



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Inspection report

Havant College

Dates of inspection: 27 September–1 October 2004

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Reference:

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Havant College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Maria Edwards
Address of college:	New Road Havant Hampshire PO9 1QL
Telephone number:	023 9248 3856
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Chair of governors:	Bill Archibald
Unique reference number:	130702
Name of reporting inspector:	Gloria Dolan HMI
Dates of inspection:	27 September–1 October 2004

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

Havant College is a sixth form college situated in South East Hampshire. It attracts students from Havant, Portsmouth and a wide geographical area extending to Chichester and Bognor Regis in the East, Petersfield in the North and Fareham in the West. There are four general colleges of further education (FE) and one sixth form college within a 12-mile radius of Havant College. Links have been established between the college, seven 11 to 16 comprehensive schools and eight other local schools. Approximately 85% of students in the Hampshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area remain in education or training beyond 16 years of age. The college's mission statement is 'to ensure the maximum achievement and fulfilment of all its students by providing high-quality education and training opportunities for all in the local community, thereby sustaining and enhancing the college's reputation for excellence'.

The college provides full-time courses mainly for students aged 16 to 18. Most students take level 3 courses. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,387 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 14 students aged over 19. Most part-time students are adults and there were 797 aged 19 and over and 5 aged 16 to 18. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is approximately 2% which reflects the local population. Some 55% of full-time students are female. Courses are offered in all areas of learning except land-based and construction. The majority of college provision is funded by the LSC, including a range of leisure courses.

How effective is the college?

The quality of provision is outstanding in science and mathematics and visual arts and media. It is good in business administration, sports, leisure and tourism, humanities and in English, languages and communications. Leadership and management are also good.

Key strengths

- ethos which promotes high aspirations and achievement
 - high pass rates on many courses
 - percentage of high grades on many general certificate of education (GCE) A2 courses
 - high retention rates on level 3 courses
 - high standard of student work
 - much good teaching
 - very effective marking and assessment on most courses
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- wide range of GCE advanced-level (A-level) courses and options.

What should be improved

- progress made by students at advanced subsidiary-level (AS level) and GCE A2 relative to their previous attainment at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE)
- retention and pass rates on courses at levels 1 and 2
- meeting the individual needs of students in lessons
- key skills provision
- access to accommodation for people with mobility difficulties.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	<p>Outstanding. Pass rates at GCE A2 are consistently very good; they are at or above national averages at AS level, outstanding in GCSE mathematics, but low in GCSE biology. Students' achievement relative to their prior attainment is good in many subjects. Students' written work is of a high standard and marking and assessment are excellent. Innovative use of technology in some lessons enhances learning.</p>
Business, administration, management and professional	<p>Good. Retention and pass rates on most AS-level and GCE A2 courses and higher-level courses are good. There is much good teaching, but some lessons do not fully meet the needs of individual students. Pastoral support and careers advice are good. Students receive prompt, clear and constructive feedback on assignments, but too many national vocational qualification (NVQ) assessments of employed students take place in college.</p>
Sports, leisure and tourism	<p>Good. Retention and pass rates are generally good and they are high on the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) travel and tourism course. There is good teaching and learning in sport, but the more able students are not extended sufficiently in some lessons. Students' progress is monitored effectively, but the marking of some travel and leisure assignments contains insufficient feedback. Good practical sports facilities enhance learning effectively.</p>
Visual arts and media	<p>Outstanding. There are high retention and pass rates on most courses. Teaching is well planned and very effective with teachers working productively in teams during lessons. Students receive very good academic and pastoral support and they produce excellent standards of work. Some accommodation for film and media is too small for the numbers of students using it.</p>

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Humanities	Good. There are well-sustained, high retention and pass rates on most courses. Much good or better teaching, which uses a range of resources effectively, stimulates student learning. Insufficient attention is given to meeting individual learning needs in lesson planning. There is a good range of level 3 courses and option choices.
English and communications	Good. Retention and pass rates at GCE advanced level (A level) in English subjects are high in most subjects. Much teaching is good or very good and is particularly strong in level 3 English lessons. Many students produce work of a high standard and use specialist terminology confidently. Lessons do not sufficiently meet the needs of individual students in communication studies and GCSE English.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are good. The principal provides strong leadership. Pass and retention rates on AS-level and GCE A2 courses, the main areas of work for the college, are high. Teaching and learning are generally good or better and standards of student work are high. Curriculum management is good in half of the areas inspected and satisfactory in others. Teamwork is good. Governance is outstanding and financial management is sound. Recent management restructuring has enhanced human resources and management information. Quality review processes are thorough, but self-assessment action plans are often imprecise. The college is not fully meeting its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act. It has made an effective response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), but access to some areas of the college is difficult for people with restricted mobility. Spending on staff development is low. Standards have been established to help review the performance of managers, but not of teaching staff. The college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college responds rapidly to identified needs. Student induction and tutorial programmes highlight issues relating to diversity, equality and active citizenship. The college has a coherent strategy for student support. Students' additional needs are assessed on entry and are well supported. Partnerships with local schools focus on raising the participation rates of young people aged 16 in full-time education. The college offers a range of basic skills courses that are taught in community and workplace settings. These courses have been highly successful in attracting adults to part-time learning. College policies for equal opportunities, disabilities, race relations and child protection address legal requirements. However, there is no systematic review and evaluation of the impact of these policies. There is no implementation plan for the race equality policy. The performance of students by ethnicity or gender is not formally reviewed. There has been insufficient staff training on multicultural issues. Considerable resources have been spent on accommodation to improve access to buildings. However, the college site presents many obstacles for people with restricted mobility; some teaching rooms remain inaccessible.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

The college provides good support and guidance for students. Effective staff teamwork ensures that students enjoy a seamless service from pre-entry to exit. Impartial and highly effective advice is provided for students on employment opportunities, careers and higher education (HE). The tracking of student destinations is exceptionally detailed and used to the benefit of future students. Learning support services are good and readily available for both full-time and part-time students. Adult students receive support and guidance in the evenings. All students are assessed for literacy and numeracy needs and their preferred learning styles. However, teaching methods do not meet the range of students' preferred learning styles in all lessons. Induction is thorough and well structured. A good range of

learning support is available, including help with dyslexia or sensory impairments. The college does not fully evaluate the effectiveness of support. An extensive programme of group tutorials develops students' social awareness and personal effectiveness. Tutors also review individual student progress against targets and action plans. Parents and guardians are notified promptly if there are any problems. A student welfare adviser offers appropriate help and referral for a range of issues.

Students' views of the college

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

What students like about the college

- supportive and helpful staff
- friendly, relaxed and safe atmosphere
- expert and enthusiastic teachers
- initial guidance and careers advice
- size of college – not too big
- help with studies from learning support
- range of courses
- that the college listens to students' views.

What they feel could be improved

- number of computers and colour printers
- choice of healthy food
- prices in the refectory
- choice of enrichment activities
- lockers to store books and equipment.

Other information

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

Part B: The college as a whole

Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and 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	78	21	1
19+ and WBL*	67	33	0
Learning 16–18	76	22	2
19+ and WBL*	83	17	0

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).

Achievement and standards

1. Most students are aged 16 to 18. Retention and pass rates for these students have been consistently above national averages over the last three years at level 3. Pass rates for this age group in 2002 and 2003 are in the top 25% of all sixth form college results. The percentage of high grades at GCE A level has increased over the last three years and is particularly strong at GCE A2. Students generally achieve results predicted by their previous attainment at GCSE. The percentage of high grades at GCSE is generally good, but varies according to the subject. Pass rates at levels 1 and 2 for students aged 16 to 18 are good, but retention rates are low. Adult students' retention and pass rates are still above national averages at levels 2 and 3, but they declined at levels 1 to 3 in 2004.

2. Students demonstrate good skills of analysis and critical evaluation. Oral skills are good and students tackle complex issues with confidence. Progression rates to HE or employment are monitored carefully each year. Most students who wished to progress to HE, FE or employment did so in 2003.

16 to 18 year olds

3. Over 90% of students aged 16 to 18 take level 3 courses. Most follow programmes leading to AS-level and GCE A2 qualifications. Pass rates at level 3 have been above national averages since 2001. Overall, students are achieving as well as predicted based on their previous GCSE results. Students' achievements relative to their prior attainment have made small but steady improvements over the last three years. Students' achievements in most science and mathematics, humanities, English, art and performing arts subjects are better than predicted by their previous attainment. However, the achievement of the significant numbers of students in psychology are consistently lower than predicted. The

percentage of high grades (A or B) at GCE A2 and AS level has increased over the last three years. At GCE A2, high grades have improved from 40.5% in 2001 to 48.4% in 2004. At AS level, high grades have increased from 23.6% to 37% over the same period.

4. Overall pass rates for level 1 and level 2 qualifications are significantly higher than national averages over the past three years. The percentage of high grades at GCSE is generally good, but variable. It is outstanding in mathematics, at 36% above the national average. Many GCSE mathematics students improve their grade from an E to a C grade. The pass rate for the relatively small number of students taking GCSE biology is significantly below average.

5. Retention rates at level 3 have been above national averages since 2001. They are consistently below average at levels 1 and 2, but have improved in 2004.

6. Progression rates to HE or employment are monitored carefully each year. Some 86% of those students who wished to progress to HE did so in 2003. The college manages student attendance very effectively. Class attendance is registered electronically and prompt action is taken in cases of poor attendance. Tutors are punctilious in picking up on late arrivals in lessons and students are encouraged to demonstrate their consideration and respect for others by being on time. Attendance during inspection was 89% which is well above the 80% attendance observed during the previous inspection and above the 85% average attendance for all sixth form colleges.

7. Many students produce high standards of written work and are developing practical skills well. Students demonstrate good oral skills, are able to sustain and develop arguments effectively and show enthusiasm for their subjects. In art and media, students participate in lively discussions and debates, are highly motivated and demonstrate very good verbal and practical skills. In sport and leisure, students answer questions with confidence and apply themselves well in groups and when developing practical sporting skills. Linguistic terminology is used confidently and precisely by students in English lessons when analysing poetry, drama and novels. Students demonstrate good understanding and use of professional terminology in business lessons. In science and mathematics lessons, students make productive use of time and strive to meet demanding standards set by teachers. Students tackle complex information effectively and confidently in humanities. They demonstrate good skills of analysis and critical evaluation.

8. Whilst the college policy is supportive of key skills, too few students achieve qualifications. Of the 427 students who started level 2 information technology (IT) in 2004, just 30 students (7%) passed their qualification. Key skills in application of number and communication are fully integrated into GCSE qualifications in mathematics and English. In 2004, pass rates in these key skills were better with 74% and 43% of students, respectively, successfully completing the qualifications. At level 3, opportunities for students to produce evidence for key skills portfolios are clearly signposted in many schemes of work, but few students gain credit for key skills in their completed coursework and assignments. The number of students who progress from level 2 to level 3 in IT is low and the pass rate in 2004

was very poor at 2%. Key skills in application of number and communication are not offered at level 3.

Adult learners

9. Adult students follow long and short courses at levels 1 to 3. Most students take levels 1 and 2. Pass rates at levels 2 and 3 have been above national averages for the past three years. At level 1, pass rates were above the national average in 2002 and 2003, but slightly below average in 2004. Retention rates at levels 2 and 3 are above national averages. Retention rates at level 1 vary and have been below the national average for two of the last three years. Both retention and pass rates are very high for the small numbers of students taking higher-level courses. Retention and pass rates on short courses have been consistently good, with retention rates around 90% and pass rates well above the national averages for the last three years.

Quality of education and training

10. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 92 lessons. The overall quality of teaching was good and it was graded good or better in 77% of lessons observed, satisfactory in 22% and just 1% were graded less than satisfactory. There is a strong link between good teaching and effective learning. Students are attentive, work productively and enthusiastically in most lessons. They participate fully in a range of lesson activities and are highly motivated to develop their learning.

11. Teachers show enthusiasm for their subjects and cover topics comprehensively. Most lessons are clearly structured and have explicitly stated objectives. Teachers stimulate learning in many lessons through good use of a variety of activities and resources which develop and reinforce learning. In most lessons, teachers maintain good momentum and, where appropriate, draw on professional and commercial experiences, for example, in business, to contextualise learning. In many lessons, group work is well structured with clear timescales set for the achievement of tasks. In visual arts and media, teachers work very effectively as a team during lessons. Their expertise inspires students when they are learning about colour theory and working on still life, for example. Teachers effectively weave together theoretical and practical aspects of art, film and media. Good use of information and learning technology (ILT) in some science and mathematics lessons enhances learning through a more visual approach to topics. In one lesson, excellent use was made of a computer simulation and interactive whiteboard to help students visualise complex motion. In English, teachers skilfully rephrase questions to elicit further responses and analysis of, for example, complexity and ambiguity when studying *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. In sport, and travel and tourism, many lessons include high levels of student involvement in lively and productive discussion. Students work well together to discuss customer service, health and safety, and to plan competitions in sport. Very good use is made of classroom technology in humanities. In one lesson, an overhead projector and interactive board was used to illustrate key points about shoreline management. Students applied an academic model to analyse an Ordnance Survey map and to understand the nature of shoreline problems. Weaker lessons are characterised by overly long expositions by teachers and too little participation by

students. In all areas of learning, insufficient consideration is given to meeting the individual needs of students in some lessons; particularly the needs of more able students.

12. Teachers are well qualified and have good subject expertise. Nearly all full-time and part-time teachers have teaching qualifications. Teachers on NVQ courses have appropriate assessor and verifier awards. Arrangements for the induction and mentoring of newly qualified teachers are comprehensive. Technical support staff provide good support for both staff and students.

13. Overall, the standard of college accommodation and specialist learning facilities is satisfactory. The college provides a safe and harmonious environment and students' achievements are celebrated through stimulating displays of their work. Teaching rooms contain informative and attractive displays which provide a clear sense of subject identity and inspiration for students. Classrooms and laboratories are well equipped with computers and data projection facilities. Many classrooms have interactive whiteboards. Facilities for practical sports are good and include two football pitches, an all-weather floodlit pitch and a well-appointed sports hall. Social space for students is satisfactory and well used. Some classrooms are too small for the number of students using them, particularly in media and business.

14. The college has a sound strategy for the development of accommodation which clearly identifies the college's needs and plans for improvements. A great deal of work has been undertaken to improve access to the entire college site by people with mobility difficulties and further work is planned. However, the college buildings still present many obstacles to free movement around the site. Chemistry laboratories are inaccessible to users of wheelchairs. Neither the library nor the IT drop-in centre contains height adjustable desks.

15. Students have good access to a wide range of learning resources. The library and IT drop-in centre are well used by students and there are sufficient books, newspapers and periodicals available. The college has a detailed ILT strategy and students have good access to well-maintained computers. The ratio of computers to students is good. The college has made slow progress in developing its intranet site and embedding ILT in classroom teaching.

16. Assessment is fair and accurate on most courses and across all areas of learning. Students receive clear assessment schedules and are aware of assessment requirements. There is particularly thorough and accurate marking in most science and mathematics subjects, where students are given very useful advice on how to improve. Students in art receive detailed weekly assessments of their work on homework and achievement record sheets. They work hard to meet the high expectations of staff. In GCE A2 English language, students respond very positively to the personalised, written feedback that they receive from tutors. Marking in AS-level and GCE A2 literature is particularly effective with well-designed coversheets linking the assessment objectives to the student's target grade. There is good attention to accuracy in written English across all subjects.

17. Students' progress is monitored regularly in relation to target grades predicted by GCSE scores on entry. Their progress is reported formally by subject teaching staff in bi-

annual reviews. Students have clear goals and know what they need to do to succeed. There is early identification of students who are underperforming and there are effective procedures for monitoring their progress. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through a range of tutorial activities, learning support mechanisms and advice and guidance. Parents and guardians are kept informed of progress, effort and attendance, through reports and parents' evenings. The college responds quickly to their enquiries.

18. Internal verification on the NVQ management course is not sufficiently effective and too few assessments are carried out in the workplace. Actions to address variations in marking and the standardisation of coursework have not been completed in AS-level and GCE A2 communications.

19. The college offers mainly advanced level courses for students aged 16 to 18 including 40 subjects at GCE advanced level. AVCE courses in leisure and recreation, travel and tourism, and health and social care are also offered. GCSE mathematics and English are offered to students who do not have a grade C on entry to the college. Level 2 provision is small and it is designed to meet the needs of students who do not qualify for advanced level courses in the first instance. Courses include 10 subjects at GCSE, including vocational GCSEs in business and travel and tourism, and Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diplomas in sport and information and communications technology (ICT). Adult education classes are offered in mathematics, accounting, ICT, administration, FE teacher training, English and British Sign Language.

20. Many students participate in additional activities which complement their courses, such as Young Enterprise, community sports leaders awards (CSLA), word-processing qualifications, foreign visits, field trips, and educational visits to local industry, universities, theatres and art galleries. The range of college-wide enrichment activities is narrow and focuses mainly on sporting activities. Students who aspire to careers in medicine benefit from a well-organised and structured work-shadowing programme. However, there is no structured programme of work experience in travel and tourism and links with industry are underdeveloped. Insufficient opportunities exist for enrichment in some humanities subjects. Good use is made of external visits in business, but opportunities for work experience are limited to the full-time administration course.

21. The college has strong links with schools, the local community and employers, particularly in the care sector. The college provides NVQ training and assessment for over 200 adult students employed in care settings. The college has opened a high street training centre offering Learndirect and qualifications in ICT. The college has been highly successful in delivering basic skills courses, both in the workplace and community settings. The college works with schools on two projects which focus on increasing participation and raising the aspirations of young people aged 14 to 16 from deprived areas.

22. There is good pastoral and learning support for full-time, part-time and adult students. The induction process is thorough, well structured and it helps students to settle into their courses quickly. Tutors work with students from all college departments. They provide an extensive programme of group tutorials which develops students' social

awareness and personal effectiveness. Individual tutorials include reviewing progress against target minimum grades and action-planning students based on information provided in termly subject reports. Students are encouraged to take control of their own learning and decision making.

23. Students receive a comprehensive, impartial and effective information and guidance service, that starts before they enter the college and supports them at all stages of their time in college. A student welfare adviser offers support on a range of financial, transport, accommodation and personal issues. Appropriate financial help is provided through the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme and the college's hardship fund.

24. There is good learning support for full-time, part-time and adult students at an individual level. A significant number receive well-focused, short-term help with organisational and planning skills. More prolonged support is offered for those with dyslexia or related learning difficulties and medical conditions. Drop-in centres are flexible and responsive. A small proportion of students are offered language support for English for speakers of other languages. Initial assessment is carried out during enrolment and includes diagnostic testing for communications and application of number. In addition, a survey of students' preferred learning styles is also conducted. The latter is shared with students and staff, but contributes little to current teaching and learning in lessons. Referrals for learning support are followed-up early in the academic year. Help is also offered promptly with special adaptive technology for students with sensory impairments.

25. The college monitors student destinations rigorously. Academic achievement is tracked closely, both internally and externally. Gap-year destinations and employment outcomes are also recorded assiduously. This information is used very effectively to help students make decisions about their programme choices, their future careers and to raise their aspirations. There is good progression from the first year to the second year of GCE A-level courses and to HE. Progression from level 2 to level 3 is satisfactory overall, as many level 2 students progress on to vocational courses at other colleges.

26. The impact of learning support is not evaluated systematically. Data are not used to show how effectively learning support improves student performance. Performance is not analysed by different groups of students.

27. Effective child protection procedures are in place. Designated senior managers take responsibility for liaising with the appropriate external agencies to support vulnerable students. Training has taken place to raise awareness for all staff who have contact with students. The college has a child protection policy and full checks are carried out on all college employees.

Leadership and management

28. Leadership and management are good. The principal provides strong leadership, and has sought to change the structure and culture of the college. The corporation and senior managers share a clear strategic vision. A key theme, to provide a quality experience for

students and to focus on their particular goals, is apparent in the work of staff throughout the organisation. Staff succeed in encouraging high aspirations and high achievement by students. The main focus is on full-time AS-level and GCE A2 courses for students aged 16 to 18. Pass and retention rates are high on these programmes and in 2003/04 the percentage of students achieving high grades at GCE A2 had risen to 48%.

29. The college also aims to serve the needs of the local community by widening participation in education and meeting the needs of businesses. These developments are only a small proportion of college activity. However, increasing work is undertaken on basic skills programmes in community venues and local businesses, and the college supports approximately 250 students on NVQs. Most are on care programmes. Partnerships with local primary and secondary schools also help to broaden the study and career horizons of young people.

30. The general academic performance of the college is good. The quality of teaching and learning is a little above that generally seen in inspections of sixth form colleges. The outcomes of the college's internal observation system slightly overestimated the calibre of teaching and learning. The college has made significant progress in more accurately assessing its standards of teaching by improved staff training and thorough moderation of grading and standards.

31. Pass rates on level 3 courses are above the national average and retention rates are also good. Overall, students achieve AS-level and GCE A2 grades broadly in line with those expected given their entry qualifications, though the level of such performance has improved in recent years. Grades achieved by students in science and mathematics, English literature and some humanities subjects exceed expectations given their prior qualifications. However, retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 for students aged 16 to 18 are low and have fluctuated on programmes for adults in recent years. Pass rates in key skills are very low. This work is managed and co-ordinated poorly. A large proportion of level 3 students progress to HE. The college is meticulous in gathering student destination data and uses it effectively in reviewing programmes and marketing courses.

32. Leadership and management are good in the curriculum areas of science and mathematics, English and visual arts and media. Subject leaders work particularly effectively in visual arts and media, and leadership by teaching team leaders is strong in science and mathematics. Curriculum management is satisfactory in other areas inspected, though some teaching teams are newly constituted after recent restructuring and methods of working have not yet settled. Teaching team leadership in humanities is good. Teamwork within courses and subjects is strong in most areas.

33. Financial management is sound, with clear financial reports supplied to budget holders. Governors have excellent awareness of the academic performance of the college and its strengths and weaknesses. They bring valuable commercial and community expertise to the corporation, and are questioning and challenging in their overview of the work of the college. In 2003, a link-governor scheme was established. Each governor is paired with an area of the college, visiting staff and students, sitting in on lessons, and where possible

joining the panel validating the self-assessment report of the area. It is intended that governors will link with a different area year by year, so increasing their familiarity with work across the college.

34. In 2004, the principal restructured the management of the college. The restructuring was well founded. It built on the strengths of senior staff and focuses more on important business functions that were relatively weak. These included human resources and management information. Personnel procedures and systems are insufficiently clear and formalised. This is now being addressed through the new post of head of human resources. Problems with software and recording inaccuracies sometimes undermined the validity and accessibility of management information. Increased staffing and the adoption of new software have improved the situation. In the restructuring, programme areas were rationalised into a smaller number of teaching teams.

35. The quality system has clear and comprehensive processes of review. However, action planning for improvement in curriculum areas is often not precise, and the reviews do not always identify this. There is a regular cycle of meetings, with appropriate standard agenda items. Subject teams, for example, meet frequently and discuss operational issues effectively. Communication within teams is generally good. Heads of teaching teams, subject teams and subject leaders set targets for retention rates and achievement based on sound review of previous performance and comparisons with national average rates. Subject reviews feed into area of learning self-assessment reports. Progress against resultant action plans is monitored by heads of teaching teams and an assistant principal. However, such plans are often vague and imprecise in the action identified and in the timescale for it to be undertaken. These plans are not always effective in driving up quality. Self-assessment reports are often extensive, but do not identify major strengths and weaknesses. Most student work is marked well. Programmes for adult students have now been embraced within the college quality system.

36. The college has a strong focus on meeting the needs of individual students. They study in a safe and supportive environment. However, monitoring and promotion of equal opportunities are underdeveloped. The college has produced a clear race equality policy, but has no plan to implement it. Minority ethnic students form a very small proportion of the student body but, even so, little formal monitoring of student performance by ethnic background, or gender, has taken place. The race equality policy has not been fully reviewed or evaluated. Relatively little staff training has taken place on multicultural issues, though there are clear instances of equal opportunities themes featuring in the curriculum. The college has informed staff about the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act and commissioned a disability audit. It is making clear efforts to meet the requirements of the Act and has spent significant sums to improve access by the installation of ramps and automatic doors. Nevertheless, easy and dignified access to some parts of the building is difficult for students with mobility problems.

37. The college has produced a staff development plan derived from the personal development plans discussed between each member of staff and their manager. These plans

are matched to strategic objectives. Expenditure on staff development is small: it was only 0.3% of college income in 2003/04 and is planned to be doubled for 2004/05. Differentiation in teaching and learning was a key staff development priority in 2003/04. However, teachers did not generally carry out differentiation effectively in lessons observed during the inspection. There has been little management training and no focus on commercial updating for relevant staff. Performance management standards have been introduced to inform the appraisal of managers. However, there is no appraisal or performance review of other staff in the college, although staff development needs of each member of staff are identified.

38. Resources are utilised effectively in the college. Staff generally teach to their contracted hours. Room utilisation is high. There are clear procedures to seek best value in purchasing. The college has also benchmarked resource usage against that typical for sixth form colleges. Its performance largely reflects sector norms. Given these features and the high performance demonstrated in many aspects of the college's work, it provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Science and mathematics

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

Strengths

- very high pass and retention rates on GCE A2 courses
- high pass rates at AS level and GCE A2 relative to prior attainment at GCSE
- outstanding pass rate in GCSE mathematics
- high standard of students' written work
- enthusiastic, informed and supportive teaching
- rigorous and regular assessment that reinforces learning
- good support for individual students
- strong curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- very low pass rates in GCSE biology.

Scope of provision

39. The college offers GCE A2 and AS levels in mathematics, further mathematics, chemistry, biology and environmental science. Geology is offered at AS level. Mathematics and biology are offered at GCSE level and one GCSE mathematics course runs in the evening for adult students. The application of the number key skill qualification at level 2 is incorporated into the teaching of GCSE mathematics. There are 997 students taking science or mathematics subjects as part of their programme, of which 18 are adults attending in the evening.

Achievement and standards

40. Pass rates on all GCE A2 subjects are very good. For the last three years they have all been above consistently above national averages. In mathematics, physics, biology and chemistry, a high percentage of students achieve grades A and B. For example, in mathematics, 68% of students achieved a grade A or B against a national average of 48% achieving high-grade passes. Over the last three years, the average grade achieved by students in all subjects at GCE A2, except environmental science, is significantly better than

would be expected from their previous achievement at GCSE. Pass rates at AS level are as good as, or better, than national averages and overall students achieve what would be expected of them based on their GCSE grades. In 2004, the percentage of students achieving high grades in AS-level biology was 10% above the national average. At both AS level and GCE A2, retention rates are at or above the national average. At GCSE the A* to C grade pass rate in mathematics is outstanding. It has been over 80% over the last two years for students aged 16 to 18 and for those aged over 19. In 2004, it was 37% above the national average. Many students reach this level after one year, having previously only achieved a grade E. In contrast, the achievement of GCSE biology students is very poor. In 2004, only 17% of the 31 students starting the course achieved a grade C or above.

41. Students' work is of a high standard. Written work, at both GCSE and GCE A level is particularly impressive with students expressing their ideas and difficult concepts clearly. Students' homework and work done in class is organised sensibly and well presented. Verbal communication skills are good; responses to teachers' questions are met with articulate, thoughtful answers. Students carry out practical work in science safely and efficiently. They record results and plot graphs accurately and neatly. The most able students are encouraged to compete nationally through the British Physics Olympiad and the UK Senior Mathematical Challenge. In 2004, three students achieved a bronze award in the Physics Olympiad and one student achieved a commendable gold award in mathematics. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	119	99	121
		% retention	82	82	80
		% pass rate	47	80	82
GCE A2 mathematics	3	No. of starts	104	101	101
		% retention	98	98	96
		% pass rate	99	96	99
GCE A2 biology	3	No. of starts	97	88	92
		% retention	98	99	98
		% pass rate	95	94	96

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCE A2 chemistry	3	No. of starts	60	58	51
		% retention	97	97	100
		% pass rate	98	95	98
GCE A2 physics	3	No. of starts	42	48	43
		% retention	100	98	95
		% pass rate	90	96	95
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	191	*	171
		% retention	96	*	91
		% pass rate	86	*	81

Source: ILR (2001 and 2002) college (2003)

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

42. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and very knowledgeable in their subject and they prepare students thoroughly for public examinations. Students work hard. They are attentive in lessons and make productive use of time when taking part in class activities. Teachers frequently explain methods, concepts and information very clearly. They often support learning by making effective use of interactive whiteboards and digital projectors. In one mechanics lesson, students developed their understanding of motion by observing a computer simulation of a mass oscillating between springs. Values were changed in the simulation and students observed carefully how the motion was affected by factors such as the stiffness of a spring. Students interpreted this information well by sketching graphs of the behaviour. Computers and digital projectors are used effectively in lessons, for example, to illustrate mathematical functions, collect measurements from the motion of a dynamics trolley and to enable students to use computer-based learning material on radio transmission. In less effective lessons, students take notes for longer periods than ideal for less able students and insufficient use is made of discussions and questioning to confirm learning.

43. Science is taught in well-equipped laboratories, however, many are inaccessible to students with impaired mobility. All laboratories and some classrooms have a sufficient number of computers for students to use. Most laboratories have data projectors and many

have interactive whiteboards. Teachers are well qualified and many have experience of marking and moderating external examinations.

44. Homework is set frequently and students return it promptly. Timely, accurate and detailed marking is undertaken by teachers. They value students' efforts and the detailed marking and feedback very effectively helps students to improve their performance. The frequent setting and marking of work enables teachers to monitor students' progress closely and contributes significantly to their motivation and development of self-study skills. There is a clear expectation, created by caring and hard-working staff, that students work hard, attend all lessons and produce their best work.

45. There is a good range of AS-level and GCE A2 subjects. The curriculum is enhanced through many imaginative extra activities. College visits to relevant conferences and industries such as a theme park for mathematicians to examine mechanics, and to a brewery for chemistry students, place college learning in context and also provide useful material for coursework.

46. Support for students academic and pastoral welfare is very good and valued by students. Extra lessons are often provided, for example, revision sessions in the run up to examinations. Formal systems for monitoring students' progress are highly effective. Students receive regular one-to-one interviews from specialist personal tutors who work in close partnership with the subject lecturers. Procedures for dealing with missed lessons and poor performance are clear and effective in ensuring students attend well and make good progress in their studies. Students who require extra learning support to meet particular learning needs receive regular one-to-one support from specialist learning support tutors. Subject teachers are kept fully informed of the support the students are receiving.

Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are good. Strong curriculum leadership has created a sustained culture of high standards through the setting and monitoring of demanding targets and procedures. There is a great commitment to ensuring students succeed and teachers work hard to achieve this. Common schemes of work are in place and resources are routinely shared through departments. There are topic tests and results are monitored regularly by heads of teaching teams.

48. There is a strong focus on quality assurance. Staff are involved in self-assessment and many of the college findings are consistent with those found during inspection. Student taking GCSE mathematics are grouped with other students of similar ability. High standards have been sustained. Equality and diversity are insufficiently explored in the curriculum.

Business, administration, management and professional

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most AS-level and GCE A2 courses
- high retention rates on AS-level and GCE A2 courses
- good or better teaching in the majority of lessons
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to students' individual needs
- some weak internal verification practice.

Scope of provision

49. The college offers AS-level and GCE A2 courses in business studies, economics and accounting. Provision at level 2 consists of a vocational GCSE in business studies. Part-time courses for adults include NVQs in accounting, administration and management, British Sign Language and FE teacher training. There is also a full-time diploma in administration for adult students. Word processing courses are offered as additional qualifications and as part of college-wide enrichment activities. There are approximately 450 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and approximately 80 adults on part-time courses in this area.

Achievement and standards

50. Pass rates on many of the AS-level and GCE A2 courses are good. Retention rates on these courses are also good with some being exceptionally high, for example, a 100% retention rate in GCE A2 accounting. Pass and retention rates are also high on many part-time courses. In 2003, the percentage of students who achieved grades A and B on GCE A2 courses was significantly above the national average with, for example, high grades in AS-level economics 16% above the national average. However, in 2004, the percentage of students achieving high grades declined in all GCE A2 subjects. The number of students achieving high grades at AS level in 2004 showed a significant improvement. For example, the AS-level business high-grade pass rate was 22% higher than the national average. Overall students' achievements are in line with predictions based on their prior attainment at GCSE. In 2004, students on AS-level business achieved much better grades than those predicted from their GCSE results.

51. Most students demonstrate an extremely positive attitude to learning. They are punctual and attendance is very good. Students are articulate, confident and responsive.

Students' written work demonstrates a good understanding of business theory and practice. A significant number of students progress on to business-related courses at university.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business, administration, management and professional, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic certificate in sign language	2	No. of starts	19	32	21
		% retention	32	59	38
		% pass rate	100	95	50
AS-level accounting	3	No. of starts	34	42	41
		% retention	91	98	88
		% pass rate	71	66	68
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	94	122	134
		% retention	87	92	93
		% pass rate	94	96	98
AS-level economics	3	No. of starts	46	50	69
		% retention	98	90	94
		% pass rate	98	87	95
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	61	62	66
		% retention	62	100	97
		% pass rate	91	100	97
GCE A-level accounting	3	No. of starts	11	12	15
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	91	100	100

Source: ILR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

52. Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons. In the better lessons, teachers use group and peer work very effectively to reinforce learning, for example, by getting students to test each other and mark each other's work. Students participate well and many activities are interesting and thought provoking. In these lessons, students are disciplined, attentive and they cope well with the challenging pace and content of the lessons. Teachers are highly effective in using their vocational expertise to motivate their students. In one lesson, the teacher made excellent use of local companies as examples to explain the terms of primary, secondary and tertiary organisations. The use of ILT in teaching and learning is currently being embedded within the teaching team. Where teachers use ILT, they do so with success. Many teachers are external moderators for awarding bodies and receive regular updating on curriculum matters. They put this experience to good use in lessons by raising students' awareness of what they need to do to achieve high grades in examinations.

53. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not adequately plan for the range of abilities of students. Lesson plans and schemes of work lack specific detail on how teachers aim to respond to different levels of ability. In some lessons, the large class size makes it difficult for teachers to meet individual needs adequately. On level 2 provision for students aged 16 to 18, some students do not work purposefully and are disruptive in lessons.

54. Teachers are well qualified, some with specialist skills that enhance the small teaching team. There are sufficient current textbooks and reference materials available for students. Students make good use of the library and IT facilities. Classrooms are bright, spacious and well equipped with smart boards and digital projectors. Most of the classrooms have computers for students and teachers to use. Some accommodation, however, is too small for the number of students in the class.

55. Students' work is marked regularly and thoroughly. Students receive prompt, clear and constructive feedback. Students are also asked to assess their own performance and set targets for themselves. Good use is made of external visits for assessment purposes. Students are required to complete a very well-designed, assessment book which sets realistic but challenging targets for its completion. Teachers keep detailed records of progress. Internal verification of the NVQ management programme is weak. It is mostly carried out within the college rather than the workplace. The NVQ team conducts standardisation events, but there is insufficient discussion about external verification issues or the development of assessment practice. NVQ workplace assessment is restricted to one half-day during the course and to a restrictive range of assessment methods.

56. Good use is made of external visits to enhance student learning. However, there is little involvement of employers in curriculum development or as guest speakers. Opportunities for work experience are available to adult students on the administration course, many of whom get jobs within the company following their placement. Business students benefit from a well-organised and successful Young Enterprise scheme.

57. Support and guidance for students are excellent. There is good communication between the tutoring staff, learning support and individual subject tutors. Subject tutors are invited to case conferences about students. There are clear records of initial assessment and learning support needs. Students are very well supported and know where to go for advice and guidance. The support can be one-to-one or discrete lessons and support in the lessons. Students are confident to use learning support.

Leadership and management

58. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory. Management information is used well and staff have a clear understanding about set targets. Students' views are used to inform the judgements in the self-assessment report and in the development action plan. Actions to address weaknesses within the development plan are not specific and are difficult to measure. Staff development is limited to curriculum updating and there has been no training on equality and diversity. There is insufficient sharing of good practice both within the team and with other areas of the college.

Sports, leisure and tourism

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AVCE travel and tourism
- high retention rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning in sport
- good practical sports facilities
- very effective monitoring of students progress.

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for more able students to extend their learning
- inadequate written feedback on student assessments in travel and leisure
- ineffective action planning for quality improvement.

Scope of provision

59. The area currently offers the AS-level sports, games and recreation, GCE A2 in physical education, CSLA, vocational GCSE in leisure and tourism and AVCEs in leisure and recreation, and travel and tourism. The provision caters primarily for full-time students aged 16 to 18 taking level 3 courses. There are 376 students in this area of learning. Two thirds of students take sports courses.

Achievement and standards

60. Retention rates on most courses have been at or above national average for the past three years. In 2003/04, the retention rate for the AVCE in travel and tourism single award was good and 10% above the national average. In 2002/03, the retention rate for the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate in leisure and tourism, at 93%, was 12% above the national average. Pass rates at level 3 are generally good. The AVCE travel and tourism pass rate has been above the national average for the past three years. The pass rate on AS-level sports, games and recreation in 2003 was good, at 93%, which was 4% above the national average. The percentage of high grades in AVCE in travel and tourism is well above national averages. In 2003, it was 67% and it was 44% in 2004 against a national average of 31%. In 2004, the pass rate on the CSLA was poor, with only 27% of students so far, completing all aspects of the course. In 2004, the pass rate on the vocational GCSE in leisure and tourism was low, at 88%, which is 10% below the national average.

61. The level of practical skills achieved by sports students is high. They perform with confidence and maturity and respond well to both tutor and peer feedback. For example, a sport leaders' award lesson involved the students planning and supervising different competition formats for badminton. Students resolved complex issues in groups without reference to the teacher. Generally, the standard of students' written work is good.

62. Students are generally punctual and the few incidents of lateness are dealt with effectively by teachers. Attendance rates during inspection were high at 89%. Comprehensive information about students' destinations is collected systematically and updated regularly. There are high rates of students progressing on to HE or related employment.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sports, leisure and tourism, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
CSLA	2	No. of starts	60	52	49
		% retention	60	92	84
		% pass rate	100	100	**
Vocational GCSE in leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	*	*	17
		% retention	*	*	94
		% pass rate	*	*	88
AS-level sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	63	72	80
		% retention	92	93	93
		% pass rate	84	93	89
GCE A2 physical education	3	No. of starts	32	36	39
		% retention	97	97	97
		% pass rate	100	89	97
AVCE travel and tourism (single award)	3	No. of starts	17	10	21
		% retention	94	100	86
		% pass rate	81	100	89

Source: ILR (2001 and 2002) college (2003)

**course not running*

***data incomplete*

Quality of education and training

63. The standard of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned with comprehensive schemes of work and effective lesson plans. Learning is fun for the majority of students and they develop their skills and knowledge effectively in both theory and practical classes. Strategies to deal with students' individual needs are signposted on schemes of work. However, these are not sufficiently implemented in lessons. Some more able students are not making full use of their time in lessons or learning at a level and pace most suited to their needs.

64. In one lesson, students were encouraged to use analytical approaches in human resource planning as they considered case studies about job losses in the travel industry. This led to a well-designed activity in which students used information gained from a talk given by a guest speaker, to check that their understanding of the subject was correct. In another good lesson on leadership in sport, students were able to grasp difficult concepts about leadership extremely well. The teacher led a discussion on leadership styles skilfully which stimulated lively debate. Students articulated thoughtful comments and asked searching questions which reinforced their understanding and assisted them to draw correct conclusions. In a few lessons, a small number of students lack sufficient motivation to be fully involved in all activities.

65. Resources are good. Staff are well qualified and experienced and many undertake useful professional development activities. Most teaching rooms are spacious and well equipped with media projectors, televisions and other learning resources. Displays are used effectively to support learning and to motivate students. The high standard of practical sports facilities include two well-maintained football pitches, a floodlit all-weather pitch used for national hockey matches, and a well-equipped sports hall. Changing facilities are too small and in need of refurbishment. Students use a local leisure centre providing minority sports such as netball and swimming. The book stock for leisure and tourism courses is too limited.

66. Monitoring of students' progress is good across both departments with many examples of comprehensive and timely feedback given in lessons. Class exercises are marked quickly and clear guidance on how to improve work is given. Assignment briefs contain clear tasks and guidelines for completion, but written feedback on student assignments in travel and leisure does not provide students with sufficient detail on how to improve their work. Students' progress reviews are thorough and focus sharply on target setting and the achievement of at least the targeted minimum grades. There is little assessment of key skills.

67. Students have access to a useful range of enrichment activities including a choice of sports, educational visits and residential activities that enhance and complement teaching and learning effectively.

68. Pastoral support is good and includes effective guidance for students with personal issues and help in finding appropriate part-time work. Students receive good academic support from teachers both in lessons and outside normal teaching time. Students attend a well-designed programme of weekly tutorials that includes thought-provoking topics such as raising awareness of mental-health problems as well as other important social issues.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are good within subject teams, but there is insufficient sharing of good practice across the new teaching team. Peer observations are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Team building and co-ordination has improved in travel and leisure and is satisfactory. Staff are involved in self-assessment, but action planning to address identified issues is not sufficiently clear or effective.

70. Some large groups of students in travel and tourism are taught in rooms that are too small for the number of students. There is strong commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity, but its impact on teaching and learning is not systematically monitored.

Visual arts and media

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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- high retention rates on most courses
- excellent standard of student work
- much good teaching and learning
- very good monitoring and assessment of student work
- very good academic and pastoral support
- highly effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

71. The college offers GCE A-level courses in art and design, media studies and film studies. Students who have not completed a formal qualification in art at school can take GCSE art and progress to AS level in their second year. After completing AS-level art and design, students have the option of taking an additional AS-level graphics or three-dimensional option which is started in June and runs alongside their GCE A2 art course in the second year. There are 425 students in this curriculum area.

Achievement and standards

72. Pass rates are high and well above the national averages for all level 3 courses. In 2004, the pass rate for AS-level film, GCE A2 film, GCE A2 art and design and GCE A2 media was 100%. In the same year, the pass rate for AS-level media was 98% and 97% in AS-level art. Retention rates are high on most courses, for example, in 2004, the student retention rate in GCE A2 media and GCE A2 art and design was 98%. Students' achievements are generally in line with grades predicted from their previous attainment at GCSE. However, in film studies, students achieve much better grades than those predicted from their GCSE results.

73. Students attend regularly and are punctual. The standard of student work is excellent, and their attainment and application of technical skills is very good. Students are highly motivated and enthusiastic, and are confident in discussing and sharing their

developing expertise and insight. Teacher expectations are high and they set challenging goals for their students. Courses are structured to build on practical skills as well as the skills of critical evaluation. In art lessons, the emphasis placed upon drawing and sensitive use of colour results in particularly lively student work. In media, students are confident and articulate; they offer informed and considered views to class discussions. Students effectively integrate the understanding of both theoretical and practical aspects of art, film and media.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual arts and media, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	111	107	116
		% retention	92	85	91
		% pass rate	86	79	98
AS-level film/video production	3	No. of starts	58	59	78
		% retention	54	51	87
		% pass rate	93	85	100
AS-level art studies/fine arts	3	No. of starts	112	100	115
		% retention	91	76	90
		% pass rate	89	75	97
GCE A2 media studies	3	No. of starts	56	63	55
		% retention	100	94	98
		% pass rate	100	90	100
GCE A2 film studies	3	No. of starts	19	38	22
		% retention	100	100	91
		% pass rate	95	100	100

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCE A2 art and design	3	No. of starts	37	57	54
		% retention	92	84	98
		% pass rate	92	84	100

Source: ILR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

74. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned. Teachers work well together as a team and share good practice. Where staff teach the same group, they work closely together and jointly prepare schemes of work which complement effectively the skills each teacher brings to the course. Courses build on students' confidence as they increase their skills, both verbal and practical. Teachers are well organised and prepared, so that lessons are filled with activities to keep students motivated and progressing at an optimum rate. Teachers demonstrate extensive, professional knowledge and expertise and are enthusiastic in their teaching. In one lesson, students were involved in painting an enormous still life of draped textiles over an angular structure. This allowed students to demonstrate their skill in fluid and spontaneous uses of colour. In another lesson, students painted a personal response to the work of a chosen artist. Their approach demonstrated sensitivity and maturity. In less successful lessons, teachers talk too much and do not allow students to contribute fully to the lesson.

75. Teachers are well qualified, and often have industry experience or are examiners and moderators. They use their knowledge effectively to engender professional standards in their students. The art section has an open studio space with good natural light and specialist art rooms for different art activities. However, the open nature of the accommodation sometimes means that there can be distractions such as students walking through areas when teachers are presenting information to the class. A dedicated computer suite is located near to the main studio and there is an in-house art shop for students to buy art materials at wholesale prices. Media and film have 12 digital video cameras and 6 editing suites. Some rooms are too small for the number of students using them, giving restricted views of films and videos. There is poor ventilation in some rooms, and poor soundproofing for adjacent rooms when films are played. In media and film studies, access for students with mobility difficulties is restricted.

76. Monitoring and assessment of student work are very good. Work is assessed and returned promptly. Students are clear about their learning goals and outcomes. Teachers set regular homework and this is assessed and marked promptly. Details of assessment schedules are displayed clearly around the department for students to see. Guidance on what students need to do in order to achieve better grades is displayed, so students have a clear idea of what is required of them to improve their work at all stages. Students have individual progress reports with plans and activities for the year listed, and their deadlines stated.

Completed and assessed work is noted in these each week, so that there is a detailed record of progress and work achieved. They understand their strengths and weaknesses and are given extra help if necessary. There is a large exhibition of student work throughout the college for moderation in the summer term.

77. Courses are carefully planned and monitored and students have opportunities to reflect on personal and social issues that are relevant to them. Students make effective use of facilities for working on their own. Enrichment activities are very good and include visits to galleries, exhibitions, cinemas and workshops undertaken by visiting artists and life drawing sessions. Students also take a photoshop course to increase their IT skills. There are portfolio-building workshops and interview-technique coaching for university and art college progression. Media and film studies students visit ITV and BBC studios and have outside speakers from the British Board of Film Classification.

78. Academic and pastoral support for students are excellent. Students undertake an initial assessment to identify their individual needs and preferred learning styles. Additional learning support is put in place immediately if needed. Dedicated tutors provide regular personal and group tutorials. Students can attend extra sessions or work through lunchtime or after college if they want to finish some work, and teachers give their time freely to help. There is excellent communication between students and their teachers, and there are frequent opportunities for students to discuss and plan their future career moves. The standard of advice is outstanding.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management are good, and curriculum management is highly effective. Teachers feel well supported and regular meetings take place in which staff are involved in actions to implement quality assurance. However, minutes of some meetings are not formalised with specific targets and most contact between staff is informal. Teachers have recently undertaken staff development that focuses on teaching and learning. Arrangements for quality assurance are very good and the standard of teaching and learning is monitored through regular observations.

Humanities

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

Strengths

- well-sustained high pass rates on most courses
- very high retention rates on GCE A2 courses
- much good or better teaching
- good range of subject choice in humanities at level 3.

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to individual learning needs in lesson planning
- insufficient action to address falling rates of high grades at AS level.

Scope of provision

80. Daytime courses at AS level and GCE A2 are provided across 11 humanities subjects. Almost all students are full-time students aged 16 to 18. Recruitment has increased in the past three years. At the time of inspection, 974 students were enrolled on humanities courses. Approximately 85% of course enrolments are accounted for by geography, history, law, philosophy, psychology and sociology. Courses are also offered in archaeology, critical thinking, general studies, government and politics and religious studies. Some 60% of enrolments are on AS-level courses.

Achievement and standards

81. Almost all students complete their courses and attain their goals. There are high and well-sustained pass rates in most subjects at GCE A2 and AS levels. At GCE A2, most courses achieved a 95% or higher pass rate. Pass rates exceed national averages on all courses except GCE A2 psychology and AS-level archaeology. Pass rates in these subjects have been below the national average for the last three years. In geography, politics and sociology, the percentage rate of high grades has been maintained above national averages, at both levels, over three years. There has been insufficient action to address the falling rates of high grades. Although high-grade pass rates are still above the national average, there has been a downward trend in the percentage of A and B grades at AS level since 2003. In philosophy and archaeology, it has slipped to well below the national average.

82. Over the past three years, retention rates have been very high on most GCE A2 courses, especially in geography, history, philosophy and law. At AS level, retention rates are close to national averages, except for law and psychology which have been higher over

the past three years. In philosophy, the rate has fallen significantly below the national average in 2004.

83. Students' work is of a high quality. New knowledge is used with confidence and students articulate their understanding of it clearly. They are methodical and respond well to challenges in their learning. Those in their second year of advanced study demonstrate commendable skills in critical analysis and evaluation. Many handle difficult concepts very effectively. In philosophy, students apply themselves well and deal with complex issues of language and mind. Students use computers to assist them in research. They show a good grasp of new technology. Students' writing skills are well developed and their standards of attainment in coursework and homework assignments are high. There is clear evidence of good progression rates to subject-related courses in HE from humanities subjects.

A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	145	130	166
		% retention	95	90	93
		% pass rate	93	97	95
AS-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	59	53	77
		% retention	86	89	79
		% pass rate	82	91	87
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	80	105	80
		% retention	95	95	85
		% pass rate	89	96	100
GCE A2 geography	3	No. of starts	73	51	47
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	99	98	100
GCE A2 law	3	No. of starts	43	43	59
		% retention	100	100	93
		% pass rate	91	95	95

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCE A2 psychology	3	No. of starts	86	118	100
		% retention	99	88	95
		% pass rate	93	93	93

Source: ILR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

84. There is much good teaching and learning. Staff are well organised, highly confident teachers. They skilfully integrate varied learning resources imaginatively, to enrich and enhance learning. Students generally demonstrate a good understanding of topics. They work well individually and in groups, are well motivated and enjoy their studies. Teachers draw effectively on contemporary issues to increase the impact and relevance of the topic for students. For example, geography students used data on Hayling Island to investigate shoreline management and, in psychology, students considered the case of tortured prisoners in military prisons as part of work on Zimbardo's psychological research. Most lessons have clear objectives and learning is reviewed at the close of the lesson. Insufficient attention is given in lesson planning to meeting the individual learning needs of students. Lesson planning insufficiently takes account of the needs of very bright students. Students' preferred learning styles are identified, but not embedded in teaching and learning. Schemes of work do not indicate how the needs of a range of students will be met.

85. There are good levels of resources to support teaching and learning. Well-qualified staff are deployed appropriately according to their specialisms. Not all teaching rooms have enough computers to match the increasing use of IT in learning. Use of IT in the curriculum is progressing. In geography and psychology, good intranet sites have been developed. Students make good use of the library and flexi-learning centres.

86. Assessment and marking of students' written work is good. Assignments are set regularly and detailed comments which help students to improve their performance are made on scripts. Teachers provide students with further feedback when marked work is returned. Additional assessment of progress takes place in lessons when students work in small groups or on individual tasks. However, insufficient action is taken to respond to individual learning needs at an early stage. Individual GCSE scores are recorded, but the use of targets to measure progress is not well embedded.

87. A wide range of level 3 courses is provided in humanities. These attract increasing numbers of students. Insufficient extra-curriculum-related activity is organised to enrich the learning experience for most students.

88. Students receive useful guidance in choosing appropriate courses. Staff are readily available and willing to give additional advice and support for learning or with personal matters, as needed. Support staff have good links with personal tutors and regularly monitor the progress made by students. Tutorials cover a good range of topics including aspects of diversity. Additional classes are helpfully provided in some subjects for revision. For example, psychology offers twilight examination preparation and revision sessions.

Leadership and management

89. Curriculum management is adapting quickly to recent changes in the college structure. Leadership of the learning area is well informed and sensitive to meeting the needs of students and staff. Induction arrangements for new staff are comprehensive. Staff are well supported and part-time staff are fully integrated into teaching teams. Communication is now more effective with time allocated for staff meetings. Subject leaders are beginning to address achievement issues with a unit-by-unit performance review in some subjects. Quality assurance is not always effective at improving standards. The quality of subject course management varies from very good to barely satisfactory. Peer observations were not all completed in 2003/04. Staff are involved in self-assessment and target setting. Insufficient action is being taken to address the falling rates of high grades at AS level, to analyse pass rates against target grades, and to meet the needs of individual students. There is a lack of training of humanities staff with management responsibilities. The majority of students are female and in some groups there is a distinct gender imbalance. Equality of opportunity issues are covered in the content of many subjects.

English and communications

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

Strengths

- consistently high retention and pass rates on many courses
- very good teaching on most level 3 courses
- high standard of work in GCE A2 literature and GCE A2 language lessons
- very effective marking on advanced literature courses.

Weaknesses

- not sufficiently meeting needs of individual students in communication studies and GCSE English lessons
- insufficient rigour in course review
- insufficient access to IT in lessons.

Scope of provision

90. There are 667 full-time students, mostly aged 16 to 18, taking AS-level and GCE A2 courses in English language, English literature, English language and literature, communication studies, and GCSE English. An evening class in GCSE English is offered to adults. The most popular course is English literature which has 255 students. Communication studies also attracts large numbers, with 150 students enrolled.

Achievement and standards

91. There are consistently high retention and pass rates, above national averages in AS-level and GCE A2 English literature and AS-level and GCE A2 English language. Retention rates are also high, for example, AS-level English literature in 2004 was 90%, GCE A2 English literature was 98% and GCE A2 English language had 100% retention rates. Pass rates are high in all these subjects. GCE A2 English language has sustained a 100% pass rate for the last three years. Students achieve high grades in GCE A2 English literature, 17% above national average and in GCE A2 English language, 24% above the national average. Students make good progress on their courses. Students on English language and English literature courses frequently achieve higher grades than would be expected from their GCSE results.

92. A high standard of student work is evident in most lessons. Students are set challenging tasks, for example, debating different viewpoints on the presentation of evil in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and providing evidence from the novel to support their case.

Students use literary and linguistic terminology with confidence and precision in analysing poetry, drama and novels. Students are able to grasp complex concepts well. They demonstrate good skills of critical evaluation. Students work effectively in groups and also work productively on tasks individually. Students are well motivated, punctual and have high rates of attendance.

93. Student destinations are regularly and rigorously monitored. A very high proportion of students progress on to HE.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and communications, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	88	*	38
		% retention	76	*	76
		% pass rate	39	*	55
AS-level communication studies	3	No. of starts	78	64	86
		% retention	97	80	92
		% pass rate	97	98	98
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	116	127	150
		% retention	95	95	92
		% pass rate	97	91	95
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	43	37	62
		% retention	91	95	97
		% pass rate	97	91	95
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	52	42	29
		% retention	98	98	93
		% pass rate	96	95	96

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	93	93	82
		% retention	97	98	98
		% pass rate	99	100	100

Source: ILR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

94. Teaching on most level 3 English courses is very good. Lessons are well planned and help students to develop sharp, analytical, literary and linguistic skills. Most students work in a purposeful manner in small groups, respecting each other's views and developing critical autonomy in challenging expert opinions, for example, in television programmes. In one lesson, the presence of two German students was used to focus the teaching of idiom and rhythm.

95. Students work purposefully during group work, delegating tasks, reading aloud and asking each other relevant questions in order to complete the task. In the best lessons, activities are carefully chosen to appeal to different learning styles. Teachers provide plenty of positive feedback and welcome student responses. Teachers helpfully rephrase questions or pose further questions to elicit greater analysis.

96. In communication studies and GCSE English lessons, teachers do not always address the needs of individual students. Handouts are rarely adapted to best suit the learning needs of individuals by content or task, and the formation of groups for analytical work is usually random rather than taking account of levels of student ability.

97. Good, imaginative use is made of limited teaching space in the area to provide an attractive work atmosphere. There are displays of relevant material, including student work, in corridors and classrooms. Corridor space with partitions and easy chairs is well used in lessons for group discussions. Teachers are well qualified and have undertaken recent relevant curriculum training.

98. There is insufficient access to IT for staff and students. Only one classroom in the area is equipped with a projector. It is possible for classes to be booked into IT rooms elsewhere in the building. The college intranet for subjects in the area is partially developed, with the widest range of materials in the GCSE section. Few references are made to online resources in lessons. The projector and whiteboard are used mainly for display purposes.

99. Students' essays and coursework are very effectively marked on AS-level and GCE A2 English literature courses. A well-designed coversheet refers to relevant assessment

objectives and links the students marks to their target grades. A standard form is used in communication studies to identify action points to improve performance. GCSE English students receive detailed feedback on content, accuracy and fluency. There is good attention to accuracy in written English across all subjects. Parents receive regular progress reviews and reports.

100. The college offers a good range of level 3 courses. Theatre visits to local venues are offered to GCSE and advanced-level students. GCSE students are encouraged to contribute reviews of performances to the intranet. Communication studies students benefit from a trip to New York. There are no extension classes offered to help more able students. There are many opportunities for students to generate evidence for key skills portfolios, but at level 3 no student has completed and submitted a portfolio for communication skills in the last three years.

101. Academic and pastoral support for students are good. There is good liaison with and referral of students to learning support. Learning support needs are identified early in the programme and help is provided promptly. Students wishing to change their subjects in the first few weeks of term are readily able to receive helpful careers advice and guidance in line with their changing subject choices. Target grades are used successfully to monitor student progress. Students value the advice and guidance they receive at open evenings and induction days. Teachers liaise with the local education authority (LEA) to provide outreach tutoring for students too ill to attend college. The tutorial curriculum covers an extensive range of topics including social issues and explicit guidance on applying to universities.

Leadership and management

102. The curriculum area is well managed. There is good ongoing informal communication by staff, facilitated by the layout of rooms and the position of the staff workspace. Regular formal meetings are held with detailed minutes and action points recorded. There is a rigorous programme of lesson observations with clear action points to improve performance. Strategic decisions are effectively made in teaching teams about subject specifications and options. Staff share ideas and resources well. However, the course review process is insufficiently rigorous and has not addressed weaknesses in communication studies coursework.

Part D: College data

Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16–18 %	19+ %
1	4	53
2	9	35
3	87	8
4/5	0	3
Other	0	1
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,206	26	14
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	101	0	1
Business administration, management and professional	527	2,350	35
Information and communication technology	335	118	5
Retailing, customer service and transportation	5	71	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	166	0	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	58	0	1
Health, social care and public services	79	317	5
Visual and performing arts and media	619	0	7
Humanities	1,436	21	17
English, languages and communication	881	13	11

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Foundation programmes	16	108	1
Total	5,429	3,024	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	103	79	117	283	176	266
	Retention rate %	78	63	30	70	61	77
	National average %	81	75	83	71	72	73
	Pass rate %	56	98	100	69	99	100
	National average %	67	75	72	68	73	75
2	Starters excluding transfers	404	407	330	225	253	393
	Retention rate %	81	73	62	85	63	76
	National average %	80	81	81	71	70	69
	Pass rate %	88	93	97	76	97	97
	National average %	84	84	86	69	70	74
3	Starters excluding transfers	4,370	4,098	4,208	116	190	160
	Retention rate %	86	94	91	78	75	83
	National average %	80	89	90	65	72	73
	Pass rate %	89	91	92	46	89	95
	National average %	86	87	88	67	73	77
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	*	15	16
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	*	13	81
	National average %	**	**	**	**		70
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	*	50	100
	National average %	**	**	**	**		

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).

Sources of information:

1. *National averages: Benchmarking Data 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.*

**fewer than 15 students enrolled*

***data unavailable*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 4	100	0	0	1
Level 3 (advanced)	80	19	1	75
Level 2 (intermediate)	63	37	0	16
Total %	77	22	1	92

Notes