The college offers courses in science and mathematics at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. GCE A and AS levels are offered in biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics. The GCE AS level in science and public understanding was introduced in 2001 to provide additional opportunities for work in key skills and to add curriculum breadth. A well-established London Open College Network (LOCN) access to HE course caters for adults who attend lessons three days a week. The innovative and flexible entry-level 'Springboard' course incorporates key skills and provides progression onto a range of intermediate courses. GNVQ science is offered at intermediate level but the AVCE has now been withdrawn. As a consequence, within the college there is only progression onto GCE AS-level courses. There are plans to reintroduce the AVCE in 2002. There are a number of GCSE mathematics classes, but no science subjects are now offered at GCSE level, with the exception of astronomy, franchised at the Greenwich Observatory. There has been a rationalisation of part-time and evening provision, reduced now to City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) numeracy, which is offered at several levels, and GCSE mathematics.

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***Achievement and standards***

37. Pass rates for GCE A-level courses have shown steady improvement over the last three years and in 2001 were comparable with national averages. Results in the new GCE AS levels in 2001 were satisfactory. Students' achievements at GCE A and AS level are significantly better than would be expected, given their previous GCSE results. Pass rates and progression from the access to HE course are very good.

38. Pass rates in GCSE mathematics compare very well with national averages for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Those for GNVQ intermediate science improved significantly last year, and compare well with national averages. Results on the GNVQ advanced course have remained poor, however, and the course has been discontinued.

39. Students begin courses with skills and qualifications below average but reach satisfactory standards of attainment. In particular, in science they are able to plan and design experiments effectively, and they develop appropriate practical skills. In mathematics, students display a sound grasp of basic techniques but are less competent when tackling problems applied in context or involving a multi-stage method. They have a clear but narrow understanding of mathematical methods and lack sufficient appreciation of their meaning and application. Problem-solving skills are weak.

40. Data supplied by the college indicate steadily improving trends in student retention rates across all courses, except in GCSE mathematics, where the rate remains poor. On GCE A-level courses the number of students failing to complete their courses is high but has fallen consistently between 1999 and 2001. The retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate and access to HE courses are much improved and now compare well with national averages.

41. There is excellent progression for students on level 3 courses, both to employment and to HE.

42. Punctuality and attendance are unsatisfactory. In a quarter of the lessons observed, attendance was below 65%.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in Sciences and mathematics, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ science	2	No. of starts	23	29	22
		% retention	65	59	82
		% pass rate	50	47	72

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	273	262	183
		% retention	57	61	56
		% pass rate	42	58	60
Access to HE (science and mathematics)	3	No. of starts	10	12	10
		% retention	50	83	100
		% pass rate	100	80	90
GNVQ science	3	No. of starts	18	13	14
		% retention	0	62	71
		% pass rate	0	63	50
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	26	23	18
		% retention	*	*	67
		% pass rate	67	71	92
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	22	18	19
		% retention	*	*	63
		% pass rate	80	83	92
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	28	32	39
		% retention	*	*	49
		% pass rate	75	55	82
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	31	25	23
		% retention	*	*	61
		% pass rate	73	56	92

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* data unavailable

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***Quality of education and training***

43. Overall teaching is satisfactory; some is very good. But about one quarter of lessons observed were unsatisfactory. In a GCSE mathematics class, dynamic teaching enthused students; they worked effectively and co-operatively in groups to solve a task. Students in a GNVQ lesson were able use their initiative in devising a method to investigate heat losses in a combustion experiment. GCE A-level biology students engaged in a range of activities, including a group discussion chaired by one of them. Sometimes, however, lesson content and actual teaching are unimaginative and uninspiring. Course schemes of work are often unhelpful, and lack planning for effective teaching. Teachers do not sufficiently share good practice. In the substantial proportion of unsatisfactory lessons, there is little active involvement of students, too little interaction between teachers and students, and few examples of discussion or problem solving. Such lessons consist of students only listening, taking notes and answering routine exercise questions from textbooks. In a GCE AS-level science and public understanding lesson, students sat quietly for 45 minutes listening to the teacher explain the preparations for a practical experiment; they had no input into the experimental design or opportunity to discuss the experimental objectives. Teachers infrequently check learning in unsatisfactory lessons and often fail to take into account the different needs of students. Work set for students is sometimes too easy and undemanding.

44. Homework is set regularly and at an appropriate level, but marking is inconsistent. Whilst some work is accurately and constructively marked, there are examples of marking with minimal feedback.

45. Working relationships between teachers and students are good. Students feel encouraged and well supported, both in and out of class. Induction programmes are carefully planned and comprehensive. Tutorial provision is excellent and an integral part of all courses. Students with particular learning needs are effectively supported. Development of key skills is an integral part of the curriculum at all levels. There are effective arrangements for all students to obtain extra help, use interactive CD-ROMs and practise past examination questions under supervision. In mathematics, extra support is given in key skills. There are popular revision sessions in all subjects, which are held during college holidays before the modular examinations.

46. Teachers are well qualified. They regularly update and improve their specialist knowledge through an effective staff development programme. Science practical classes benefit from excellent technical support. There is an adequate range of appropriate resources, including computer software packages, available in classrooms and in the learning resource centre.

***Leadership and management***

47. The responsive leadership of the school promotes curriculum development and seek to ensure that the course offer is successful and focused on the needs of students. Good action planning at school and programme-area level has led to improved support systems, contributing to a rise in most course retention and pass rates. Effective management

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teamwork ensures that programme areas address priority issues, including the development of learning resources and the use of information learning technologies. Self-assessment is comprehensive and thorough but lacks balance in its evaluation of teaching and learning, giving an exaggerated view of strengths. Weaknesses have been accurately identified and a peer observation scheme of teaching has been devised. Steps taken thus far to improve the quality of teaching and learning are, however, insufficient in scope. Implementation of school policy on lateness is inconsistent and not monitored effectively. Policies for improvement of attendance are insufficiently thorough and have failed to effect improvement to reach the targets set.

## Construction

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

### *Strengths*

- good teaching
- good personal support for students
- generous sponsorship of equipment from the building services industry.

### *Weaknesses*

- poor retention rates on most courses
- poor pass rates on level 1 courses
- insufficient work-based assessment for modern apprentices
- underdeveloped key skills
- inadequate use of IT to support teaching and learning.

### *Scope of provision*

48. The school of engineering and construction offers construction programmes at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Some specialist provision, including plastering, building maintenance and signwork, is also provided. At the time of the inspection there were 140 learners aged 16 to 18 and 198 adults on full-time programmes, and 156 learners aged 16 to 18 and 343 adults on part-time programmes. New Deal clients, 7 full-time and 12 part-time, also benefit from the provision. Most of the provision is designed to meet the needs of the high proportion of unemployed people who have enrolled on the courses and come from culturally diverse backgrounds.

### *Achievement and standards*

49. Retention rates on most construction courses are unsatisfactory. They have declined steadily on intermediate and advanced craft courses over the last three years. Pass rates on most courses are also poor. On NVQ level 1 courses they are 15% below the national average and on BTEC national courses are 8% below. The standards of attainment were unsatisfactory in 32% of the lessons observed by inspectors. However, most students produce practical work of an acceptable standard. A small number of brickwork and painting and decorating students produce unsatisfactory work. Students' work on assignments is of a satisfactory standard in most areas.

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*A sample of retention and pass rates in Construction, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Foundation vocational (crafts and general operations)	1	No. of starts	141	140	109
		% retention	67	49	71
		% pass rate	77	35	49
GNVQ foundation vocational (technician)	1	No. of starts	*	44	*
		% retention	*	93	*
		% pass rate	*	0	*
Intermediate vocational (crafts)	2	No. of starts	380	456	417
		% retention	72	61	49
		% pass rate	30	38	67
Advanced vocational (crafts)	3	No. of starts	111	53	120
		% retention	77	64	58
		% pass rate	32	47	61
Advanced vocational (technician)	3	No. of starts	37	40	51
		% retention	68	80	47
		% pass rate	20	16	58

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course did not run

### Quality of education and training

50. The quality of teaching is often good. In 68% of the lessons observed, teaching was good or better. Lesson plans are well designed. They have clear aims and objectives. In effective lessons, teaching is delivered in an industrial context. References are made to realistic and practical examples. Good use is made of students' industrial experiences to promote discussion. Most practical teaching is satisfactory. Most practical activities relate

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closely to situations found in a workplace. In plumbing, for example, good resources enable effective simulated assessment to take place. In carpentry and joinery, however, roof rigs are unrealistically situated at ground level.

51. There is effective internal verification of the work of students and teachers and adequate sampling of students' assessed work. Some assignments on BTEC programmes lack application of knowledge. Marking of assignments is not always in line with the requirements of the awarding bodies. In carpentry and joinery and technician courses, students receive helpful written feedback. On other courses, feedback from teachers to students on the quality of their work is minimal. Modern apprentices are aware of the need to produce workplace evidence to support their portfolios of evidence.

52. All students receive effective initial assessments to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses. Induction programmes, incorporating health and safety issues, are sound. Tutorial support for full-time students is good, particularly on BTEC programmes. The teaching of key skills is underdeveloped. Key skills have only been introduced recently for modern apprentices and do not form an integral part of craft courses. On BTEC programmes, key skills are not identified in the units of the programmes to ensure coverage. In the main, staff and student understanding of the importance of key skills is low. The guidance and support for students with learning difficulties is good. They are well integrated into vocational courses. For example, a student with a hearing impairment on the NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery course was supported by both vocational and specialist needs teachers.

53. Most teachers are well qualified and have relevant vocational qualifications and assessor awards. However, few of them have updated their ageing industrial awareness by extended visits to employers. The construction area has a good range of workshops. In plumbing, workshops and resources are particularly good. These facilities are supplemented by generous sponsorship from industry. However, in brickwork, progress and standards are hindered by the lack of sufficient workshop space for the number of students and, on occasions, there were too few technicians to support teaching. The ratio of learners to computers is 4:1, which is good. However, although some specialist computer software is available and some intranet materials have been developed, these resources are rarely used to help students with their studies. In carpentry and joinery, a computer numerically controlled router is not used because no staff have received appropriate training.

54. There are good links with the local communities. Students have helped local special schools and a youth club with refurbishment work, and students on European exchange visits have worked with German students on a number of construction-related projects.

55. In some areas of work, there are very good links between local industry and college staff. For example, in plumbing, substantial equipment has been donated by building services companies.

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*Leadership and management*

56. Strategic and operational management of construction is poor. There have been difficulties in managing the provision since the last inspection, leading to a deterioration in the effectiveness of provision. Teachers are insufficiently aware of the recent poor retention and pass rates. They are also unaware of much of the content of the self-assessment report and how it relates to course review. Communications are poor and there is little sharing of good practice between course teams. School and staff meetings are infrequent. Although a recovery plan for construction has been drawn up, teachers have not been involved and at the time of the inspection, insufficient progress had been made. The plan has no specific actions to improve retention and pass rates. Staff have undergone recent development reviews, which identified their training and development needs and the means of meeting them.



## Engineering

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

### *Strengths*

- good retention rates at levels 2 and 3
- high examination pass rates at levels 2 and 3
- good work from students
- good teaching and learning
- good course management
- very good specialist accommodation and equipment.

### *Weaknesses*

- poor attendance levels on level 1 courses
- lack of punctuality by many students
- insufficient key skill opportunities for motor vehicle students.

### *Scope of provision*

57. The broad engineering provision covers general engineering, electronic engineering, IT services, and motor vehicle engine and bodywork. Courses extend from level 1 to level 3. There were clearly defined progression routes for the 1,600 students enrolled on engineering courses at the time of the inspection. Most students are male: 43% are aged 16 to 18, and 57% aged 19 or over. The curriculum offer is regularly reviewed for appropriateness. Recent changes include the introduction of courses on IT support systems, which have replaced traditional and outdated electronic servicing courses. There are good opportunities for students with learning difficulties to participate in engineering education and training. A good engineering-link programme enables young people in local schools to sample vocational education and work.

### *Achievement and standards*

58. Student retention rates, for all ages, are above national averages at levels 2 and 3. For the GNVQ intermediate/BTEC first diploma course, retention rates from 1999 to 2001 for students aged 16 to 18 are just above the national average of 80%. For adults, it is 36 percentage points above the national average of 60%. Students' pass rates are also above the national average at levels 2 and 3, for all ages. For the BTEC national diploma, pass rates over the past three years for students aged 16 to 18, averaged 82% against the national

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average of 75%. For adults, achievement was 100% against a national average of 78%. Retention and pass rates increase as course levels rise. The lowest pass and retention rates are on level 1 courses, and reflect the widening participation policy of the college. For example, retention rates are poor for students aged 16 to 18 on the NVQ in vehicle maintenance service replacement, and for adults on the CGLI 2240 electronic servicing, part 1. Pass rates are also poor for the latter course for all age groups.

59. Students' attainment in lessons was often good or very good. They produce good work and talk with knowledge and confidence. In a basic welding class, students were able to undertake overhead welding and could fully explain why they performed the task and why it should be carried out in a particular way. In a first-year motor vehicle lesson, a student demonstrated excellent skills when repairing the damaged ball joint and body wheel area of his own car.

60. There is poor attendance on level 1 courses and late arrival by students on some courses. Attendance at lessons observed during the inspection, was 66%. In a NVQ level 1 engineering lesson, 6 students were present out of a class of 24, and in an electrical workshop lesson, 10 were present out of a class of 25. In a level 1 motor vehicle lesson, resuming after a break, 8 students returned in groups of 2 over an 18-minute period, causing disruption to teaching and learning. Such lateness is challenged by teachers and there are systems to deal with absence.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ vehicle valeting	1	No. of starts	57	58	24
		% retention	47	31	96
		% pass rate	100	84	100
CGLI2240 electronic servicing	1	No. of starts	57	51	48
		% retention	70	73	58
		% pass rate	54	52	36
GNVQ/BTEC first diploma	2	No. of starts	22	16	18
		% retention	86	81	94
		% pass rate	91	50	60

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
BTEC national diploma	3	No. of starts	21	26	19
		% retention	62	58	79
		% pass rate	100	62	100
NVQ vehicle body repair	3	No. of starts	18	18	22
		% retention	61	89	72
		% pass rate	100	50	50
CGLI 2240 electronics servicing part 3	3	No. of starts	27	18	9
		% retention	89	82	100
		% pass rate	85	43	44

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

### Quality of education and training

61. Teaching and learning are good. All lessons are well planned and are supported by well-conceived learning materials. Many practical classes present students with appropriately demanding learning assignments. In a level 1 motor vehicle valeting lesson, students formed their own body panels, spraying and polishing them, and working in groups to diagnose faults. Students found this a motivating experience. An NVQ level 1 group, studying health and safety principles, received a demonstration of resuscitation. To reinforce learning, they practised the techniques until they were confident and were achieving high standards. Teachers differentiate tasks in mixed ability groups to ensure that all students fully participate in the work. In an IT support systems lesson, where students were required to install a range of computer printers, more advanced students were directed to printer fault diagnosis exercises. In an Internet applications lesson, more accomplished students concentrated on more complex information searches.

62. There are health and safety issues in some practical lessons. In a lesson in a mechanical engineering workshop involving forge work, students all wore soft sports shoes, did not wear heat resistant gloves and many did not use eye protection. In a welding workshop, many students wore soft footwear. Not all students wore eye shields when involved in soldering exercises.

63. Guidance and support, both before joining the college and during courses, are effective. During induction, additional learning support needs are identified. There was good support for students with numeracy and literacy difficulties and also for a student with a

hearing impairment. However, there are insufficient opportunities for motor vehicle students to study key skills. Full-time motor vehicle students do not have time dedicated to key skills on their timetables, as is required by college policy, even though course tutors have identified deficiencies in students' skills in number and communication. Tutorials are used effectively to monitor students' progress. Assignments and portfolio work are discussed and action plans formulated. The standard of assignments is good and controlled by internal and external verification processes. Students appreciate the return of their work within one week and confirm that teachers' comments are informative and helpful.

64. Teachers and technical support staff have technical qualifications and industrial experience to support the course provision. Most have recently undertaken further training for technical staff and gained work-related experience, which has included spending some periods in mainland Europe. Most teachers have assessor and verifier status and all demonstrate sound technical knowledge. All practical workshop or laboratory lessons have technical support which benefits students' learning. There is excellent workshop and laboratory provision and equipment. The resource centre is well equipped with a broad range of engineering study materials, including specialist AutoCAD software, and has a dedicated engineering network.

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

65. There is an effective line management structure and good internal communications, supported by regular departmental and programme meetings. Engineering courses run on two campuses, but this poses no communication difficulties. Course teams, with student representation, meet at least termly. The minutes of some meetings show no discussion of retention and pass rates, or of curriculum issues. There are performance indicators. Targets for improvement are set, and plans are agreed for their achievement. Resources are deployed effectively to support the teaching of the curriculum. There is positive action to keep the curriculum offer up to date. For example, developments have taken place to update the offer in electronics and to make motor vehicle courses more readily available for the unemployed. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report, but considered that the college had understated the strengths in provision.

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## **Business**

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

### *Strengths*

- good achievements on NVQ 1 administration, professional and management, and access to business programmes
- development of students' confidence and self-esteem through effective teaching
- good support for individual students
- flexible and imaginative provision in some areas
- well-resourced learning environment
- effective teaching of key skills.

### *Weaknesses*

- poor pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate
- some unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- inadequate co-ordination of the separate provision for business courses
- staffing shortages in some key areas.

### *Scope of provision*

66. There is a wide range of business provision. Courses for GCE A level, GCE AS level and GNVQ in business are provided in the college's academic centre. A range of full-time and part-time business, administration, professional and management courses are in the business school. Full-time courses include: NVQs in administration at levels 1, 2 and 3; an innovative range of office technology, secretarial and Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) legal secretarial courses and an access to HE in business. There are general part-time courses, for example, the national certificate in business and finance, certificate in management studies (CMS) and the National Examinations Board (NEB) in supervisory studies awards and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board diploma in marketing. Some of the administration and management courses are taught off-site. More specialist provision includes the national certificate in housing management and an NVQ in school administration.

67. 'Citybound' is a new venture which focuses on employment within the financial and business sectors, specifically aimed at large employers in the city of London. It is an intensive course available exclusively for those eligible for the government's New Deal

programme. At the time of the inspection, 45 clients had joined the programme, 27 of whom had completed training and 17 of whom had entered employment.

68. Enrolments across a substantial range of the main courses have been declining over the last three years, and some courses have been discontinued following review of enrolments, achievement and specialist teacher needs. At the time of the inspection, there were 574 students in the business school of whom 262 were full-time and 312 part-time students.

### *Achievement and standards*

69. Pass rates are high on a number of management and professional courses. The results for those learners who completed the CMS, access to business and ILEX legal secretaries certificate courses compare favourably with national averages. In 2000, each had a 100% pass rate. Most students on NVQ administration programmes achieve well and there is good progression to higher level courses. Students on business and administration programmes have achieved pass rates in the external tests that are well above the national average. Achievement on GCE A-level business studies has been good and has shown improvement until 2001.

70. Most other courses have pass rates at or near national averages. However, some rates display a gradual downturn from previously high levels. Achievement for completers on the GNVQ intermediate course were poor in 2001, when only 41% achieved their full award. Retention rates are broadly satisfactory. However, there is a declining trend on a few courses and particularly poor retention on GCE A-level business, where only 38% of students completed their course in 2001.

71. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory. On administration courses, students develop confidence in the application of skills and cope well with the practical demands of the work-related aspects of courses. The provision of additional learning support and assistance with basic skills contributes substantially to raising the standards achieved by many of the students. On some courses, students display a high level of written and oral presentation skills.

### *A sample of retention and pass rates in Business administration, management and professional, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ administration	1	No. of starts	15	18	22
		% retention	67	83	64
		% pass rate	90	86	100

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GNVQ business	2	No. of starts	45	41	45
		% retention	62	78	71
		% pass rate	92	75	41
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	44	49	44
		% retention	73	65	80
		% pass rate	84	75	63
ILEX legal secretarial certificate	2	No. of starts	19	23	21
		% retention	100	78	81
		% pass rate	95	89	100
GNVQ business	3	No. of starts	49	29	24
		% retention	83	83	88
		% pass rate	70	87	76
NVQ administration	3	No. of starts	68	57	46
		% retention	80	91	70
		% pass rate	93	69	72
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	82	38	44
		% retention	71	76	38
		% pass rate	68	83	73
Access to HE	X	No. of starts	21	19	19
		% retention	71	74	75
		% pass rate	67	86	100

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Certificate in management studies		No. of starts	80	40	37
		% retention	80	88	70
		% pass rate	94	88	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

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

72. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and in over half of the lessons observed by inspectors, the teaching was good or better. There were examples of very good teaching across the whole range of provision. However, there were too many lessons that were less than satisfactory.

73. A distinctive strength of much of the teaching is the creation of a climate for learning which builds students' confidence and self-esteem. Many teachers are skilful in encouraging students to respond in lessons and to develop their potential. Basic and key skills are emphasised throughout the courses. Learning support teachers work effectively in partnership with business teachers to help those students identified as requiring support. Teaching and learning on administration courses are consistently effective and have an appropriate vocational focus. Expectations and targets for tasks are clearly set and monitored. On GCE AS-level business studies, some teachers challenge students academically and check their learning carefully. Students are required to justify their responses in class, and extend their answers to questions to demonstrate the full extent of their understanding. Current examples drawn from business are skilfully used to illustrate theoretical aspects.

74. Some lessons lack planning for reinforcing and checking learning. Lesson planning does not always sufficiently address intended learning objectives. On some level 3 programmes in business and professional studies, teachers fail to give sufficient emphasis to analysis, evaluation and problem solving skills within the appropriate business context. Sometimes, lessons fail to extend the ability of students to build on their existing knowledge and understanding. As a result, some students make slower progress and are not challenged by the teaching. Persistent students' lateness for some lessons intrudes into the effectiveness of learning.

75. Students are very well supported by their teachers. Work is set regularly and marked carefully. Judgements on assessment are fair, soundly based and in most cases accompanied by helpful feedback. Arrangements for induction are comprehensive and are valued by students. Course handbooks provide helpful additional information and guidance. Most work experience is well co-ordinated. Students on the NVQ courses have two days a



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week of work experience with Lewisham Borough Council and Community Health South London.

76. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and a few have good vocational experience. Staff development is supportive and well matched to needs. There is an appropriate focus on training in key skills and basic skills to meet curriculum and learning priorities. Staff shortages and difficulties in recruiting teachers for some specialisms have presented difficulties; and in some cases have led to interruptions in the course. The learning environment and physical resources in the business school are good. Students have access to reliable, extensive and up-to-date computing facilities. Learners on administration courses are able to develop their skills in a 'virtual office'. The good accommodation is well furnished and equipped with whiteboards and overhead projectors.

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

77. The business school has a clear management structure. The college is reviewing the organisational structure for business. It has decided not to replace two programme area leaders, which has resulted in additional pressures for the remaining managers and their staff. In spite of this situation, there is a strong team spirit and a collective resolve to meet this challenge. Course teams manage their areas effectively. Course files and documentation are well maintained and minutes of team meetings show clear agendas and action points. However, overall co-ordination of the separate provision for business courses in the business school and academic centre and 'Citybound' initiatives is underdeveloped. There are insufficient opportunities for fostering connections and identifying and sharing good practice are limited. Quality assurance procedures are well understood by course teams but course reviews are not supported by sufficiently reliable data. The self-assessment report is generally accurate and identifies the main issues but understates the significance of some of the weaknesses.

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## Trade union studies

Overall provision in this area is **Outstanding (grade 1)**

### *Strengths*

- excellent achievements of learners
- broad range of provision
- good teaching and learning
- extensive collaboration with the Trade Union Council (TUC) and trade unions
- good course provision for IT and basic skills.

### *Weaknesses*

- no weaknesses were identified.

### *Scope of provision*

78. The college offers a broad range of part-time courses for adults. These include trade union studies, basic skills and IT for trade union members. Courses are run at levels 1 to 4 and, apart from the one-year, level 3 certificate in occupational health and safety, all are short courses directed towards National Open College Network (NOCN) certification. The IT and basic skills courses are increasingly offered at locations away from the main college premises, including in the learners' places of work. The IT courses are often available for 12 hours a day in order to accommodate shift workers who can start and finish at times to suit themselves. At the time of the inspection there were 157 learners. Over a full academic year the college would expect to enrol some 1,500 students.

### *Achievement and standards*

79. The pass rates for trade union studies qualifications are outstanding. Usually, all students pass the course. The standard of work in students' portfolios is appropriate for their levels of study. Standards in lessons are good. Within their lessons, students present their arguments articulately and engage in detailed discussions and debate. At level 3, some students produce outstanding work. Within their assignments, they demonstrate an ability to analyse issues related to their employment experience in considerable depth. In health and safety, students demonstrate a full understanding of the issues involved. Learners' project work is very well presented.

80. Pass rates on IT courses are also at 100%. Students use workbooks which have been designed in association with the TUC to reflect the background and context of their studies. Students work at their chosen pace, and attainment and progress are monitored by the teacher. Students' standards of attainment were at least satisfactory in all lessons observed by

inspectors. Additional learning support is provided for students whose progress is hindered by poor levels of literacy.

81. Retention rates are high, with the exception of the certificate in occupational health and safety. It fell on some courses in 2001, but at the time of the inspection there had been no early withdrawals for programmes started in the 2001/02 academic year.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in Trade union studies, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NOCN trade union representation stage 1	2	No. of starts	57	36	53
		% retention	98	100	83
		% pass rate	93	100	100
NOCN health and safety stage 1	2	No. of starts	43	45	26
		% retention	100	100	81
		% pass rate	93	100	100
NOCN trade union representation stage 2	2/3	No. of starts	10	21	14
		% retention	100	100	93
		% pass rate	100	100	100
NOCN health and safety stage 2	2/3	No. of starts	18	34	29
		% retention	89	100	97
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Certificate in occupational health and safety (day)	3	No. of starts	11	*	8
		% retention	100	*	63
		% pass rate	64	*	100
Certificate in occupational health and safety (evening)	3	No. of starts	*	*	27
		% retention	*	*	56
		% pass rate	*	*	100

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Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course did not run

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

82. Most teaching is good or better and inspectors observed no unsatisfactory teaching. On the certificate in occupational health and safety courses, teaching is well planned with an appropriate variety of learning activities. Teachers consolidate and build on the work of previous weeks, drawing extensively on the students' own work situations and experiences. Teachers' obvious enthusiasm and interest is communicated to the students who respond equally enthusiastically. Students work well in groups. In one well-conceived lesson, after some preparatory work in groups, students made confident presentations to the whole class. There followed an analytical and critical discussion. In one level 2 trade union course lesson, a guest speaker, whose experience in a union was clearly valued by learners, acted as the stimulus for a session of questions and debate. The teacher made good use of open questions to focus debate. As the issues became related to their own experiences, the students became more involved. In another lesson, students enthusiastically undertook a simulated health and safety risk assessment in three areas of the college. They undertook this activity with considerable enthusiasm.

83. On IT courses, students value the good support from teachers in lessons. Students receive as much of the teachers' time as they need and teachers take the opportunity to develop students' skills beyond those envisaged in the workbook. Many students regard these courses as a route back into learning. Teachers amply demonstrate their competence in working with students of different abilities and at different levels. In one lesson, a student brought in some work from his employment and the teacher helped to integrate this with class work.

84. Overall, the guidance and support for all students is good. The teachers, who are particularly well qualified and experienced, work closely with experienced trade unionists to add relevance to the programmes. Resources are good. For the IT programmes, laptop computers are used to offer tuition on construction sites. 'On-line' learning, using computers, is available for the trade union courses.

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

85. The area is well led. The teaching team, of both full-time and part-time staff, works well together and teachers are mutually supportive. Part-time teachers usually manage to attend the regularly held team meetings. Teachers are involved in the self-assessment of what they consider to be the areas' strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors largely agreed with their conclusions. The team markets its programmes effectively to trade union members and has contributed well to the college's objective of widening participation. Provision is increasingly being developed away from the college sites.

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## Information and communication technology

Overall provision in this area is **Outstanding (grade 1)**

### *Strengths*

- very good teaching
- good pass rates, with outstanding achievement on many courses for adults
- outstanding textual and on-line resources to support learning
- high standards of students' coursework
- thorough assessment and helpful feedback to students
- good access to a high quality computer network, with up-to-date hardware and software
- very effective management.

### *Weaknesses*

- some rates of attendance and punctuality.

### *Scope of provision*

86. The school of computing and IT offers an extensive range of provision, from entry level to HE. There are many opportunities for students with few or no previous qualifications. There are about 4,000 students enrolled each year, for whom provision includes: LOCN introduction to computing; GNVQ at foundation and intermediate level; AVCE, access to HE; higher national programmes; CGLI diplomas; the European computer driver's licence; and a range of individual LOCN units. The school has strong and developing links with industry. The development of programmes takes into account the needs of local employers, and includes links with the E-skills National Training Organisation (NTO) and the business link for London. Recent innovations include the achievement of Cisco regional academy status and accreditation to run A+ and Microsoft certified systems engineer programmes. The college is an associate college of the University of Greenwich, which secures entry to the university for students completing the access to computing course. The college is recognised as a centre of vocational excellence for this area of work.

### *Achievement and standards*

87. Pass rates are good overall and are outstanding on some courses for adults. For example, on the access to computing course in 2000/01, 93% of candidates were successful. The CGLI diploma course pass rates were 89% in 2000/01. Retention rates are generally comparable with national averages. Retention rates are good on the CGLI diploma; over 90% of students are consistently retained. Overall attendance at lessons during the inspection

was only 67%, which is low. Late arrival of students was noted in a few lessons. Internal progression opportunities from entry level to HE courses in computing are excellent. Students often gain entry to universities and employment.

88. In the most effective lessons, learners are active and attentive, and as a result achieve high standards. In the CGLI diploma networking classes, inspectors noted that students successfully set up user accounts and determined levels of security and access. Students in an AVCE lesson on presenting information, made very good use of visual imagination, as well as ICT expertise, in the production of a portfolio of design work. Portfolios of work are consistently good, particularly on the AVCE course.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in ICT, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
LOCN introduction to computing	1	No. of starts	1,437	2,306	3,184
		% retention	86	86	94
		% pass rate	87	98	87
BTEC first diploma in IT	2	No. of starts	79	51	52
		% retention	*	69	77
		% pass rate	*	94	88
CGLI diploma	2	No. of starts	111	387	352
		% retention	**	91	91
		% pass rate	**	84	89
AVCE single award	3	No. of starts	**	**	86
		% retention	**	**	80
		% pass rate	**	**	75
AVCE IT (3 units)	3	No. of starts	**	**	38
		% retention	**	**	53
		% pass rate	**	**	65

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
BTEC national certificate in computer studies	3	No. of starts	78	74	74
		% retention	*	*	50
		% pass rate	*	*	100
Access to HE (computing)	3	No. of starts	23	22	20
		% retention	83	73	75
		% pass rate	100	88	93

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* data unreliable

\*\* courses did not run

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

89. The quality of teaching is consistently high. Planning is good, and teachers prepare excellent materials. These are well structured and stimulating to ensure that all students achieve the basic objectives of each lesson. There are additional materials and activities to engage the most able students. Teachers make good use of group, individual and paired work and students understand what is required of them. Most teachers are enthusiastic and make good use of students' questions to help develop the themes of the lessons. In a few lessons, teachers do not plan or prepare adequately and talk too much. Teachers are well qualified. Many have relevant industrial experience, which they apply effectively in lessons. Students believe that the teachers build up their confidence and motivate them to develop the necessary skills and the desire to maintain life-long learning.

90. Key skills are developed in all computing programmes. On CGLI programmes, for example, teachers ensure that word processing lessons also create opportunities for work on spelling and grammar. Numeracy skills are developed in spreadsheet assignments for LOCN courses, encouraging students to explore numerical and data values. The school has very effective processes for the initial assessment of students' skills and needs, prior to the start of their course. Students, particularly adults, value this approach and have found the results very helpful in making course and career decisions. The tracking of students' progress is thorough. There are good systems for ensuring that students are regularly informed of their progress. Progress reviews at tutorials and setting and marking of work are effective. Assessment is well organised and the high quality of marking, feedback and diagnostic record keeping ensures that students' achievements are tracked accurately.

91. Following high levels of investment in recent years, the college provides an extensive network of up-to-date PCs and computer software. The IT classrooms are bright and spacious and contain good furniture and displays. Many rooms are air-conditioned. Some classrooms also have 'smart' white boards, projectors, large screens and network tools that enable excellent presentation of prepared teaching materials and very effective group demonstrations. The college intranet hosts a wide range of good teaching materials to support courses. Some teachers use the intranet to post and receive assignments, model answers and students' work. There is a well-equipped and well-stocked learning centre.

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

92. The management of computing and IT is highly effective at school and course levels. Teaching teams operate well. The work addresses the needs of students, an approach recognised and valued by them. The integrated approach to course management ensures that a comprehensive range of resources is available to support all programmes. The aims and values of the college are reflected in the positive attitudes and behaviour of staff and there is a clear commitment to, and monitoring of, equal opportunities. An effective system of lesson observation contributes to the thorough evaluation of the school's effectiveness. In most respects, inspectors agreed with the judgements contained in the college's self-assessment report. There is an annual development review which outlines staff development needs. Managers are active in developing programmes in response to analysis of students' performance and needs. The IT resources and staff are deployed efficiently and effectively by managers. Communication between the school and the central college registry is under developed, resulting in some inconsistency between the achievement and retention records kept in the school and those recorded centrally.



## **Hospitality and catering**

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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching in practical classes
- good examination pass rates
- high standards of practical skills
- extensive and suitably varied practical resources
- good support for students
- extensive links with employers.

### ***Weaknesses***

- underdeveloped initial assessment of vocational skills
- inadequate planning of assessment and internal verification
- poor attendance rates.

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

93. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time provision in hospitality and catering. NVQ courses are available in food preparation and cooking at levels 1, 2 and 3, preparing and serving food at level 1, and serving food and drink at level 2. Courses are also available in food hygiene and customer care. At the time of the inspection, there were 21 learners aged 16 to 18 and 68 adults on full-time courses, and 3 students aged 16 to 18 and 59 adults on part-time courses. There were four New Deal clients on the full-time education and training option. School links programmes have been established, and lead to the successful progression of some pupils into college. The preparing and serving food qualification programme is available throughout the year.

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

94. In 2001, students' results were above national averages on all courses, with the exception of the CGLI certificate in food preparation and cooking. This outcome is a considerable improvement on earlier years. The pass rates for NVQs are particularly good. Most retention rates are satisfactory or better, and are very good on food preparation and cooking level 2 courses. The retention and pass rates of students aged 16 to 18 are similar to those of students aged 19 and over. The standards of attainment observed in lessons were mostly satisfactory and much of the work was good or very good. The majority of students

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gain awards in addition to their main qualification. All achieve a basic hygiene certificate. Most students go on to gain employment related to their training in industry or continue onto higher level courses in hospitality and catering.

95. Students demonstrate a high standard of technical skills in the kitchens and restaurant. They also achieve high standards in food preparation, cooking and food service. Learners work well together as a team and display good social skills when dealing with customers. Their portfolios of evidence often lack sufficient detail. Students' attendance rate is poor. In the lessons observed by inspectors the rate was only 65%.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in Hospitality, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ serving food and drink-counter (1 year)	1	No. of starts	19	23	16
		% retention	72	61	81
		% pass rate	38	75	91
NVQ food preparation and cooking (1 year)	1	No. of starts	41	37	48
		% retention	84	70	62
		% pass rate	58	73	88
CGLI certificate in food preparation and cooking (1 year)	1	No. of starts	*	36	48
		% retention	*	80	74
		% pass rate	*	79	76
NVQ food preparation and cooking (1 year)	2	No. of starts	27	25	28
		% retention	72	84	100
		% pass rate	69	86	85
NVQ serving food and drink-restaurant (2 year)	2	No. of starts	5	11	48
		% retention	60	80	71
		% pass rate	0	38	90

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

96. There is much good teaching in practical lessons. These lessons are well structured. Students have well-defined roles in production kitchens and in the restaurant, which is open to the public. There are some good learning materials for theory and practical subjects. One teacher uses computer presentations which are popular with students. Teachers link theory to practical examples from industry and with work that students will undertake in the college. In most lessons, good use is made of questions to check students' understanding and ensure that learning has taken place. During most lessons in production kitchens and in the restaurants, students work under appropriate commercial pressure. However, during the inspection, there were too many students in the table service restaurant to properly mirror industry practices. Students' experience is enhanced by working on functions which take place in the college. Some key skills are not taught in a vocational context and learners do not recognise the relevance of these skills.

97. The practical assessment of NVQs is inconsistent. Some students are assessed in unrealistic situations and are provided with too much guidance to enable accurate decisions on competence to be made. Most assessments are by observation and questioning. Little use is made of alternative methods of assessment, such as witness statements. Although internal verifiers sample at least two units of each student's portfolio, there is no internal verification sampling plan to ensure the necessary checking of all aspects of provision. Assessor observations also take place, but these are not planned or recorded in overall tracking documentation.

98. Students are complimentary about the support they receive from their tutors. Induction and tutorial programmes are well planned and include introductions to health and safety, food hygiene, applying for jobs and other employment topics. Absences are systematically followed up and progress is monitored thoroughly. Issues raised by teachers and students are recorded and influence the development of the individual learning plans. Students at risk of failure are set clear targets for improvement and provided with additional support as required. Excellent support and guidance is offered to students with specific learning difficulties. Basic skills levels are assessed during induction and the results contribute to the individual learning plans. Little attention is paid to students' previous learning or experience. Inappropriate levels of prior knowledge are assumed in some assessment questions and the outcomes are not effectively communicated to all teachers.

99. All staff are well qualified. Several teachers have recent industrial experience and the college is promoting industrial updating of their skills. All staff work together well as a team and support each other during practical lessons. The catering facilities include a training kitchen, two production kitchens, a pastry production kitchen, two restaurants and a cafe. The kitchens have an appropriate variety of specialist equipment to support learning and provide excellent environments in which to prepare for employment. Most of the equipment is up to date. One kitchen and restaurant is open throughout the year to enable students on the serving food and drink qualification to have access to training and assessment. General teaching rooms are of a good standard. The library book stock is good

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and students have access to computers and the Internet to aid their research. Their experiences are widened and improved by the well-established industrial links and the variety of visits organised by the college, which include exhibitions, hotels and exchange trips. The links developed with employers often lead to employment opportunities being made available to students.

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

100. The area is well managed. There is a clear sense of direction. Staff meetings are held regularly and appropriate action is taken to address issues which arise. Course committees, which include student representatives, meet regularly and actions agreed at meetings are followed through. Lesson observations take place regularly and are noted on staff appraisal records. Course reviews are effective and contribute to the self-assessment report for the curriculum area. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and some of the weaknesses identified during the inspection, but omitted other important weaknesses. Staff appraisals are effective and ensure that continuous professional development takes place. Retention and pass rate targets are set, but not for all courses.

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## Sports, leisure and travel

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

### *Strengths*

- good teaching
- effective support and guidance
- good resources to support learning
- imaginative programmes to attract students
- good leadership and staff teamwork.

### *Weaknesses*

- low retention rates on GNVQ courses
- late arrival and poor attendance of students.

### *Scope of provision*

101. At the time of the inspection there were 207 full-time students, 101 following sport and recreation courses and 106 taking leisure and travel/tourism courses. Full-time courses in sport and leisure are delivered through the NVQ sport and recreation, levels 1 to 3. At level 3, around 50% of students are advanced modern apprentices. The leisure and tourism course is delivered through the GNVQ at foundation and intermediate levels and the recently introduced AVCE travel and tourism. There is a specific GNVQ foundation, in leisure and tourism, for speakers of languages other than English. There are very small numbers of students pursuing the GCE A and AS levels in sports studies. In addition, sports courses have been introduced to foundation learners to supplement their basic skills programme. There is also a wide range of additional qualifications in sports coaching and fitness instruction. Courses attract students from differing age groups and many different backgrounds. The 'football academy' programme involves around 50 students who combine training in football and other sports skills with the development of their basic skills.

### *Achievement and standards*

102. Retention and pass rates for students have been low, but significant improvements were made during 2000/01 when rates reached or exceeded national averages. On the NVQ sport and recreation programmes, retention rates increased markedly in 2000/01 and pass rates also increased at NVQ levels 2 and 3. Retention rates on GNVQ leisure and tourism improved in 2000/01, but were still poor. However, there were significant improvements in many pass rates in 2000/01. Retention and pass rates on short courses are consistently high. In the lessons observed by inspectors, the standards of learners' attainments were, in most

cases, good or better. Students demonstrate a keen willingness to learn and make a determined effort in their lessons. All students undertake key skills in their learning programmes and these are assessed and recorded for accreditation.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in Sports, leisure and travel, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	*	*	20
		% retention	*	*	77
		% pass rate	*	*	84
NVQ sport and recreation	1	No. of starts	40	34	49
		% retention	45	47	80
		% pass rate	67	88	62
GNVQ leisure and tourism		No. of starts	43	29	27
		% retention	49	52	67
		% pass rate	43	47	89
NVQ sport and recreation	2	No. of starts	57	50	42
		% retention	53	48	90
		% pass rate	50	46	68
GNVQ leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	24	21	23
		% retention	33	48	48
		% pass rate	75	50	90
NVQ sport and recreation	3	No. of starts	*	7	6
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	43	100

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	*	18
		% retention	*	*	67
		% pass rate	*	*	73

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course did not run

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

103. Teaching is good. Schemes of work and lesson plans are appropriately detailed and clear. Teaching is targeted at the appropriate level and presented in a stimulating way which focuses on students' needs. Students work towards demanding targets and are encouraged to achieve their potential. The teaching in all of the lessons observed by inspectors was at least satisfactory, 78% of lessons were good or very good. In a highly effective GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism lesson, the attractions of 'Disneyworld' were considered. The lesson was well planned and engaged all students, most of whom were not native English speakers. Video presentation was used to stimulate discussion and then the teacher skilfully managed a question and answer session. Learning and teaching are hampered by persistent lateness and poor attendance. The average class size of lessons observed during inspection was 13, and overall attendance was only 64%.

104. Learning is regularly monitored and helpful feedback from teachers is given promptly. All students have a regular and thorough review of their learning programme. There are good working relationships between teachers and students. Assessment is appropriate to the qualification and students understand the arrangements for assessment and are well prepared. In the NVQ sport and recreation courses students are monitored and assessed at appropriate points throughout their programme. A range of assessment situations is used to provide evidence of competence. Internal verification procedures are well established and used effectively. The guidance and support provided for students are good. The tutorial programme is effective in addressing group and individual needs. Key skills are successfully integrated into subject teaching.

105. Resources are good and used effectively. Teachers are well qualified and vocationally competent. They regularly update their skills. Specialist part-time teachers are successfully employed for specific areas of the programme. Modern and appropriate resources support learning. A large sports hall and modern fitness suite are available and classrooms are well equipped with IT, books and a range of suitable visual and teaching aids.

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*Leadership and management*

106. The programme area is well organised. Leadership and staff teamwork are good. Regular team meetings are held to advance the work of the area and to look for continual improvement. Self-assessment and target setting are used to ensure that actions that have been agreed to achieve improvement are monitored, including the improvement of retention and pass rates. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the area's self-assessment report. Staff are appraised annually and individual staff development plans are devised. All staff undertake training opportunities to update their skills and knowledge. Equal opportunities issues are addressed and policies effectively applied. Attention is paid to fostering an inclusive approach and building up students' self esteem. Good use is made of resources, both through efficient timetabling and by allowing students to develop work-based skills outside curriculum sessions.



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## Health and social care

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

### *Strengths*

- good pass and retention rates on GNVQ foundation, BTEC first certificate in caring and access to nursing courses
- good achievements of students on counselling courses
- effective development of key skills on most courses
- teachers supportive working relationships with students
- good opportunities for progression.

### *Weaknesses*

- poor pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate.
- poor retention and pass rates on the first diploma in care, national diploma and certificate in childhood studies.
- very poor retention rates on the GNVQ advanced health and social care
- high turnover of teachers
- failure in many lessons to meet individual needs.

### *Scope of provision*

107. The school of care, counselling and teacher training offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in health and social care, childcare, counselling and teacher training. Teacher training was not inspected as part of this area of learning. Although most programmes are full time, there is increasing provision to meet the needs of part-time students. At the time of the inspection there were 1,627 students, of whom 84% were women. Of these, 12% were aged 16 to 18 and 75% were over the age of 25. The health and social care programmes enrol most students, approximately 350 from entry level to level 3. The college has introduced a number of part-time courses, including, introduction to the childcare business and early years childcare and education for NVQs at levels 2 and 3. There are counselling programmes from foundation to advanced levels and access courses including nursing, social work and teaching. The foundation access to nursing provides entry at a lower level. The wide range of access courses provides adults with opportunities to return to study in preparation for HE. An undergraduate counselling programme is at the planning stage and if introduced would offer progression routes at level 4.

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***Achievement and standards***

108. Retention and pass rates vary considerably. Pass rates are good on most courses for adult students. They are consistently above the national averages for the diploma and certificate in counselling. The Edexcel first certificate in care course has retention and pass rates above the national average. Retention rates on the access to nursing course have been 10 percentage points above the national average for the last three years. Pass rates are also good. However, retention and pass rates are poor on some full-time courses. Retention rates on GNVQ advanced health and social care, declined significantly between 1999 and 2001, and in 2001 the rate was 20 percentage points below the national average. Pass rates on the first diploma in caring improved in the three years to 2001, but are still well below the national average. Retention and pass rates for the GNVQ foundation improved significantly in 2001. Both are now above the national average.

109. A significant number of students progress within the college and to HE or employment. For example, in 2001, all students achieving qualifications in access to nursing, social work and the GNVQ advanced in health and care, gained HE places. Most students' work is of a satisfactory standard, meeting the requirements of the awarding body.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in Health and social care, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	46	45	52
		% retention	74	73	88
		% pass rate	*	52	89
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	54	27	21
		% retention	44	70	76
		% pass rate	65	56	63
BTEC first diploma in care	2	No. of starts	18	44	61
		% retention	44	57	70
		% pass rate	88	43	70
BTEC first certificate in care	2	No. of starts	**	17	13
		% retention	**	67	69
		% pass rate	**	90	89

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Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	40	24	27
		% retention	*	*	48
		% pass rate	*	100	85
BTEC national certificate in childhood studies	3	No. of starts	19	15	17
		% retention	*	*	59
		% pass rate	100	92	90
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	86	67	72
		% retention	81	82	82
		% pass rate	*	82	93
Certificate in counselling	3	No. of starts	116	114	136
		% retention	67	80	69
		% pass rate	98	88	92
Diploma in counselling	X	No. of starts	18	29	27
		% retention	89	100	78
		% pass rate	75	91	89

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* data unreliable

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

110. Teaching is satisfactory or better. Most lessons are well planned. In effective lessons, activities built upon previous learning and work experience and promoted learning. Less effective lessons failed adequately to meet the individual needs of students. In some lessons, teachers do not help students to develop the capacity to work on their own or to work through their own ideas. Some aspects of key skills are well integrated into teaching and most key skills assignments have some relevance to health and social care. Assignments are vocationally relevant and mainly set at an appropriate level for the stage of the course. Written feedback by teachers provides clear guidance to students on how to improve their

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work. Work-based learners are well supported, although there is some inadequate recording of their assessments. Equipment for practical childcare is adequate. Lack of a practical room for caring studies limits the learning opportunities for students and the practical anatomy room fails to offer privacy and a professional environment. There are insufficient library resources to meet the needs of students. All students have an e-mail account and are encouraged to use the Internet for research.

111. A restructured teaching team supports students well and promotes their self-confidence. Students are very positive about their courses and the support they receive. All care and childcare students are tested and interviewed to determine the most suitable course that will align with their aspirations. Well-planned induction is used to assess learning needs. Students negotiate a learning plan which is regularly reviewed; targets are amended as required. All students have regular tutorials. Tutors offer personal support and monitor academic progress. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the additional key skills support available in the learning centre, which builds on key skills work in lessons. Students benefit from planned work experience and through participation in college-wide activities, such as 'Health Week' and 'Black History Week'.

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

112. There is a new management team, and an acting head of school. Many teachers at the time of the inspection were recently appointed. Teachers have vocationally relevant qualifications and experience. Development reviews ensure that staff have the opportunity to update their experience to meet the needs of their jobs. The head of school promotes supportive working relationships. New staff are enthused and motivated by an induction programme that gives them a grasp of wider college issues. There is good communication within the school and the college, and regular meetings. The high turnover of teachers in 2000/01 has placed extra pressure on those remaining in post, but they have worked hard to maintain standards. However, there has been less monitoring of the quality of teaching, assessment and internal verification. A number of new systems have been introduced to improve internal verification and moderation, but at the time of the inspection it was too early to judge their effectiveness. The department has a number of partnerships with nursery providers and is seeking to strengthen these and improve work-based assessment and learning. Data on pass and retention rates were not interpreted well in the self-assessment report. Some strengths were exaggerated and some weaknesses overlooked. Managers have established good links with a wide range of organisations including those involved in HE, early years and childcare development partnerships.

## Visual arts

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

### *Strengths*

- good pass rates on the diploma in foundation studies
- very good or excellent teaching and learning
- effective management and imaginative leadership
- very good resources
- courses responsive to local need.

### *Weaknesses*

- students' late arrival and poor attendance, notably for key skills
- some poor retention and pass rates.

### *Scope of provision*

113. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time provision in the visual arts, comprising art and design, graphic design and fashion. Courses at entry, intermediate and advanced levels are available during the day and, in some cases, in the evening. The awards are of national diploma, GCE A level, foundation studies, CGLI and LOCN. The course on skills for creative art is run at entry level for students with learning difficulties. At the time of the inspection, 185 adult students and 159 students aged 16 to 18 followed full-time courses. Some 48 students were registered for evening classes and there were 103 other part-time students, mostly attending day courses. A new national diploma course in textiles was introduced in 2001.

### *Achievement and standards*

114. Most pass rates are at or above national averages. Rates for the diploma in foundation studies have improved over the three years 1999 to 2000 and match the national average. In 2000, 88% of students on this course progressed to HE or related employment. Their standard of attainment was very good. In the best work, students show evidence of extended exploration, experimentation and enquiry. They make confident use of the local area as a resource. Students work with enthusiasm, and show independence of thought. The GCE A-level course in art and graphics has had results below national averages. The pass rates for the national diploma in design, level 3, in 1999 and 2000 were at or above the national averages, but fell to just below in 2001. The standards of attainment observed in lessons and in students' work are mostly good or very good. At advanced levels, work is

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technically very sound and shows a good grasp of the principles of design in both graphics and fashion.

115. Retention rates are often at the national average. However, the rate is poor on the CGLI 7900 creative studies part 1 course. On the national diploma in design, it has fallen over the last three years to around the national average.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in Visual arts, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
CGLI 7900	3	No. of starts	96	67	28
		% retention	55	43	50
		% pass rate	66	72	78
LOCN fashion enterprise	3	No. of starts	*	*	16
		% retention	*	*	69
		% pass rate	*	*	100
National diploma in design (2 year)	3	No. of starts	44	39	63
		% retention	86	74	73
		% pass rate	100	88	79
Diploma in foundation studies (1 year)	3	No. of starts	17	23	17
		% retention	82	78	94
		% pass rate	91	94	100
GNVQ art and design (2 year)	3	No. of starts	22	21	21
		% retention	59	86	76
		% pass rate	80	*	79

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

116. Teaching is of a high standard on all courses. It is sometimes outstanding. Students are highly motivated and committed to their courses. They benefit from the expertise and relevant up-to-date subject knowledge of teachers, who are often practitioners in their own fields. Courses are planned in depth and have good schemes of work. Teachers are accomplished at meeting the individual needs of students and successfully link learning to previous lessons. In a lesson for the BTEC foundation studies diploma, students worked independently on chalk drawings. The teacher skilfully introduced the lesson by reminding them of their previous experience of this task. An 'artist in residence' supported their work and challenged their thinking in individual discussions. Students were helped to produce some very imaginative work.

117. Teachers recognise that the provision of key skills is important by teachers. However, whilst some students understand their relevance, especially in IT, the integration of application of number with core studies has still to be achieved. Students' attendance at courses is poor, particularly for key skills and their late arrival is also an issue. Both have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers often give a generous 15 minute allowance before regarding students as being late which does little to motivate students to improve their attendance and to be punctual.

118. The fashion and graphics areas are very well resourced. In the national diploma in fashion course, students benefit from drawing classes. A new computer 'U4ia' system has improved students' attainment. Overall, they have access to good IT facilities, including specialist applications, which help their learning. The learning centre is used effectively to develop students' research skills. The use of the print area for general art teaching is unsatisfactory.

119. Students work in a very supportive and caring environment. They receive appropriate guidance both before joining the college and during their programmes of study. Induction is thorough. Students have individual learning plans, which are monitored throughout the course. Basic skills support is good. Assessment is thorough and constructive and links in to the subject tutorial system. Tutors help students to develop their confidence and deepen their understanding of the work. Students undertake many and varied visits to galleries and exhibitions which are of great value to their studies. Links with the local community are strong. Students of graphics have undertaken a number of projects for outside agencies.

***Leadership and management***

120. The head of school gives a clear sense of direction and purpose to the area. Management decisions are discussed in the school and there is a strong sense of unity amongst the teaching team. Management systems are effective. Performance indicators are established. Targets are set, and appropriate action taken to monitor progress towards meeting them. Course reviews are thorough, but value added data is not made full use of. Some aspects of management and quality assurance are hindered in their effectiveness by

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inconsistencies in data on students' numbers and achievements. Self-assessment is rigorous and all staff feel involved in the process. Inspectors agreed with most strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. The range of provision is responsive to the needs of students. Planned developments include an expansion of links with the local community, especially to improve the employment prospects of students.



## Performing arts

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

### *Strengths*

- good use of professional expertise
- excellent specialist resources
- extensive range of qualification and performance opportunities
- high-quality dance and drama work in a professional environment
- good progression to HE and relevant employment.

### *Weaknesses*

- poor student attendance on media and popular music courses
- poor retention rates on first diploma performing arts and technical theatre.

### *Scope of provision*

121. At the time of the inspection there were 171 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 167 aged 19 or over. In addition, there were 113 part-time students, most of whom were adults. The curriculum area offers an extensive range of programmes in dance, drama, media, popular music and sound engineering at levels 2 and 3. Courses are validated by Edexcel or the LOCN and students can incorporate GCE A-level subjects, where appropriate. Dance is a significant provision and students who enrol do so at levels appropriate to their ability and experience. Evening programmes are offered in sound engineering and GCE A/AS-level drama.

### *Achievement and standards*

122. Pass rates are above national averages on most courses. They are well above on the music and drama access courses and on the national diploma in performing arts. External verifier reports confirm that national standards are attained across the provision. Retention rates are often good. Only on the first diploma in performing arts and the technical theatre national diploma are rates poor. The overall attendance rate in the lessons observed during inspection was 71%. The quality of much of the drama and dance work is exceptionally good. Dance particularly benefits from the close professional links that are fostered. In drama, students work at a sophisticated level when devising performances or using Stanislavskian techniques to help them prepare audition speeches. Ensemble playing in popular music is often proficient. Generally, students express themselves with perception and sensitivity. There is good progress for dance and drama students to prestigious HE institutions, even though competition for places is intense. Fewer musicians progress to HE

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but significant numbers enter the profession as freelance performers. Some drama students have, exceptionally, gone directly into employment in the professional theatre.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in Performing arts, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
BTEC first diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	27	18	22
		% retention	71	83	82
		% pass rate	100	93	94
BTEC national diploma in performing arts*	3	No. of starts	63	67	80
		% retention	73	72	73
		% pass rate	100	80	93
Access to music	3	No. of starts	38	18	22
		% retention	71	83	82
		% pass rate	100	93	94
Dance foundation access	3	No. of starts	54	53	47
		% retention	75	74	66
		% pass rate	96	43	74
Drama foundation access	3	No. of starts	18	19	13
		% retention	89	89	85
		% pass rate	100	94	100
BTEC national diploma in media studies	3	No. of starts	17	21	23
		% retention	59	71	57
		% pass rate	100	92	86

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* includes data for technical theatre and popular music

***Quality of education and training***

123. Much teaching is good or better, but a substantial proportion is no more than satisfactory. Teachers and support staff are well qualified. Relations between staff and students are harmonious and students appreciate the efforts made on their behalf. The insistence on employing experienced, often notable, current practitioners as visiting tutors underpins the vocational relevance of programmes. Dancers are required to be dressed in coloured leotards that denote their current level of achievement and to be warmed-up before lessons begin in order to maximise the use of time. Students work with rigorous concentration in dancing classes. Demanding teachers make full use of the outstanding dance facilities, which include barres and mirrored walls in all four studios. The teaching of ballet benefits from the use of répétiteurs. Students of film can talk perceptively about Film Noir, although students of media show an underdeveloped understanding of semiotics. First diploma students are helped to acquire study skills and are expected to articulate views with perception and sensitivity. Performance skills are tested through a challenging series of public performances for all students. Teachers expect the outcomes of evaluations, including those of their peers, to influence the work of students in the future. Dancers audition to participate in the college's highly regarded touring company that visits local schools.

124. Students are well supported. Induction and tutorials are well organised and constructive.

125. Staff arrange extensive enrichment activities that support and develop subject and career understanding. Assignments are written and set to a common format. Assessment criteria are published. Written assignments are helpfully annotated. Students are required to comment on the quality of marking on the feedback sheet. The key skills programme bears little relevance to the vocational area. Individual instrumental tuition is available for all music students.

126. The technical theatre provision includes a dedicated production room, a good three-dimensional workshop, and technician support. The college theatre is of a professional standard with fold-away seating, sprung floor and good lighting facilities. Although the accommodation for music is less impressive, equipment and instruments are of a high specification. The overall provision for accommodation is excellent, although some classes are taught in inappropriate venues.

***Leadership and management***

127. Curriculum management is effective. The head of school and programme area leaders meet weekly and information reaches other staff through regular briefings. Programme teams are required to set pass and retention targets and review performance against targets accurately. There are rigorous application procedures that include auditions and written tasks, in addition to an interview. Nonetheless, retention, pass and attendance rates remain a concern. The self-assessment report failed to give due recognition to these issues. The self-assessment for the area is written by the management team and incorporates course reviews, external verifiers' reports and other outside views. Inspectors agreed with

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most of its conclusions, with the exception of the quality of teaching which they found to be less consistently good than the assessment in the report. Staff development, also available to visiting tutors, is linked directly to identified needs, and staff are encouraged and helped to update their skills. There are effective arrangements for peer observation and for staff to acquire teaching qualifications. The contribution of visiting tutors is additionally recognised by paying them to attend course team meetings. An allowance of hours recognises the considerable extra time public productions demand of teachers. Income from the letting of facilities supplements part-time teaching and production budgets.

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## Humanities

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

### *Strengths*

- good GCE A-level results
- good progression to HE from adult and youth access courses
- much good teaching
- good study support materials
- strong subject support for students
- active promotion of students' self-esteem and confidence
- effective measures to widen participation.

### *Weaknesses*

- low retention rates in some subjects
- poor pass rates in some GCSE subjects
- poor attendance in some lessons.

### *Scope of provision*

128. The area offers a good range of courses at levels 1 to 3. Courses are offered in government and politics, law, psychology and sociology at GCE A and AS levels. Citizenship, critical thinking, and European studies are available at GCE AS level. GCSE provision is in law and humanities through a GCSE-based, 'Pathways' course. There are access to HE courses for both adults and 16 to 18 year old 'youth entry' students. Access to FE courses include an adult learners' course and the 'Springboard' course for students aged 16 to 18. The inspection covered all subjects offered. At the time of the inspection there were 336 students taking these subjects.

### *Achievement and standards*

129. Pass rates at GCE A level are good, and show a pattern of improvement over three years. The results in 2001 in GCE A-level law were outstanding, and well above the national average; there were a high proportion of grades A to C. Recent pass rates at GCE AS level are very good in law and good in European studies and sociology. At GCSE level, pass rates were poor in psychology and social studies. The pass rates for the access to HE courses are good. Progression to HE from this course and the youth entry to HE course are both good.

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All access and youth entry learners who have applied to universities have been offered places. Although students' retention rates have improved since the last inspection they are still below the national averages in GCE AS-level psychology and GCE A-level sociology. Attendance rates have also improved since the last inspection but there is poor attendance in some lessons.

130. Standards of attainment observed in lessons and in students' work are generally satisfactory or better. Students' written work is sound. Level 3 students are able to carry out independent research. In critical thinking they were able to devise their own fallacies to help demonstrate their understanding of the concept: 'all boys play football; my sister plays football, therefore my sister is a boy'.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in Humanities, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE law	2	No. of starts	46	22	26
		% retention	46	68	62
		% pass rate	38	27	50
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	63	57	66
		% retention	67	68	71
		% pass rate	75	85	95
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	85	72	83
		% retention	55	54	70
		% pass rate	71	76	79
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	45	22	40
		% retention	71	55	58
		% pass rate	65	56	79
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	60	51	44
		% retention	57	61	61
		% pass rate	100	74	81

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

***Quality of education and training***

131. All teaching is satisfactory or better, and much is good. Teaching is well planned and clearly structured. In classrooms there is always a sense of order and discipline. Good working relationships between teachers and students are established quickly, and students are encouraged to work collaboratively. Teachers actively promote students' self-esteem and confidence. They congratulate them on their contributions and provide ways in which they can achieve success in classroom activities. In effective lessons, students are intellectually challenged and expected to gain knowledge and academic skills rapidly. Some teachers help students systematically to acquire new specialist vocabulary. When students meet new

concepts, some teachers ask them to apply their existing knowledge to evaluate or apply them. They are encouraged as far as possible to organise their own learning through self-run study groups for GCE A and AS levels, and through the homework club, as part of the GCSE course. Students make increasingly good use of IT in researching and producing their work. They use computer-based tests to check their own progress in psychology. Students develop key skills through a mixture of integrated assignments, short workshops and subject teaching. They are enthusiastic about their opportunities to attend external conferences and Saturday schools at a university.

132. In some lessons, not all learning opportunities are taken up. Some questioning is undirected and techniques are not fully developed to allow students to respond critically. When learners do make contributions some teachers do not make best use of the opportunity to consolidate learning and to discuss how the students' comments fit with existing knowledge.

133. Many teachers are external examiners and this experience is reflected in assignments that are set. Work is marked and returned quickly and students are given the opportunity to have individual discussions about their work. The best feedback sheets include clear advice on how students can improve their work. Some assignments require students to use ICT.

134. Support for students is strong and sometimes imaginative. Students value the amount of personal support and subject guidance which is readily provided by teachers. They know what progress they are making against clear targets. Revision weeks are offered as well as 'catch up' workshops. There are effective measures for widening participation, such as 'Springboard' and courses for adults at level 1, and the 'youth entry' to HE course. There are no formal entry requirements for many courses, but interviews and initial assessment are used well. Visiting speakers, such as black barristers, act as positive role models for students. Successful links with universities ensure that students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have the best possible opportunities to go on to HE.

135. Subjects are appropriately resourced. Teachers have produced good study support guides and materials. Some of these are available on the college's intranet. Accommodation is satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified. Staff development opportunities are good and there is sound support for new teachers.

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

136. Teachers work as an effective team in the academic centre. Courses are well managed. Quality assurance procedures lead to improvement. For example, the college recognised that GCSE pass rates were poor in psychology and social studies, and removed the subjects from the curriculum, offering access to FE and the 'Pathways' courses as better options. A weakness in tutoring was addressed through additional training and careful documentation. The self-assessment process is thorough. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report.

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## English

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

### *Strengths*

- some high pass rates
- good guidance and support for students
- well-led provision.

### *Weaknesses*

- below average retention rates on most courses
- some unsatisfactory teaching
- poor attendance rates and lack of punctuality.

### *Scope of provision*

137. The provision in English caters for approximately 136 students, both full time and part time. GCE A and AS-level courses are offered in English language, English literature, English language and literature, and communications. The school has introduced level 1 courses to meet the needs more appropriately of a large number of young people, for whom existing programmes were unsuitable. Approximately 100 younger students now follow these courses, which focus on key skills, within a range of vocational options that suit individual preferences. The course is accredited through key skills and LOCN units. Students on the access to sciences and humanities courses follow an English pathway, also accredited by LOCN.

138. The provision of English as a foreign language (EFL) is located in the school of English. The EFL programme offers part-time day and evening courses from elementary (entry level) to advanced courses (level 3). Optional courses are offered in computing, oral communication skills and writing skills. The provision caters for 220 students.

### *Achievement and standards*

139. The standards achieved in lessons on GCE A/AS-level, and GCSE courses in English are satisfactory. On GCE A-level courses students demonstrate an appropriate level of understanding in their written work. On GCSE courses, although the expression and accuracy of some students' written English is weak, the standard of debate in lessons is sound. On access courses, students produced good work and demonstrated a keen understanding of literature. Students develop skills of independent study, through work on assignments which require research. On EFL courses, standards are high. Students' written work shows that they are making significant progress in learning the language.

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140. Retention rates are below the national average on most English courses, although they improved in 2001. For EFL programmes, retention rates are satisfactory. They are above the national average for the University of Cambridge languages examinations scheme (UCLES) certificate of proficiency in English. Completion rates for students on short courses are high. Retention rates are poor for the UCLES certificate in advanced English. On some courses, attendance is poor and students arrive late.

141. Pass rates are good on some GCSE and EFL courses. For example, results for GCE A level and GCSE English language, GCE A-level English literature and English language/literature are above national averages. In EFL, pass rates are high on the UCLES preliminary English test, and short alternative courses such as the international English language testing system, business English and certificate for communicative skills in English (CCSE). Pass rates are below national averages for GCE AS-level English language and the UCLES first certificate in English and certificate in advanced English. Based on an analysis of GCSE results and a prediction of their likely progress, students taking GCE A-level English subjects over the last three years have not progressed as well as expected. There is good progression onto other courses and to HE.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in English, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
UCLES preliminary English test	1	No. of starts	56	73	76
		% retention	74	59	67
		% pass rate	60	84	74
UCLES first certificate in English	2	No. of starts	201	124	81
		% retention	61	62	71
		% pass rate	48	33	53
GCSE English Language	2	No. of starts	284	230	157
		% retention	57	62	61
		% pass rate	87	89	96
GCE A-level English language (1 year)	3	No. of starts	32	35	15
		% retention	47	55	47
		% pass rate	80	82	86

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCE A-level English language (2year)	3	No. of starts	23	18	25
		% retention	25	41	64
		% pass rate	80	71	93
GCE A-level English literature (1 year)	3	No. of starts	28	26	13
		% retention	82	30	69
		% pass rate	91	83	100

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

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

142. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. However, the proportion of good teaching observed was not particularly high, and 15% of lessons were less than satisfactory. In EFL all the teaching observed was good.

143. Effective lessons are well planned and appropriately demanding. Teachers promote learning through a well-judged combination of whole class, group and pair work and through class discussion. Activities are suitably varied and enjoyable. They hold students' attention. In one English lesson, the teacher began with a quiz as a means of recapitulating on the key points from the previous lesson. The teacher then held students' concentration through group work, discussion and timed activities and created an element of competition. Although in most lessons, teachers respond to the individual needs of students, planning for this approach is not evident in schemes of work or lesson plans. Teachers are demanding of students and they respond well. Relationships between students and teachers are good and contribute to increasing students' confidence. In unsatisfactory lessons, there was poor planning and teachers often failed to promote learning, challenge students or check that they were understanding the work.

144. Marking on English courses was not always thorough. In some students' course work there is inadequate written feedback and teachers fail to identify weaknesses in students' work.

145. On EFL courses, students are helped to develop skills in independent learning through homework and the use of the learning centres. Teachers' feedback is helpful in enabling students to develop their language skills. The implementation of the EFL marking policy is effective. Students are set homework on a regular basis and their progress is regularly monitored.

146. Teachers are well qualified. All teachers have received IT and multimedia training, although, as yet, there is little planned use of ICT in the curriculum. The English base room contains a good range of resources. In the learning centre, students are well supported with books and other materials and have ready access to helpful staff. In the EFL area accommodation is good, and has useful displays of students' work. The school is well equipped with a language and computer laboratory.

147. There is good support for students. Tutorials are effectively organised and are appreciated by students. In English, additional support is integrated and delivered mainly by teachers of the subject. The integration of key skills is an important feature of the provision for younger students. In EFL, teachers give good personal attention to students individually. Lesson time is sometimes effectively devoted to the correction of common errors found in their work. Some, but not all, teachers challenge students' lateness, which is recorded and followed up through the tutorial process.

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

148. The provision is well managed. There is good leadership and managers have high expectations. Managers have been effective in raising pass and retention rates on some courses through the implementation of college-wide strategies. There are regular reviews and monitoring of students' progress, made more rigorous with the introduction of individual learning plans.

149. Course reviews ensure that the curriculum is responsive to the needs of students. For example, in EFL, most courses offer a choice of two qualifications, to help all students achieve a satisfactory outcome. The targets set for retention and pass rates are based on realistic expectations of students, and monitored effectively by course teams. There is a comprehensive programme of college-based staff development, linked to yearly staff appraisals.

**English for speakers of other languages**

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

***Strengths***

- programme responsive to local needs
- good planning and management of the curriculum
- effective staff team
- very good individual support for students
- good achievement by students.

***Weaknesses***

- insufficient monitoring and assessment of learning
- some classes too large.

***Scope of provision***

150. The college offers a responsive programme of ESOL courses, which includes: ESOL for adults; full-time ESOL courses for learners aged 16 to 19; and ESOL vocational courses. A good range of qualifications is offered. These include: CGLI numeracy and communications; Pitmans examinations institute ESOL; English speaking board (ESB) and LOCN; ESOL and IT units; and the CCSE reading and writing units. This well-developed range of qualifications offers students the opportunity to achieve in both English and other subjects at appropriate levels. The adult programme includes evening options. The specialist vocational offer consists of ESOL computing, office skills and catering. Two ESOL courses are also run to help students enrolled on other courses. Literacy workshops are available for students who require additional literacy support. Self-access, multi-media sessions offer further opportunities for learning. Independent learning projects for students aged 16 to 19 are run in conjunction with the learning centre. At the time of the inspection there were 648 students enrolled on ESOL courses. The inspection focused on provision for students aged 16 to 19 and adults, although a sample of courses within the vocational offer was included in the inspection of other areas of learning.

***Achievement and standards***

151. Students' achievements are good. In 2000, pass rates on Pitmans, CGLI and ESB examinations exceeded 80%. Of the 251 entries for ESB examinations, all candidates passed. Some 96% passed at least one unit of the CCSE examinations. There are similar good results for other qualifications which have exceeded targets in some cases. External moderators for these qualifications report high standards of work and well-organised programmes of study.

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Students also achieve in a variety of other ways. A group of learners aged 16 to 19 has produced a magazine using ICT. Others are employed as helpers during enrolment where they act as interpreters and assist potential students. Some students from higher-level classes work as 'study buddies' in the college's literacy workshops. Teachers running one of the independent learning projects help students to make impressive progress in the development of their research and study skills. Such improvement will be of great benefit to these learners as they progress onto vocational courses. Retention rates have improved on ESOL level 1 courses and in 1999/2000, the rate was 70% which was an improvement of 57% on the previous year. Retention rates on level 3 courses have been poor but improved to 55% in 2000/01.

152. Most students achieve good standards in their written work. The pattern of attendance across the programme is good, particularly given the social and economic difficulties many of the students face. Progression is good. In 2000, 58% progressed to other ESOL courses, 28% to other courses in the college, including business, leisure and tourism, childcare and catering, and 5% obtained jobs.

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

153. An effective staff team works hard to meet the diverse needs of students, most of whom are asylum seekers and refugees. Teaching and opportunities for learning are well planned. Teaching is based on comprehensive schemes of work which include details of grammar, speaking, literacy, numeracy, IT, cross-cultural awareness and equal opportunities as well as study skills components.

154. In effective lessons, teachers share objectives with students and there is a suitable range of activities, including pair and small group work and games to develop learners oral and writing skills. In one group of boisterous students, aged 16 to 19, the teacher skilfully gained students' attention with a word game. This appealed to their competitive spirit whilst encouraging concentrated effort and co-operation. Some very effective, linguistically aware teachers provide opportunities for students to practise all four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. In a lively numeracy session, teachers used a set of leaflets advertising take-away pizzas to develop numeracy and language skills. A range of materials was available at different levels in this lesson to meet the diverse needs within the group. In less successful lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to accuracy, the modelling of language patterns and pronunciation, and they do not offer sufficient opportunity for students to practise speaking. There is insufficient monitoring and assessment of learning in some lessons. Whilst most teachers and many learners complete records of work, these are not evaluative and, in many lessons, there was little time given to a review of learning.

155. Challenging targets for retention and pass rates are set at individual course level. Punctuality and attendance policies are applied with rigour by tutors who work hard to challenge lateness and attendance issues. Assessment is well organised and most teachers give students clear and helpful feedback on the quality of their work. However, where there is an over-reliance on worksheets, marking of work does not provide students with sufficient guidance on how they may progress and improve.

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156. Students are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning and achievements. There is very good individual support for students. They are assessed and receive an effective induction. The ESOL team provides a caring and very supportive learning environment which especially benefits many of the very vulnerable young people. An effective programme of tutorials for all students includes goal setting and individual learning plans. These are at an early stage of development. There are well-mapped progression opportunities across the programme and into mainstream vocational courses. Each learner has an accreditation profile mapping progress and progression intentions. Literacy workshops have been set up to support individual literacy needs. There is much innovative practice within these workshops. They depend on the support of volunteers who are largely recruited from students who have a better command of English. These volunteers offer invaluable bilingual support and are extremely positive role models. However, they have few teaching skills and their teaching role has definite limitations. Some of the classes are too large; their size has a marked impact on the quality of learning available for individual students. Many students have significant literacy difficulties alongside few language skills and do not receive adequate support in classes, where the ratio of learner to teacher can be as high as 20:1.

157. Many teachers are well qualified and the good range of staff development activities is well used by teachers. The quality of learning environments is good, although a few classrooms are not adequate for the size of the groups being taught in them.

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

158. The planning and management of the curriculum is good. The ESOL area is organised by two programme leaders under the direction of the head of school. Management is effective and communications are good. There is an energetic commitment to improvement and the development of consistent good practice and effective teamwork. The head of school holds weekly meetings with the programme leaders and there are regular meetings with staff. The self-assessment report is informative and provides a good range of evidence to support the judgements made.

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## **Provision for students with learning difficulties**

Overall the provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

### *Strengths*

- well-planned and very effective teaching
- imaginative entry-level provision in vocational areas
- excellent real-work learning programmes
- excellent resources
- good management and co-ordination of provision.

### *Weaknesses*

- inconsistent approach to target setting and individual learning plans.

### *Scope of provision*

159. The college, through the school of supported learning, offers a range of full-time and part-time programmes for school leavers and young adults with learning difficulty and disabilities. The programmes offered are designed to provide an appropriate learning experience that is matched to the identified needs of the learner. Provision for students with severe and moderate learning difficulty focuses on the acquisition of independent learning skills that will enable them to progress to programmes with a more vocational focus. An 'individual vocational programme' caters for more able students aged 16 to 19 who have left school with few or no qualifications and who frequently make their presence felt through their challenging behaviour. This programme initially focuses on personal development, basic skills and confidence building. Students are placed onto vocational programmes across the college for part of the week, as determined by their individual learning goals and programme. The school also supports full-time entry-level provision provided by the schools of construction, hospitality and leisure, performance arts and creative arts.

### *Achievement and standards*

160. Achievements within the school are good. The achievement of learners is measured, recorded and recognised using a series of internal and external accreditation. Targets for achievement are set for students, for the programmes and for the school. A system for measuring value added has been developed and is used effectively. It indicates that most students add considerably to their knowledge and achievement whilst at the college. Targets for individuals are challenging and students are aware of the goals they must seek to achieve. The attendance of the students, at 80%, is well above the national average of 66% for similar provision in other colleges.



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161. The standards of work achieved by most students are consistently high. In real work situations, such as the access to horticulture and team enterprise programmes, students are prepared for effective participation in the workplace and the skills learnt often exceed assessment objectives.

### *Quality of education and training*

162. Most teaching is consistently very good and some is excellent. Some 75% of the lessons observed by inspectors were awarded grades 1 and 2 and none were graded less than satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic and students are well motivated. Teaching is exceptionally well planned to ensure that the majority of sessions offer a range of activities which have an appropriate degree of challenge. Individual students' needs are accommodated within lessons and there is skilful class leadership to ensure that all students participate, respond and progress. In effective lessons, students understand why they are being asked to do a task, how well they are doing and how they can improve. Learning support workers are used effectively to oversee and support the progress of individual learners. In a small number of sessions, some of the students are insufficiently challenged and adopt passive roles. There is insufficient use of IT by students and teachers in lessons.

163. An effective tutorial system is used to monitor and support students' progress. Initial assessment often starts whilst the student is attending college on a school-link programme. Initial assessment is used to inform the individual learning programme and to identify the most appropriate programme. On joining the college as a full-time student, initial assessment continues through an extended induction. Assessment continues throughout the period of the students' studies. However, there are some inconsistencies across the school over the process of recording students' progress. Student self-assessment and peer-assessment are also used to establish individual learning goals.

164. Curriculum design and content provide a sound framework for student development and contain aims and objectives that are realistic and achievable. There is an appropriate balance between preparing students to be more independent and providing work preparation skills. Students enjoy their college experience and grow in confidence during their time there. They place a high value on the levels of support they receive and respond positively to the challenges and expectations placed upon them. Most have the opportunity to attend residential activities, away from the college. Activities are planned to enable them to apply and consolidate the skills which they have learnt in a different context. There is also a European exchange programme with the Netherlands for students with severe learning difficulties.

165. Resources for teaching are very good. A modern independent living area enables students to practise essential life skills in a realistic environment. Facilities for the team enterprise and horticulture programmes provide a real work production environment. All full-time programmes have dedicated base rooms which are well equipped and provide students with a sense of ownership and place within the college. Space within some of the base rooms is inadequate for some practical activity. There is good access to IT facilities

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within base rooms and there is a separate computer room. Students on entry-level programmes in vocational schools also have access to good and relevant facilities.

***Leadership and management***

166. The provision is well managed. The desire to help students to develop into adults, with a sense of responsibility and an awareness of what they can do, underpins all developments within the school. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and many have developed considerable experience. Staff development is promoted and staff regularly update their skills and knowledge. There is a clear sense of direction and the commitment to continuously improve provision. Managers and staff regularly review their performance and seek to develop better teaching and better outcomes for students. Self-assessment is thorough and identified the strengths noted by inspectors. Entry-level provision in vocational areas is being developed as the first phase of a planned strategy to reduce the present curriculum offer and provide greater opportunity for students with learning difficulty and disability within the wider college curriculum. Existing vocational entry programmes are operated jointly by staff from the school who provide the tutorial support to students and vocational staff who provide appropriate work-skill training. These programmes are highly effective in developing the skills of learners.

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## Basic skills

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

### *Strengths*

- effective additional support
- good pass rates
- effective teaching
- good diagnostic assessment for learners with specific learning needs.

### *Weaknesses*

- weak individual learning plans
- underdeveloped assessment of basic skills.

### *Scope of provision*

167. The college offers both discrete courses in basic skills, and additional basic skills support in a number of college schools. Basic skills teaching is an important and effectively integrated element of most full-time and part-time courses. In 1999/2000, 700 learners received additional support. At the time of the inspection, around 1,900 learners were identified by the college as basic skills students. Of these, some 500 were under the age of 19. Basic skills students may take examinations such as CGLI wordpower, numberpower and key skills. The college's extensive portfolio of access and LOCN courses offers students the opportunity to progress to more advanced levels.

### *Achievement and standards*

168. Most pass rates in examinations are at or above national averages. Those for achievement tests in literacy are well above. Results for courses in basic English, communications and application of number all exceed national averages. Levels of attainment for open college courses, numeracy and key skills communication are all satisfactory. Results for other qualifications range from good to satisfactory. For many learners such achievements are their first successful experience in gaining a qualification. Students' attainment in lessons is good.

169. 'Springboard' is a scheme devised by the college for young people who wish to enter FE, but who have not achieved the necessary GCSE grades. Whilst the retention rate for adults on the scheme is only around 50%, those who complete the course achieve the qualification. Successful students then pursue a GCSE course or progress to courses in the performing arts, art, business studies, engineering and vocational access. In courses for students aged 16 to 19, the completion rate is about 70% and the pass rate 100%. There is a high record of progression into FE. 'Springboard' students' attainment in lessons is good.

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170. Students who receive additional support for literacy, numeracy or dyslexia on mainstream courses perform better than those who have not been identified as needing support. In 1999/2000, retention rates for such students, in five vocational areas, were above the college average of 81.9%. Similarly, the achievement of supported students in examinations in four vocational areas was better than the college average of 50%.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in basic skills, 1999 to 2001*

Qualification	Level	Completion year	1999	2000	2001
Basic literacy skills (English)	X	No. of starts	*	145	267
		% retention	*	81	70
		% pass rate	*	33	98
LOCN	X	No. of starts	533	708	729
		% retention	69	69	66
		% pass rate	99	45	100
Achievement tests (literacy)	1	No. of starts	31	*	147
		% retention	100	*	97
		% pass rate	100	*	100
CGLI 3611 communication	1	No. of starts	266	476	232
		% retention	85	69	81
		% pass rate	84	82	77
Key skills (number)	1	No. of starts	*	*	338
		% retention	*	*	96
		% pass rate	*	*	62
Key skills (communication)	1	No. of starts	*	*	273
		% retention	*	*	96
		% pass rate	*	*	74

CGLI 3750 numeracy	1	No. of starts	427	550	593
		% retention	85	74	71
		% pass rate	79	79	85

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course not running

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

171. The teaching of students with additional support needs is effective across the college. Learner referral systems are comprehensive. Students are identified through the cross-college assessment process, through the work of course tutors or through self-referral. Individual education plans for learners with dyslexia are thorough. Teachers have clear learning objectives for each learner and these objectives are regularly reviewed. Lessons are purposeful and students are clear on what they need to do. Teachers have good classroom management skills and are effective at promoting a pleasant, productive working atmosphere. Students respond well to structured questions and understand the objectives of the lessons. They are set work at appropriate levels and encouraged to use their study skills. Worksheets are attractively presented. Supported lessons and one-to-one tuition help students with their English and with organising, planning and clarifying tasks. There have been some isolated cases of support needs being identified late but this matter has now been remedied. All the students interviewed by inspectors indicated that the additional support they received had enabled them to stay on their courses and achieve their learning goals.

172. Students joining basic skills courses are assessed, using Basic Skills Agency tests, before being directed on to a course at the appropriate level. Learning goals within students' individual learning plans are too general to enable students to clearly understand their targets, or to measure how far they have progressed. The college has identified this issue of learning goals as an area for improvement in its quality improvement action plan. Schemes of work and lesson plans put too great an emphasis on the requirements of awarding bodies rather than the needs of individual students. Computers are available in the learning resource centre, but not within general classrooms that are used for basic skills teaching.

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

173. The deputy principal is responsible for the strategic management of basic skills, emphasising the college's strong commitment to this provision. The responsibility for the operational management of basic skills lies with the heads of schools. The self-assessment report did not cover all aspects of the college's provision, but inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified. The college has an ambitious agenda for the development of basic skills and some aspects are not yet fully in place. The college has identified in its basic skills action plan that there is a need for further staff development and training, that co-ordination within schools and across the college needs strengthening, and

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that all aspects of the new standards and curriculum in basic skills need dissemination. In addition, new courses need developing. The college received an audit of basic skills by the London Language and Literacy Unit in September 2001. There is a basic skills working group, which monitors developments, develops training for staff and proposes a basic skills strategy for the college.

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

Level	16–18 %	19+ %
1	20.3	30.8
2	46.1	36.0
3	15.8	11.2
4/5	0.6	2.2
Other	17.2	19.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in autumn 2001*

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

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	1,397	5,865	25
Agriculture	2	10	0
Construction	252	908	4
Engineering	402	660	3
Business	610	2,258	10
Hotel and catering	675	894	5
Health and community care	355	1,242	5
Art and design	438	629	4
Humanities	2,631	3,245	20
Basic education	2,165	4,916	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,927</b>	<b>20,627</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.*

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,055	1,193	1,400	2,192	3,019	2,369
	Retention rate (%)	76	67	81	80	71	74
	National average (%)	75	76	N/a	73	76	*
	Pass rate (%)	78	56	64	82	67	70
	National average (%)	59	64	N/a	58	66	*
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,404	1,855	3,243	2,602	3,214	3,982
	Retention rate (%)	70	65	67	76	73	71
	National average (%)	72	73	*	74	74	*
	Pass rate (%)	73	68	49	75	66	65
	National average (%)	65	69	*	63	66	*
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	978	1,000	1,892	1,958	1,657	1,677
	Retention rate (%)	74	67	77	75	72	78
	National average (%)	73	75	*	75	76	*
	Pass rate (%)	78	60	67	83	67	74
	National average (%)	65	66	*	63	67	*
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	4	2	3	863	218	45
	Retention rate (%)	50	50	100	81	81	84
	National average (%)	**	**	**	78	75	**
	Pass rate (%)	50	50	100	84	51	90
	National average (%)	**	**	**	56	55	**

*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).*

*\* data not available*

*\*\* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

*Sources of information:*

1. *National averages: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.*
2. *College rates for 1997/98 – 1998/99: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.*
3. *College rates for 1999/2000 to 2000/01: provided by the college.*



**Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection**

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	55	35	10	109
Level 2 (intermediate)	71	23	6	69
Level 1 (foundation)	71	25	4	85
Other sessions	69	26	5	43
<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>306</b>

# MONITORING INSPECTION OF LEWISHAM COLLEGE

*Published April 2003*

## **Outcome of monitoring inspection**

The provision in the curriculum area of **construction** is now **satisfactory**.

## **Background**

Lewisham College was inspected in November 2001. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory in all curriculum areas inspected, except construction, where it was found to be unsatisfactory.

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

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

## **Monitoring inspections**

In accordance with the above procedures, monitoring inspections of construction took place on the 6 and 7 November 2002, and 2 and 3 April 2003.

## **Construction**

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

## Strengths

- good teaching
- good personal support for students
- generous sponsorship of equipment from the building services industry.

## Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on most courses
- poor pass rates on level 1 courses
- insufficient work-based assessment for modern apprentices
- underdeveloped key skills
- inadequate use of IT to support teaching and learning.

Following the monitoring inspections, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that the overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**. In 2002, pass rates on level 1 courses improved to 90%, which is significantly above the national average; pass rates at level 2 are well above the national average. At level 3 pass rates are now at the national average and any courses that were below the national average have been withdrawn. Retention rates overall are at the national average but are below at levels 2 and 3. The current retention rates for work-based trainees are good. Assessment of modern apprentices has now improved and is effective. Work-based procedures are in place and have been implemented. The use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support teaching and learning is now good. All courses now have some element of ILT. Teachers have been supported to produce interactive learning materials, which were observed in use during observations. Students articulated the use of IT on their course and gave examples of its use in designing and checking specifications for building projects. All lessons observed in March 2003 was satisfactory or good, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Students spoke positively about their teachers and the individual support they received. They reported that feedback is excellent and very helpful in helping them to learn. Key skills developments are progressing in construction with the help of specialist staff and a clear strategy for implementation.