



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

BROOKLANDS COLLEGE

This inspection was carried out by OFSTED under section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. It was a joint inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI).

Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Telephone: 020 7421 6800

This report may be downloaded from the OFSTED website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Reference no. HMI 297

© **Crown Copyright 7/2001**. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

BROOKLANDS COLLEGE INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection week: 30 April 2001

Reporting Inspector: Chris Clark HMI

Contents

Paragraph

Part: A: Summary

Part B: The College as a Whole

Achievement and Standards

How well do learners achieve? 1

Quality of Education and Training

How effective are teaching training and learning? 10

How are achievement and learning affected by resources? 15

How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress? 24

How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs
and interests of learners? 29

How well are learners guided and supported? 33

Leadership and Management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement
and supporting all learners? 41

What should the college do to improve further? 51

Part C: Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Computing and Information Technology 52

Science and Mathematics 60

Engineering 68

Business and Administration 82

Management and Professional Studies 89

Hospitality and Catering 99

Leisure, Tourism, Sport and Public Services 108

Health, Care and Counselling 118

Childhood Studies 126

Art and Performing Arts 138

Humanities 146

Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities 156

Basic Skills 167

Part D: College Data

Summary

Part A: Summary

Information about the College

Brooklands College is a medium-sized general further education college situated close to the centre of Weybridge. It also has 12 outreach centres in Surrey. It is one of 12 colleges in the Surrey Local Learning and Skills Council area and provides courses in most curriculum and vocational areas except agriculture and construction. The demand for academic courses is high and the college provides General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A level) courses in over 40 subjects. It also provides specialised vocational courses in areas such as aircraft and motorsport engineering. The college has 8,500 students on roll, 25% of whom are full-time. About 60% of students are aged 19 or over. Work-related training is provided for about one hundred students. Staying-on rates in Surrey are high and unemployment is low. There are skills shortages locally in precision engineering and telecommunications. The college defines its mission as 'raising knowledge, skills and aspirations to build success in our community'.

How Effective is The College?

Inspectors judged the quality of education and training to be good in management and professional studies, catering, art and performing arts, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Education and training were satisfactory in computing, maths and science, engineering, business and administration, leisure and tourism, health care and counselling, childhood studies, humanities and basic skills. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- increasing proportion of students achieving their target qualifications
- high standards, good teaching, and good examination results in management and professional studies, catering, art and performing arts, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good advice and learning support arrangements
- good staff-student relationships
- good management structures and policies.

What should be improved

- the proportion of students who complete courses successfully
- management information systems
- methods for measuring students' performance (value-added)
- teaching in some subject areas
- the implementation of quality assurance arrangements
- the state of some of the accommodation.

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

Summary

Quality of Provision in Individual Curriculum Areas

The table below shows inspectors' 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 in each curriculum area 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
Computing and IT	Satisfactory Teaching is generally good and lessons are well planned. Pass rates are high on advanced level courses, but low on foundation and intermediate level courses. Some students' attendance is poor. There are deficiencies in course management.
Maths and Science	Satisfactory Teaching is satisfactory in mathematics but there is too much unsatisfactory teaching in science. Rigorous assessment helps students improve. There are high retention rates on all courses but some low pass rates on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education Advanced Supplementary/Advanced level (GCE AS/A level) courses.
Engineering	Satisfactory The broad range of courses meets local needs. Pass rates are good at level 2 but unsatisfactory on some courses at level 3. Practical teaching is effective. Some accommodation is unsatisfactory. Work-based learning programmes are ineffective.
Business and Administration	Satisfactory Pass rates on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced programmes are significantly above the national average. Those on GNVQ intermediate programmes are below average. Some of the teaching is effective but much of it is dull.
Management and Professional Studies	Good Teaching is purposeful and effective. Students achieve high standards in their written and oral tasks. Retention rates are consistently above national averages. Pass rates on most courses are high.
Hospitality and Catering	Good Teaching is well planned. Practical teaching is particularly effective. Pass rates are outstanding on level 2 catering and hospitality programmes. Some retention rates are unsatisfactory. Deficiencies in equipment affect learning adversely.
Leisure, Tourism, Sport and Public Services	Satisfactory Pass rates are good. Retention rates are close to national averages on most courses. There are good opportunities for students to gain additional qualifications and to take part in work experience. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is too high.
Health, Care and Counselling	Satisfactory Most students who complete their course successfully progress to relevant higher education or employment. Work experience is well planned. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but the pace of teaching is too slow in some lessons.
Childhood Studies	Satisfactory Most teaching is satisfactory but some is ineffective. There is effective individual support for students. Retention rates on part-time courses are good but retention and pass rates on the Certificate in Childcare and Education are low.
Art and Performing Arts	Good Teaching is good. Pass rates on GNVQ art and design and GCE A level courses are above the national average. Retention rates on national diploma courses were unsatisfactory in 1999/2000.

Summary

Humanities	Satisfactory Students' work on some GCE A level and access courses is of a high standard. Oral work is often good. Much of the teaching is dull and fails to motivate students. There is a lack of rigour in the monitoring and review of courses.
Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities	Good Teaching and assessment are well planned. Appropriate learning resources have been devised. Learners make good progress but procedures for recording the progress of adults in the outreach centres are ineffective. There is insufficient co-ordination between college work and work experience.
Basic Skills	Satisfactory Teaching is well planned. Support for students is very good. Younger students make good progress but some of the work with adults in the community is less effective.

How Well is the College Led and Managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the college provides adequate value for money. In most but not all subject areas, courses are well planned. Self-assessment is not yet sufficiently rigorous, particularly in identifying weaknesses in teaching and learning. The college has identified the main areas where improvement is needed but is at an early stage in dealing with them. This is particularly the case in the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms and value-added measures.

How Well are Students and Trainees Guided and Supported?

The quality of advice and guidance for full-time students is consistently good. It is more varied for part-time students, but satisfactory overall. Pre-course enrolment advice is generally good, and students are well supported through their courses and given sound advice about progression routes, particularly to higher education. In some subject areas, individual learning plans are insufficiently developed, students' learning targets are vague, and the marking of students' work is not rigorous enough. The co-ordination of workplace training is inadequate and trainees' work is not monitored sufficiently closely.

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, friendly staff
- good induction
- generally good computing facilities
- opportunities for adult returners
- work experience opportunities
- range of programmes
- good preparation for higher education.

Summary

What they feel could be improved

- organisation and teaching of key skills
- quality of accommodation
- quality of some specialist equipment
- pre-entry course advice
- the teaching on some courses
- information about enrichment activities
- information about their progress
- access to some facilities for students with impaired mobility.

Other Information

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

The College as a Whole

Part B: The College as a Whole

Achievement and Standards

How well do learners achieve?

1 Overall, the college has achieved a small but steady improvement in retention rates over the last three years. Retention rates for 16–18 year-old students are good at all levels. For students aged 19 and over they are good on intermediate and advanced courses, but below average on foundation courses. Retention rates for 16–18 year-old students have been particularly good on mathematics and science GCE A level and GCSE courses, engineering and catering National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses, GCE A level art and design and advanced and intermediate GNVQ courses, and humanities A level and GCSE courses. For students over the age of 19 they have been good on humanities A level courses. Retention rates on basic skills programmes are generally good.

2 Table 3 in Part D of the report shows how the achievements of students at Brooklands College compare with those of students at similar colleges. In 1999/2000, about four out of five students achieved their qualification aim. Pass rates are around the national average on foundation and advanced courses (levels one and three) for 16–18 year-old students. They are above average for 16–18 year-old students on intermediate (level 2) courses. Pass rates for students over the age of 19 are average at advanced level. At intermediate and foundation levels they have varied between average and below average from year to year.

3 Students following GCE A level courses are generally well motivated and work hard. Overall, GCE A level examination results over the last three years have been in line with national averages, but they have been below average in science, business and humanities. The average

points score for 16–18 year-old students entered for two or more A-levels has improved from 12.7 to 15.0 over the last four years, a slightly higher rate of improvement than the national average. In 1999/2000 the average point score per examination entry was 4.5. These two figures place the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector. The college has only recently started to develop value-added data to judge how well students are achieving relative to their entry qualifications. So far the data have not led to any conclusions.

4 In 1999/2000, 77% of students on advanced GNVQ courses and 66% on intermediate GNVQ courses achieved their qualification aim. The pass rates for 16–18 year-old students on advanced GNVQ courses have been above average over the last three years for business, catering, leisure and tourism and art and design. They have been below average in science. Pass rates for students aged 19 and over have been similar to national averages, except in engineering, where they have been below average. Pass rates on intermediate vocational qualifications have been above average for 16–18 year-old students on science, engineering and art and design courses. They have generally been similar to national averages for students aged 19 and over. NVQ level 3 pass rates have been particularly good in catering, for both 16–18 year-olds and students over the age of 19. NVQ results at other levels have generally been in line with national averages.

5 Students' portfolio work and their achievements in lessons were good in about 35% of cases for advanced and intermediate students, and in just over 40% of cases for level 1 students. They were unsatisfactory in 23% of advanced, 15% of intermediate and 12% of foundation level lessons. The highest proportion of good work was in art and design, catering and in courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most teachers were effective in developing students' ability to

The College as a Whole

work independently and acquire the higher order skills of research, analysis and synthesis. However, in a minority of lessons, students were given insufficiently challenging tasks and consequently achieved little.

6 As part of Curriculum 2000, all full-time students have access to an enrichment programme and they are all expected to take part in a programme to develop their key skills. So far, however, the teaching and assessment of key skills and the recording of students' achievements have been poorly integrated with other aspects of their programmes. Students express little enthusiasm for the key skills qualification and feel that it is confusingly organised. No results have yet been received for this year's external tests, and attendance at the special support sessions has been very low. The teaching of key skills on the established vocational programmes has been more successful.

7 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve their learning goals. Pass rates are satisfactory for 16–18 year-olds on basic skills courses, but sometimes poor for adults.

8 Retention and pass rates for work-based learners on motor vehicle and engineering programmes are poor. Over the three-year period 1997–2000 the retention rate was 32%. On aeronautical programmes, the retention rate was better at 75%. Pass rates over the same period were very low for engineering and motor vehicle programmes; they were much better on aeronautical programmes.

9 The overall attendance rate in the lessons observed was about 74%. It varied from over 90% in health, care and counselling courses to 50% on some catering and leisure courses. Attendance during the week when the inspection took place was affected by revision programmes, educational visits, and public transport strikes.

Attendance in lessons observed

	Average number of Students	Average Attendance
Brooklands College	8	74%
National average for 1999/2000	10.3	76%

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

The College as a Whole

Quality of Education and Training

Quality of teaching observed during the inspection

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			Sessions Observed No.
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	56%	32%	12%	121
Level 2 (intermediate)	53%	32%	15%	59
Level 1 (foundation)	70%	30%	0%	20
Other sessions	74%	21%	5%	35
Total (%)	60%	30%	10%	235

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

How effective are teaching, training and learning?

10 The table above shows that 90% of the teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better. Sixty per cent was good, very good or excellent. The highest proportion of good or very good teaching was in art and design, computing and IT, catering, and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities lessons. Unsatisfactory lessons were spread fairly evenly across the curriculum areas. In terms of level, the highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was on level 2 courses. In terms of age range, the highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was on courses for 16–18 year-old students.

11 Teachers were well qualified, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. They had good relationships with their students. In management and professional studies, the teaching was particularly well informed by the teachers' own recent business experience. However, in other subject areas, for example health and business and administration, the teachers had insufficient up-to-date practical experience of their

subjects. Lessons were well planned and followed clear schemes of work. Assignments were appropriately scheduled to meet course requirements. Much of the teaching in practical lessons was good. Students' work was marked regularly and usually returned with helpful written or oral comments. In subjects where there was a stable and closely-knit course team, for example, management and professional studies, teachers were particularly successful in providing stimulating, well-focused lessons. By contrast, the teaching was less successful in subjects where there had been staffing problems, for example, sociology and psychology. Basic skills teaching was successful in giving students confidence and helping them develop personal and social skills.

12 Ten per cent of the lessons were less than satisfactory. Typically, such lessons were taught at a slow pace and teachers failed to meet students' differing needs or to involve them in discussion. In some health and humanities lessons information was presented in an uninteresting way. In some science lessons, teachers failed to check students' understanding of complex issues. In a minority of cases, marking was not rigorous

The College as a Whole

enough and did not give students a clear idea of their progress. On occasions internal marking was overgenerous. For example, in leisure and tourism portfolios, some work at merit level was graded as being at distinction level. Students' learning aims were often not clearly defined in learning plans. There were occasional examples of inappropriate student behaviour that went unchallenged by teachers. Some volunteer teachers in basic skills courses set insufficiently challenging work. The teaching of key skills is generally poor. An exception is in art and design, where key skills are an integral part of the teaching programmes.

13 Work-based trainees, mainly modern apprentices, were following appropriate programmes. They had clear tracking documents and were aware of their progress. However, few had individual learning plans and there was insufficient co-ordination between learning in the workplace and learning in college. Assessment practice in work-based learning is poor and overreliant on witness testimonies and job cards. No system exists to ensure that internal verifiers systematically sample all areas of assessment.

How are achievement and learning affected by resources?

14 The quality of much of the colleges' accommodation is poor. The shabby and cramped accommodation in some curriculum areas adversely affects staff and student motivation. Cleaning is sometimes inadequate and there is insufficient display of students' work. The accommodation strategy does not take sufficient account of low rates of room use and occupancy.

15 The college is aware of the weaknesses in its accommodation. Some improvements have been made since the last inspection. The refectory and catering facilities have been refurbished, new classrooms built and nine huts removed. The sale of a separate site has provided

capital for further developments. Some of the accommodation is now good, such as the blocks for science, mathematics and management and professional studies. However, many areas remain poor. The sports hall provides an unsuitable environment for specialist aspects of sports, leisure and public services courses.

16 Staff take care to ensure that teaching activities do not place students' health and safety at risk. Nevertheless, forward risk assessments have not been carried out. This omission is now being reviewed, after an audit by an external consultant.

17 Student services, careers guidance and counselling are conveniently located on the ground floor near the main reception area and are accessible to learners with disabilities. At the time of inspection, however, only 57% of classrooms were accessible to students with impaired mobility. The college is sensitive to the needs of disabled students and, wherever possible, access difficulties are overcome through relocation of lessons.

18 Teachers are generally well qualified. Over 23% of permanent teaching staff hold higher degrees and 95% have, or are working towards, recognised teaching qualifications. Half the part-time teachers have teaching qualifications. They are required to gain a teaching qualification if they teach for more than 40 hours a year. The college has had difficulties recruiting teachers in engineering, IT, computing and aspects of art and design. Teachers are adequately supported by administrative and technical staff, but there are insufficient classroom assistants for programmes at entry level for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

19 The college has appropriate procedures for identifying staff development needs, based on staff appraisal, which involves line managers observing lessons. However, professional development is not yet having sufficient impact on improving the

The College as a Whole

quality of teaching and learning in some areas.

20 IT and computing facilities were improved significantly during the twelve months prior to inspection. The student to computer ratio of 5:1 is good and there is good Internet access. A new drop-in computer facility is located in the learning resources centre and there are smaller drop-in facilities in all the main college buildings. However, the computers are not all linked to the same network and engineering students have inadequate access to computers. The college intranet is currently underdeveloped and is not yet exploited for teaching and learning purposes. At the time of the inspection the college was updating its management information systems. Staff do not have easy access to information and they are not confident that the data they receive are accurate.

21 The learning resources centre is staffed by professional librarians. Students speak highly of the support they provide. Annual expenditure on the centre is around the national average and there is a good stock of books and other resources.

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

22 The assessment of students' progress is generally undertaken thoroughly. Insufficient use is made of value-added information when setting the targets in students' action plans. Information gained from initial assessments could be used more effectively to help teachers adjust their teaching programmes to take better account of individual students' learning needs.

23 Most assessment procedures are appropriate and meet the course requirements. Most teachers have quickly adapted their assessments to take account of the changes to syllabuses following the introduction of Curriculum 2000. Teachers on vocational courses make good use of

students' work experience; the knowledge and skills gained at work are used to complete course assignments. Tests and internal examinations are set regularly to help students to prepare for external examinations. Students on GCE A level courses in the humanities benefit from well-structured revision programmes and good examination preparation. This good practice could be adopted in other departments.

24 The recording of students' achievements is generally done well. The information is shared with students to keep them informed on what they need to do to complete the course successfully. For example, on health, care and counselling courses the tracking of students' progress is particularly well done and contributes to the good pass rates on some courses.

25 Marking is generally undertaken systematically and accurately. Most teachers provide appropriately detailed comments which help students to improve their work, although better use could be made of good practice exemplars. The quality of assessments is monitored through internal verification and any college-wide issues are followed up systematically. Heads of programme areas check and review procedures, though some carry out their tasks more effectively than others. Key skills are not yet being assessed effectively.

26 Parents and employers receive useful reports on learners' progress. Students are aware of the predicted grades that are used for admissions purposes. Tutors and parents meet and discuss students' progress at parents' evenings. There are effective arrangements for parents to meet tutors at other times if there are particular concerns. Employers receive written reports on trainees' progress. The Training Employment Officer ensures that all parties are aware of progress made by learners in relation to the targets in their individual training plans.

The College as a Whole

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

27 Overall, the college provides a broad range of programmes and courses from entry level through to advanced level and beyond, in a wide range of curriculum areas. Progression routes are clear, enabling successful students to move to higher levels. A range of courses, particularly in the computing, administration, and care curriculum areas, have admission arrangements which enable students to begin studying without waiting for the start of the academic year. A wide range of courses is offered in the 12 community centres, but there are insufficient numeracy courses. Opportunities are available for open and distance learning and the college is part of the Surrey Hub for the University for Industry (Ufi). Participation in Ufi is very low in Surrey. The college is also part of the Government's UK Online scheme to introduce the public to information technology.

28 The college has made a major commitment to the post-16 Curriculum 2000 reforms. There is a common college timetable to facilitate non-standard combinations of courses. Students can combine AS courses with the advanced vocational certificate in education (AVCE).

29 The college is sensitive to the diverse learning needs of the local community and to the employment situation in the area. For example, the college plans to increase the number of care students to meet a need that has been identified in the community. The college responds positively to employers' suggestions and makes good efforts to meet specific requests by putting on short training courses. Examples include a short course on child protection and a part-time course in IT design software. Good links with local employers enable the college to offer appropriate work experience placements to students. Outreach work is effective. Good working relationships have been established with homeless people,

travellers and drug rehabilitation units, enabling learners to be approached who previously might not have considered undertaking education or training.

30 The college offers government-funded training in eight occupational areas. Eighty-five per cent of trainees are modern apprentices, and seventy-one per cent of these are on engineering programmes. The majority are employed in companies which have long-standing training arrangements with the college. There are three women on engineering programmes, but the college is not sufficiently active in trying to increase this number. The majority of trainees attend the college on a day-release basis. There is insufficient work-based assessment.

How well are learners guided and supported?

31 Pre-entry advice and guidance arrangements are efficiently undertaken. Most students are placed on courses for which they are suitably qualified and in which they have expressed a strong interest. The process is helped by the wide range of good-quality publicity materials, and by the generally good links between the college and local schools. College careers advisers attend school open evenings. They provide useful information and advice to prospective students and trainees.

32 Admission procedures are clear and for the most part consistently applied, although staff in some programme areas do not take sufficient account of all the available information. In general, information gained during the initial assessment and screening of applicants is not used to ensure that all students receive the support they need from the outset. The college is sensitive to issues of equality of opportunity and addresses many of them imaginatively and well. All applicants are interviewed and applicants for both full-time and part-time courses receive a well-devised information pack prior to interview. The college's student services unit follows up queries promptly and refers students to

The College as a Whole

those staff best placed to provide further help and assistance.

33 An induction programme is provided for students who join at the start of the academic year. Some students who join at other times do not have a full induction programme. The induction programmes cover college procedures and policies well, but are insufficiently diagnostic. Students opting for subjects and courses unfamiliar to them need to receive earlier feedback on their suitability for the courses.

34 All students, including part-time students, have a personal tutor. Full-time students spend two hours per week with their tutor. This time is not always well used. Some good tutorials were seen but others were not well planned. Students applying for further and higher education courses valued their tutors' support highly, along with advice offered by staff in the Careers and Higher Education Centre. Other parts of the tutorial programme are less effective: for example, monitoring, and target-setting are not always done well. Relatively few tutors make sufficient use of value-added information. While there are well-established procedures for responding to poor punctuality, non-attendance and students' poor performance, these are not always implemented. Part-time students found the support and guidance arrangements generally good if they actively sought help and assistance.

35 A good level of help and support is available for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Increasing numbers of students with hearing impairments, dyslexia, and other disabilities are being successfully supported on mainstream programmes. The diagnosis of the additional needs of such students is helped by the pre-entry screening programme, by the process of self-referrals, and by referrals made by tutors. Students' progress is systematically monitored and reviewed. All learners on full-time courses are given a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. However,

opportunities for additional support are not always taken up, even when a clear need has been identified.

36 Full-time students value the services of well-qualified staff with responsibility for their welfare and personal support. These support services are less accessible to part-time students, adult learners working away from the college and students on work-based training. Students who had used the service reported that they had received timely help and advice on a wide range of personal, medical and financial matters.

37 Specialist careers guidance is provided by Surrey Careers Service Ltd. in conjunction with the college's own careers guidance staff. The working relationship between the two groups is long standing and effective. Changes in the service agreement have led to an increase in the support offered to students on courses at Levels 1 and 2 and a decrease in the support for students wishing to progress after completing Level 3 courses. The college has adjusted to these changes well. The number of Level 3 students progressing to higher education courses has grown steadily and last year stood at 73%. There is a good range of up-to-date and relevant careers information in the well-resourced learning centre. Students find the staff helpful and supportive. Arrangements for organising work experience or work placements are good.

Leadership and Management

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

38 The college's leadership and management are satisfactory; recent management re-organisation has resulted in greater accountability at all levels. Some newly-established systems, such as those for quality assurance, have yet to result in any improvements. Attempts to improve the quality of teaching across the college have

The College as a Whole

been only partially successful and the college is not yet able to measure any improvement. The college has overestimated its income for some years, resulting in a deficit, but control of college finances is now improving.

39 The management board and governors provide clear strategic aims for the college. Team and programme managers understand these aims and use them as the basis for operational plans. There is an appropriate structure of ten cross-college committees, including the academic board, all of which report to the management board. Staff regard the principal and senior managers as open and approachable.

40 The quality of management information is poor. The management information system does not have the confidence of programme managers. Inaccuracies in the data hinder target-setting and the analysis of retention and achievement at course level. Staff also doubt the reliability of the electronic registration system. Some managers do not have on-line access to management information.

41 A project to improve student retention rates on a sample of courses was undertaken in 2000. This resulted in a series of initiatives at college and programme levels. For example, students at risk of leaving prematurely are now identified and supported; increased contact has been established with parents; and there is a programme of visits to departments in other colleges with good retention rates.

42 Governors' monitoring of the academic performance of the college has improved since the last inspection. Helped by effective clerking and a comprehensive training plan, governors are now aware of key issues relating to retention and achievement. The business development committee scrutinises students' achievements through regular,

comprehensive management reports. Governors meet regularly with the students' union and attend college functions but are not involved in the work of curriculum departments.

43 Sixteen team managers, responsible for the operational management of curriculum areas within departments, have recently been appointed. Some are more effective than others. In the performing arts and media, courses are well organised and managers and teachers are dealing effectively with weaknesses they have identified. There is a clear and well-understood management structure in engineering and good support arrangements exist for part-time staff. Programme teams in business and administration meet regularly to plan and review. In other teams, such as health, care and counselling, humanities and childhood studies, meetings are irregular and insufficient attention is paid to the recording of decisions and the monitoring of agreed actions. In some areas, staff absences and unfilled vacancies are inhibiting the smooth running of teams. The management of key skills across the college is unsatisfactory.

44 All teams are required to set performance targets. However, the curriculum reviews from which targets are derived are not all of the same quality. In some reviews, data relating to students' performance are scrupulously analysed and discussed and there is a clear emphasis on improving students' performance and the quality of teaching. Other reviews pay insufficient attention to poor recruitment, retention or achievement and action planning is weak.

45 The recently introduced quality assurance procedures are thorough, but have not yet had much impact. The college produces an annual self-assessment report, which is internally validated and which identifies many of the college's strengths and weaknesses. In computing, humanities and catering, self-assessment procedures are applied thoroughly. In other curriculum

The College as a Whole

areas, self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous. Nevertheless, inspectors agreed with most of the college's self-assessment grades. There are twice-yearly student surveys. The responses are analysed and the findings are disseminated. There is a rolling programme of lesson observations, but, until this year, lessons were ungraded.

46 Equal opportunities policies and procedures are regularly reviewed by the equal opportunities committee which reports to the management board. All departments record the ethnic origins and gender of their students. Racist incidents are only now being recorded and monitored separately. There are examples of the promotion of equality of opportunity. Lessons have, on occasion, been relocated to accommodate disabled students and strategies are in place to tackle the gender imbalance on some courses.

47 The college uses a range of benchmarks to compare itself with other Surrey colleges in terms of value for money. The college recognises that staffing costs exceed targets and that class sizes are often too small. It has instituted a course-costing exercise.

What should the college do to improve further?

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

- improve retention and pass rates on courses where they are below national averages
- apply the new quality assurance procedures rigorously
- improve the quality of work-based learning and assessment
- improve the quality of curriculum management and ensure that senior staff monitor and improve teaching in areas where it is poor

- develop and use reliable value-added measures to gauge the progress made by students
- improve the teaching and recording of key skills
- improve the reliability of management information systems
- improve the effectiveness of tutorials
- increase class sizes in order to obtain better value for money
- improve accommodation in the areas where it is unsatisfactory.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Part C: Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Computing and Information Technology

Overall provision in these subjects is **satisfactory (Grade 3)**

Strengths

- good pass rates on advanced and short courses
- well-planned lessons
- broad range of courses
- good availability of computers for students' use
- well-organised work experience.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rate on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses
- poor attendance on full-time courses
- weaknesses in course management
- insufficient opportunities for professional updating.

Scope of provision

49 The computing and information technology (IT) provision includes full-time GNVQ IT programmes at foundation, intermediate and advanced level, a national diploma and a higher national diploma in computing, and GCE AS and A level computing. Short courses at foundation and intermediate level, aimed specifically at the over-19 age group, are available both at the main site and as part of community provision. The college also offers a small number of computer programming courses. This broad range of courses attracts about two hundred 16–18 year-old students and a substantial number of adults.

Achievement and standards

50 Pass rates on full-time GCE A level and advanced vocational courses are generally good. Those on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses are poor. The retention and pass rates for students aged over 19 years of age completing short IT courses are well above the national average. Retention rates on the national diploma computing course, together with most other advanced level courses, have declined this year. Project and assignment work are generally of a good standard. Low student attendance rates and poor punctuality adversely affect many lessons and courses.

51 Students are encouraged to use the Internet and to design websites. They develop good computing skills through such projects. However, their skills in writing user guides and running test data need to be improved.

Quality of education and training

52 The general standard of teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. Induction onto courses is well planned and students are encouraged to try different taster sessions. To improve the standard of pre-course guidance, computing teachers now interview all course applicants. All courses have handbooks. Lessons are well planned. Each course has a detailed scheme of work reflecting the requirements of the syllabus. Considerable thought has been given to the scheduling of assignments.

53 Most lessons are well planned. Teachers organise appropriate learning activities and use good teaching materials. Some teachers show particular skill in encouraging students to solve difficult programming problems. Short computer courses that take place at community centres are increasingly popular and generally well attended. Teaching is generally good on these courses, but in

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

some lessons teachers failed to take account of some students' slow progress.

54 Students generally respond well in lessons and they have a good rapport with their teachers. In some lessons, students are encouraged to participate in group discussions or to work in pairs and all make good progress. In others, teachers take insufficient account of the range of ability in the class. More able students are not stretched, and less advanced students struggle to keep up. Overall, there is insufficient checking of learning and there is an over-reliance on workbooks and the completion of sets of example questions.

55 Teachers set satisfactory assignments that meet course requirements. They correct students' mistakes and make constructive comments to help them improve the quality of their work. However, some teachers pay insufficient attention to students' course work and rarely mark any work other than assignments. Internal verification and cross-marking are effective but detailed records are not always kept. Few students attend the key skills workshops to which they have been directed.

56 Teachers are generally well qualified. Most have a teaching qualification. However, they are given too few opportunities to bring their professional knowledge up to date. The computing building provides satisfactory teaching accommodation, although some of the workrooms are poorly laid out. Computer hardware and software are good and meet course requirements. The computer network, although sometimes slow, is good and is well supported by technicians. Students have access to specialist computers outside of lessons. The selection of computing texts in the library is adequate.

Leadership and management

57 Management of the curriculum area is less than satisfactory. Although teachers work well together and support each other,

there is too much reliance on informal procedures. There is no overall co-ordination of IT across the college. Each course team maintains a course file, but few of these contain formal minutes of team meetings. Each team completes a self-assessment and action plan each year. However, the implementation of these plans is not effectively monitored or evaluated. During self-assessment, insufficient account is taken of data on students' achievements and issues related to teaching and learning. The college's self-assessment report did not identify many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Science and Mathematics

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

Strengths

- consistently high retention rates on all courses
- rigorous assessment of students' work
- well-equipped and well-organised science laboratories
- well-qualified and experienced staff.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on several courses
- unsatisfactory teaching in science
- insufficient attention paid to teaching and learning by curriculum managers.

Scope of provision

58 The college offers GCSE science and mathematics courses, a range of GCE AS/A-level subjects, pre-GCSE mathematics, GNVQ advanced science and AVCE science. A science foundation programme, forming the first year of a modular science degree, is offered in conjunction with a local university. GNVQ foundation and intermediate science programmes were not running at the time of the inspection, as they did not attract sufficient students.

Achievement and standards

59 Retention rates on science and mathematics courses are consistently high. In 1999-2000, all GCE A level geology students completed the course. Retention rates for GCE A level biology, chemistry and physics for the same year were 87, 95 and 84% respectively. However, this high level of retention is often accompanied by low pass rates. The pass rates for GNVQ advanced science and a number of GCE AS/A subjects including chemistry and

mathematics are significantly below the national averages. Pass rates are also low in many GCE AS level subjects, particularly statistics and mathematics. A large number of students take GCSE mathematics, but only 34% achieved an A*-C grade pass in 1999/2000. An improvement in the pass rate in GCE A level biology from 55% in 1998/1999 to 85% in 1999/2000 was accompanied by a large fall in the number of students taking the subject. In 1999/2000, 85% of students on level 3 courses achieved a place in higher education.

60 Students produce some work of a high standard, particularly for formal assessments. In mathematics there is a strong focus on practice examination questions. Students produce answers which are well structured. Practical laboratory work is carried out competently and there is an appropriate emphasis on working safely. The standard of attainment in many lessons is low. Many science students find it difficult to apply theoretical concepts to practical problems. They do not critically evaluate the information given by teachers. Students' attendance in the observed lessons was low, at 74%.

Quality of education and training

61 In mathematics, all the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, but there was too much unsatisfactory teaching in science. There was a small amount of good teaching in both areas. Most lessons are well structured and cover the course content at an appropriate pace. Students learn steadily, but without enthusiasm. Teachers rarely manage to inspire or motivate their students. The small classes allow teachers to give students individual attention, particularly in practical lessons and when students are working on mathematical problems. Mathematics students develop the skills needed to answer examination questions, but do not always understand the underlying mathematical concepts. In science, teachers often talk too much without checking that the students understand what they are saying.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Generally, teachers fail to adjust their teaching to take account of the needs of students with different abilities.

62 Key skills are taught in separate lessons and also through integrated assignment work. Voluntary sessions at which students are expected to collate evidence for their key skills portfolio are very poorly attended.

63 Teachers' assessment of homework and assignments is carried out well. Students' work is marked rigorously and is returned with constructive comments that help students to improve their work. Students receive regular, helpful reports on their progress but there are no individual action plans, with specific targets agreed by the student and the tutor.

64 There are sufficient teachers and technicians who are well qualified and experienced. The purpose-built science laboratories are well equipped and there are well-organised science preparation rooms. Classrooms contain comfortable furniture, and in science rooms interesting displays of students' work and posters create a stimulating learning environment. The learning resource centre is well stocked with a wide range of science and mathematics textbooks. Insufficient use is made of IT to promote learning in science or mathematics lessons, although students make good use of the IT resource areas at other times.

Leadership and management

65 Managers and team leaders need to pay more attention to the quality of teaching and to improving pass rates. The development of teaching and learning is not well co-ordinated across the science and mathematics curriculum areas. There is little systematic sharing of good practice, particularly among science staff. Course administration is effective. Staff hold regular, minuted meetings. All courses have schemes of work, although they lack detail on teaching methodology. The self-assessment process is evaluative and the

views of students are considered fully. Whilst the weaknesses in pass rates are recognised by the college, action plans to improve the situation pay insufficient attention to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Engineering

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

Strengths

- broad range of engineering courses
- good progression rates from level 2 to level 3 full-time courses
- good standard of students' practical work
- above average retention and pass rates on most first diploma and level 2 craft courses
- effective teaching of practical skills
- the opportunities for work experience
- good resources in aeronautical and motor sport engineering.

Weaknesses

- ineffective work-based learning programmes
- low achievement and retention rates on national diploma courses
- lack of individual learning plans
- uninspiring teaching in some theory lessons
- unsatisfactory accommodation and equipment in mechanical engineering workshops
- inadequate written feedback on students' work
- inadequate course reviews.

Scope of provision

66 The engineering department offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses. These include aeronautical engineering, mechanical and electrical engineering, motor vehicle and motor sport engineering. Full-time students are able to choose from a range of courses from level 1 to level 4. Many students progress from level 2 to level 3 courses, and some go on to study higher national diploma courses at

the college. There are some productive links with employers in motor sport and aeronautical engineering. Many full-time students benefit from a period of work experience. Modern apprentices attend college courses to acquire the background knowledge required to gain an NVQ.

67 There are 89 work-based learners; 13 on aeronautical programmes, 28 on motor vehicle programmes and 48 on other engineering programmes. All but three are modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

68 The standard of most students' work is satisfactory or better. In the final year of the national diploma in engineering course, students undertake a variety of mechanical engineering projects. Many of these are imaginative. They have included the development of a sand-yacht and specialist components for motor-cycles. Many of these products manufactured by students are of a high standard. However, the standard of written work of some students is low. Arrangements for the teaching and assessment of key skills are unsatisfactory.

69 At level 2, pass rates on the first diploma and City & Guilds courses are good. At level 3, the number of 16–18-year-old students successfully completing their course and gaining a qualification declined in 1999/2000. Retention and pass rates on national diploma courses fell well below national averages in 1999/2000. The percentage of students over 19 years of age who completed their courses and gained a qualification in 1999/2000 was slightly above the national average.

70 Retention and achievement rates for work-based trainees on motor vehicle and engineering programmes are poor. Over the three-year period 1997–2000 the retention rate on these programmes was 32%. The retention rate for aeronautical programmes was better at 75%. Over the same period, the achievement rate for motor vehicle and engineering programmes was

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

14% and for the aeronautical programme it was better at 74%. The achievement rate for the level 2 NVQ on the aeronautical programme was particularly good, at 94%.

Quality of education and training

71 Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Teaching in practical lessons is good and well planned. Students demonstrate enthusiasm for their work, and on many courses their progress is carefully monitored and recorded. Teachers effectively link the topics being covered at college with the students' experiences in the workplace. However, many theory lessons were dull. Teachers often neglected to take into account the range of attainment among their students. The teaching of key skills is poorly planned and organised.

72 Most teaching staff are adequately qualified. Some make good use of recent industrial experience to enliven their teaching. In motor sport engineering and aeronautical engineering there is a broad range of modern equipment. The aeronautical workshop is bright and reflects industry practice. However, most of the other engineering workshops and specialist resources are dated and present a poor image of engineering. In a few lessons, a lack of up-to-date specialist equipment adversely affected the learning of students. Old and worn machine tools limit the levels of precision engineering that students are able to achieve. Teachers often fail to make effective use of IT in lessons, and students' access to specialist IT is inadequate.

73 Assessment schedules are generally carefully linked with schemes of work, and students are informed of deadlines and work patterns through well-prepared course handbooks. Students' work is normally marked promptly. However, the written feedback provided by some teachers is insufficiently detailed. Internal verifiers are insufficiently rigorous in commenting on the quality of written feedback. Some students' portfolios of work are poorly presented.

External verifiers grade the standard of assessment and students' work as good.

74 Most students are enrolled on appropriate courses. Course brochures are of good quality and suitable for both school-leavers and adult learners. There is good support and guidance for students on first diploma courses. All courses include an induction programme. The additional support needs of full-time students are identified, but the subsequent progress of students identified in this way is not monitored systematically. Some tutorial programmes are inadequate. For example, some do not include regular reviews of students' progress, the development of agreed action plans or the setting of learning and achievement targets.

75 Work-based trainees are on programmes well suited to their own needs and those of their employers. The NVQ units to be included in their programmes are selected in consultation with their employer. Trainees are provided with the opportunities to develop and demonstrate the competences required in the workplace. If one company is unable to offer the required experience on, for example, aircraft, arrangements are made for the trainees to work at another company for a period of time. Trainees on the aeronautical programme are able to study for the appropriate aircraft engineer's licence and to sit the external examinations. Employers are encouraged to visit the college and observe lessons.

76 Trainees have a clear tracking document in their portfolios recording their progress towards an NVQ. Trainees are aware of the units completed, and what they need to achieve. However, few trainees have individual learning plans. Employers are given insufficient information by the college and overall co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training is poor.

77 Assessment practice in work-based learning is poor. There is insufficient assessment by direct observation in the

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

work place. Assessment is over-reliant on witness testimonies and job cards. Workplace supervisors have not been trained to provide witness statements or to understand their role in providing evidence of competent performance. Assessment plans do not identify the timing of assessments, or state how they will be undertaken. There is no system to ensure that internal verifiers systematically sample all areas of assessment. Internal verification is too reliant on checking completed portfolios. Only three engineering trainees are women. No action has been taken to encourage more women to apply.

Leadership and management

78 Roles and responsibilities for individuals and teams in the engineering department are clearly defined. Business and operational plans for the department have been developed carefully. Target-setting, in relation to students' achievements and retention, are being improved. However, many annual course reviews are inadequate. They do not deal adequately with weaknesses in teaching, learning, students' retention and achievement. Procedures for monitoring the quality of work-based learning are inadequate. Managers do not have access to on-line management information to help them in their day-to-day work. Reports on student performance provided centrally are often inaccurate, and managers spend too much time reconciling locally-held data with those produced centrally.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Business and Administration

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

Strengths

- good liaison with employers;
- high pass rates on GNVQ advanced and NVQ level 1 and level 3 courses;
- good attendance and retention rates on general administration courses.

Weaknesses

- some dull teaching;
- low retention rates on GNVQ advanced business and NVQ level 2 courses;
- declining achievement rate on GCE A level business course;

Scope of provision

79 The college offers full-time and part-time courses at the college and in local community centres. For full-time students these include GNVQ and AVCE business, GCE AS and A level business studies, GCE AS and A level accounts. The part-time offer includes NVQ level 3 administration and customer service courses and secretarial and bookkeeping courses. Students can also take additional courses in personal development, key skills, IT and first aid.

Achievement and standards

80 Most students' written work is well organised and neatly presented. Those on advanced level courses demonstrate appropriate levels of knowledge, are able to interpret data and can apply business theory to practical exercises.

81 Examination results are mixed. Pass rates on NVQ programmes at level 1 and 3 and GNVQ advanced business programmes are significantly above national averages. Those on NVQ programmes at

level 2 are below average. On the NVQ level 1 bookkeeping course, students with no prior experience in accounting are confident and competent at preparing income and expenditure accounts and balance sheets. The pass rate in GCE A Level business studies has declined from 88% in 1997 to 53% in 2000.

82 Attendance rates on some courses such as the AVCE and year two of the GNVQ advanced are unsatisfactory. Staff have identified but not solved the problem. Retention rates on general administration courses are good. Students are well motivated and keen to attend. On NVQ level 2 programmes, retention rates are below the national average.

The quality of education and training

83 The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some teachers use imaginative examples to explain economic concepts. For example, in a GCE A level business studies lesson the business cycle was compared to a bath and the injection of investment into the economy was likened to the flow of water from taps. However, much of the teaching is dull. Some students are reluctant to contribute to discussions and teachers do not do enough to encourage them to join in. A minority of younger students do not pay attention in class and they are a disruptive influence. Teachers do not deal effectively with this.

84 The department has good links with employers. Teachers arrange visiting speakers and trips to local businesses. This year the department has introduced an innovative 'Understanding Industry' event run by commercial and industrial representatives. This has been welcomed by students, whose understanding of business has grown as a result.

85 Assignments are clearly written and relevant to the programme of study. Students are informed of the assessment criteria and know what is expected of them.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Teachers' comments on written work are supportive, but do not indicate how students can improve their work to obtain higher grades. There is insufficient internal verification of assignment work on some vocational programmes.

86 All full-time students are allocated an academic tutor. They are required to meet regularly with their tutor and attendance is monitored and records kept. Students' work is reviewed twice a year. Parents receive reports and are invited to attend parents' meetings. Most parents take up the invitation.

87 Teachers are academically well qualified. Most have a first or higher degree and a teaching qualification. A minority have some business experience but all lack up-to-date relevant commercial or business experience. An appropriate number have gained assessor qualifications. Since the last inspection, IT resources have been improved. Computers have been updated and most have been networked to the college's intranet. Library facilities are good. There is a good range of learning resources, including videos and CD-ROMs. Teaching rooms are generally adequate. They are well maintained and decorated. Some, however, are too small for the groups that use them. The layout of rooms does not facilitate group work.

Leadership and management

88 Leadership is satisfactory. Teams meet regularly. Staff have identified areas for improvement in the provision. Action plans have been prepared but the analysis of problems lacks rigour. Equality of opportunity is promoted throughout the department.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Management and Professional Studies

Overall, provision in this area is **good (Grade 2)**

Strengths

- effective teaching
- good pass rates on the Certificate in Personnel Practice, Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) and Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) courses
- high retention rates
- high standard of students' work
- well-planned and well-managed assessment of students' work
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on the AAT foundation and the CIM Certificate courses.

Scope of provision

89 The college offers a good range of management and professional courses, extending from NVQ level 2 to postgraduate diploma level aimed mainly at adult students attending part-time or studying through flexible learning. The main programmes prepare students for the examinations of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and the Institute of Management Foundation.

90 This range of programmes provides good progression opportunities for students, particularly in accounting. Enrolments on some courses are low, but the college continues to support the courses in recognition of local need. There are no major gaps in provision. Considerable

efforts have been made to meet students' preferred study patterns. The AAT, CIPD and CIM programmes in particular are organised to enable students to attend at convenient times. The college meets the needs of students who wish to attempt only part of a qualification by allowing them to study and gain accreditation for single units or modules.

Achievement and standards

91 Retention rates on many courses exceed national averages. Pass rates are well above national averages for the CIPD and the Certificate in Personnel Practice courses. For some years there have been good pass rates on the AAT intermediate and technician courses and the CIM Diploma. Pass rates are poor for the CIM Certificate course and the AAT foundation course.

92 Most students across the curriculum area achieve well. An analysis of achievements over the last three years indicates that many students continue their studies and subsequently achieve their complete qualification. AAT students perform particularly well in their external assessments.

93 Students often produce written work of a high standard, both in lessons and for assignments. Most assignments relate closely to students' employment tasks. Students demonstrate a good understanding of the business context in which they work.

Quality of education and training

94 Most of the teaching is good. It is pitched at appropriate levels for the diverse range of adult students. Most lessons are well-planned and clearly thought through. This enables teachers to adjust lesson plans when necessary. Students generally contribute well and relevantly in class debates. Reflective and challenging debate between students and between students and teachers is a strong feature of the teaching.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

95 Teachers make good use of students' own work experience; practical activities based upon the students' work experiences are used regularly. Part-time teachers bring particular strengths to lessons, drawing upon their own commercial experience. In a minority of lessons teachers fail to use sufficient directed questions to engage the more reluctant students or to check on their understanding.

96 The assessment of students' work and the monitoring of their progress are well planned and managed and supported by rigorous internal verification. Most teachers provide detailed and helpful written comments on students' work. Closely-knit course teams make effective use of the outcomes of assessment to help monitor the progress of their students and to guide changes to individually tailored programmes. Tutorials are well organised to meet the particular needs of adult students. Some particularly effective tutorials for management students were observed.

97 The teachers are well qualified. Most have relevant professional and vocational qualifications and an up-to-date awareness of the commercial world. Most take the opportunity to update their practical experience when appropriate. Effective use is made of the expertise and experience of part-time teachers. Management and professional studies courses are taught in good quality, well-equipped accommodation. Two rooms of modern computers are readily available, close to the grouping of teaching rooms. Modern business software is available.

Leadership and management

98 Effective course teams operate within clear management guidelines. Teams undertake thorough reviews of students' progress and their achievements are closely analysed. Comparisons are made with previous years and with national averages. Targets are set for retention and achievement, as part of the college's

improvement strategy and the annual course review process. Course teams determine key strengths and weaknesses, using the questions in the Common Inspection Framework.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Hospitality and Catering

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

Strengths

- outstanding retention and pass rates on intermediate courses
- students' well-developed team-working skills
- good practical teaching
- well-planned lessons
- clear commitment to improving the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by students.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some courses
- weaknesses in the quantity, use and organisation of specialist resources.

Scope of provision

99 The college provides an appropriate range of courses in hospitality, catering and bakery for full-time and part-time students. Students can progress from level 1 to level 4. Programmes are provided on the college's premises and in the workplace. Short courses are provided for individuals and organisations.

Achievement and standards

100 Most achievement and retention rates are good and a number are outstanding. Retention rates on a few courses are unsatisfactory. Achievement and retention rates on one-year NVQ programmes in food preparation and cooking and food service at level 2 and supervisory management at level 3 have been maintained at an outstanding level for the last three years. On two-year food preparation and cooking courses at NVQ level 2, pass rates are good but retention rates have declined to an unsatisfactory level. The retention rate for NVQ level 1

preparing and serving food is well below the national average. Achievement and retention rates on pastry courses at level 2 are good. On the advanced GNVQ in hospitality and catering the retention rate has declined to a low level over the last three years. Short course results are mostly good, particularly on the National Licensees' Certificates.

101 Most students have appropriate vocational skills but a few are not yet working to the standards required by industry. Students work well together in teams to prepare, cook and serve the food and drink for the college restaurant. The standard of students' written work is generally satisfactory. The college has an established record in hospitality and catering competitions, both in the United Kingdom and overseas. At the 2001 Heart of England Salon Culinaire British Open Championships, three students from the college won a gold award and best in class in the cook and serve competition.

Quality of education and training

102 In practical lessons, careful account is taken of each student's individual learning requirements. Professional cookery and bakery teachers have accurate knowledge of each student's level of skill and understanding. They provide students with good individual guidance, give effective demonstrations and make appropriate evaluations of individual performance.

103 Most lessons have detailed plans, supported by succinct and relevant schemes of work. Most teachers use an effective range of teaching approaches. Occasionally, in theory lessons teachers fail to motivate students and keep their interest. Written comments by teachers on NVQ students' work is too brief to provide useful guidance.

104 Teachers hold appropriate professional and teaching qualifications and have relevant experience in the hospitality and catering industry. Generally, the range

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

of specialist equipment is adequate. However, in some cases, cramped or badly-maintained accommodation and insufficient resources affected adversely the quality of students' work. Students have access to a wide range of library-based resources. They appreciate the help provided by the library staff.

105 Hospitality and catering staff have made appropriate arrangements for assessing and verifying students' work on NVQ, GNVQ and other programmes. Students demonstrate that they have the required competences and collect evidence from the college restaurant, kitchens and bakeries. Procedures for internal verification are thorough and clear. Students' progress is reviewed in tutorials and action is taken to improve their performance. Where appropriate, students' parents are kept informed at parents' evenings. The amount of information supplied to employers is, however, unsatisfactory. They are not kept informed of the performance of their employees on college day-release programmes.

106 Students appreciate the support and help they receive from hospitality and catering teachers. Students consider that courses are clearly explained to them at interview and that induction settles them well into their studies. Students' punctuality is good and their attendance is satisfactory. Lateness, when it occurs, is dealt with promptly and there are clear procedures to be followed if absences continue. Hospitality and catering students do not receive a formal programme of careers guidance and education.

Leadership and management

107 The hospitality and catering team is well led. Managers are committed to improving and maintaining the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by students. Challenging targets are set and, in most instances, met. Note is taken of national benchmarks and students' past performance to establish targets. Course

reviews focus clearly on improving teaching and raising standards. Each member of staff has an individual action plan which includes an objective to improve achievement and retention rates. The self-assessment report for hospitality and catering identified clearly most of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. It did not recognise all the strengths in teaching and failed to identify some weaknesses in resources.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Leisure, Tourism, Sport and Public Services

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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on NVQ travel courses
- good pass rates on GNVQ courses
- rigorous assessment and monitoring of students
- the opportunities to gain additional qualifications and to take part in work experience, educational visits and enrichment activities
- well-qualified staff with relevant commercial experience

Weaknesses

- the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching
- inappropriate student behaviour in some lessons
- poor attendance on several courses
- the poor-quality sports hall

Scope of provision

108 The college offers a wide range of leisure, tourism, sport and recreation courses. These include: GNVQ intermediate and advanced leisure and tourism, AVCEs in travel and leisure, GCE A levels in physical education and sports studies, NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in travel services and sport and recreation, and specialist travel courses in fares, ticketing and reservation systems. First diplomas and national diplomas in public services are also offered.

Achievement and standards

109 Achievement rates for students completing full-time programmes in 2000 were above national averages. All of the

students who completed the GNVQ intermediate and advanced leisure and tourism courses achieved the qualification. There were also 100% pass rates for students completing NVQ level 3 tour operations, NVQ level 2 sport and recreation and the national diploma in public services. Pass rates on most courses have improved over the last three years.

110 Retention rates on some courses, for example the NVQs in travel services, have consistently exceeded national averages. On other courses, retention rates have fallen to below the national average. For example, retention on the GNVQ intermediate course in 1999/00 was 62%. In 1998/99, on the first and national diplomas in public services it was 57% and 50% respectively.

111 Many students produce work of a high standard. Most NVQ students maintain well-organised portfolios of evidence. GNVQ and public service students' portfolios provide evidence of competences at the required standards. Some students' coursework, for example for GCE A level physical education and the AVCE in leisure is not satisfactory. Few AVCE students are producing work of the standard necessary to pass the examination. In most lessons, students were mature, attentive and responsive during discussions. In several lessons, however, students displayed inappropriate behaviour; they were inattentive and did not respond to the tutors' attempts to involve them in the lesson. Throughout the year attendance on some courses has been unsatisfactory.

Quality of education and training

112 Most lessons were well planned and effective. Teachers in these lessons communicated clear objectives to students and maintained their interest through well-paced, effective activities: for example, role play, watching video recordings, using computer-based learning materials, fitness testing exercises and quizzes. In most lessons, teachers were aware of individuals'

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

needs and progress. For example, in a lesson where students were working at their own pace through computer-based exercises on airline reservation systems, their personal targets were revised on a weekly basis, depending on progress made in preceding weeks.

113 In one quarter of the lessons observed, however, the teaching was less than satisfactory. Shortcomings included failure to challenge inattentive behaviour, unstructured lessons or unclear explanations, failure to involve all students in discussions and a lack of awareness of individuals' needs. The effectiveness of some lessons was reduced by the low attendance.

114 Students are given opportunities to undertake work experience as part of their courses and to go on educational visits in the UK and overseas. Many take additional qualifications, for example the community sports leader award.

115 Assignments provide good coverage of all the course requirements. Tasks are generally clear and students are aware of the standard required to achieve a pass, merit or distinction. On most courses, students' progress is rigorously monitored and efficiently recorded. For example, NVQ sport and recreation students have regular sessions when they update the progress records in their portfolios. By contrast, tutors responsible for GCE A level physical education and sports studies have not applied sufficient pressure to ensure the timely completion of examination coursework.

116 Teachers are well qualified and many have recent experience of the travel and leisure industries or the police force. They are given opportunities for relevant staff development. At the time of the inspection, there were no teachers on the public services courses with military or fire service experience. The college has a sports hall, fitness centre, football pitch and two tennis courts. The sports hall is

dilapidated and of very poor quality. The floor is unsuitable and lighting inadequate. The college travel office is linked to a local travel agent and students can use some industry-standard software and access the internet.

Leadership and management

117 Day-to-day management of courses is satisfactory. Three programme managers have responsibility for travel, public services and sport and recreation courses. They carry out their duties effectively. The responsibility for GCE A levels in physical education and sports studies is unclear. The departmental plan and individual staff action plans pay appropriate attention to improving retention and achievement rates. However, some course self-assessment reports and the departmental self-assessment report fail to recognise any weaknesses in teaching and learning.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Health, Care and Counselling

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

Strengths

- good links between theory and practice in the majority of lessons
- good achievement rates on some courses
- well-planned work experience
- good progression from advanced level courses to higher education
- effective tracking of students' progress
- good development of students' IT skills.

Weaknesses

- some poor teaching and lesson planning
- very low and declining levels of student recruitment
- teachers' lack of relevant vocational qualifications and experience
- inadequate attention to students' achievements and the quality of teaching in course reviews
- much cramped and shabby accommodation.

Scope of provision

118 The college provides full and part-time care and counselling courses from foundation level to higher education, including GNVQs in health and social care, first aid courses, and basic and advanced counselling courses. Provision offered in the community includes counselling courses at several venues, and a newly established NVQ in care for students based in a home in the community for elderly people. Part-time courses are offered on Saturdays. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 has had minimal impact on the range of provision in health and care and there has been little participation in enrichment activities.

Achievement and standards

119 Students' written work for the intermediate and advanced GNVQs usually meets course requirements. Most students are able to demonstrate an appropriate level of competence in their work and in their contributions to lessons. Students demonstrate an awareness of the importance of professional values and the need for commitment and integrity in their work. Students are not always able to explain, however, how they would use in the workplace with clients the techniques they learn at college. Counselling students display a clear understanding of the sensitivity required in practising their skills with clients. They record the work done in college and in practice in well-written and thoughtful journals.

120 The pass rates for GNVQs at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels are generally comparable with national averages. Approximately three-quarters of advanced level students completing the course gain a merit or distinction grade. The retention rate was just below the national average for GNVQ advanced level in 1999/2000, but at only 30% was very poor on the intermediate GNVQ for the same period. Only two of the ten students who started the course achieved the full qualification. Retention in the current year is at a higher level than at the same stage in previous years. Recruitment, however, is declining, and group sizes are very small. Retention and achievement rates on counselling courses are comparable with national averages. There is good progression from the GNVQ intermediate to advanced, and those students who successfully complete the advanced GNVQ generally go on to relevant higher education or employment. Attendance and punctuality were good.

Quality of education and training

121 Eighty per cent of the lessons inspected were graded satisfactory or better, but only ten per cent were graded very good

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

or outstanding. Most schemes of work and lesson plans ensure adequate coverage of course requirements, but they do not always contain sufficient detail about learning outcomes or assessment. Teachers give students a high level of individual support. Most teachers organise an appropriate range of activities to engage students' interest and make clear the links between theory and practice.

122 In less effective lessons, although the course content was covered satisfactorily, the pace of teaching was too slow and teachers failed to maintain students' interest. Some practical lessons were not well planned and took place in cramped conditions that inhibited creative and safe working. Much of the teaching and assessment of the key skills of IT and communication is integrated with other aspects of the course. Where this takes place, students appreciate the relevance of key skills to their main area of study. This is less so with numeracy, which is taught separately and with little vocational context.

123 Assignments are generally marked conscientiously and returned promptly, with comments from teachers. Students' progress is closely tracked by tutors. All GNVQ students undertake useful work-experience placements. The course literature available for prospective students is informative and of good quality. All students have a well-devised period of induction and tutorial programme.

124 Teachers generally have teaching qualifications. Few, however, have relevant vocational qualifications or recent professional experience. Care students are often taught in rooms of an inappropriate size. There is little use of display to enhance the learning environment. The library has a satisfactory stock of relevant books, video-recordings and journals for the current number of students. Students and staff have access to up-to-date IT equipment.

Leadership and management

125 There is a good deal of informal co-operative work between care staff, although there is currently no permanent programme manager in post. Course teams follow the college's quality assurance procedures, but insufficient attention is paid in course reviews to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and retention and achievement rates. Nor do the course reviews deal with issues of low recruitment. Some attempts have been made to compensate for small group sizes by combining groups for common elements of courses. Despite this, the full-time courses do not represent good value for money, given current recruitment levels. Teachers of care and counselling courses demonstrate a high level of awareness of equality of opportunity in their recruitment practices and in their teaching.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Childhood Studies

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

Strengths

- high pass rate on the Diploma in Nursery Nursing course;
- good retention rates on part-time courses;
- high rates of progression to other courses and into employment;
- effective support for students;
- a wide range of appropriate courses.

Weaknesses

- low retention and achievement rates on the Certificate in Childcare And Education course;
- slow completion rates on NVQ programmes and the Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education;
- some unsatisfactory teaching;
- teachers' lack of professional qualifications and experience.

Scope of provision

126 The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in childhood studies. The number of full time courses has increased in recent years and the college offers the Council for awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) Certificate in Childcare and Education at intermediate level and the Diploma in Childcare and Education at advanced level. An Open College Network (OCN) foundation course in childcare has started this year.

127 The college has responded to the needs of adult learners and provides a range of part-time courses, including the Diploma in Childcare and Education and NVQs in early years. Students are able to start the NVQs in early years and the advanced Diploma in Childcare and

Education at any time during the academic year.

Achievement and standards

128 Students' written work is well organised and well presented. Most students on certificate and diploma courses demonstrate appropriate levels of knowledge, understanding and practical skills. Students on the foundation course demonstrate skills and knowledge beyond the requirements of the course. Students' progress in work placements is well monitored.

129 Examination results are mixed. Pass rates on the Diploma in Nursery Nursing have been above the national average for the last two years. However, the pass rate in 1999/2000 on the Certificate in Childcare and Education was below the national average. A large proportion of students on NVQ programmes and the Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education have not completed the qualification within the two years normally allowed.

130 Retention rates on most courses are at or above national averages. They are consistently high on part-time courses for adults. Retention rates on the Certificate in Childcare and Education have declined in the last three years and are now below the national average. Student progression is good. Many full-time students progress within the college to higher level courses. Progression to employment for nursery nursing students has been 100 per cent for the last three years.

Quality of education and training

131 Most teaching is satisfactory. The best lessons are well structured and theory is clearly linked to practice. Teachers draw effectively on students' experiences to reinforce learning. Most students are attentive, work productively and respond well to different styles of learning. In many instances, teaching materials have been

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

designed to enable students to work at their own pace.

132 In some lessons, objectives are not made clear to students and activities are introduced without clear instruction. In a few cases poor class management led to disruptive behaviour. Teachers did not monitor what students had learnt or provide them with extension activities. In a minority of lessons the teacher did not demonstrate the required level of knowledge.

133 Teachers have some relevant specialist and vocational experience but there is no child health specialist or early years teacher in the current team. There has been a shortage of qualified assessors in the workplace, which has slowed down the rate at which students complete their national vocational qualification.

134 Accommodation is poor; it is often untidy and cluttered. Teaching rooms are too small for the size of groups being taught in them. There are adequate practical resources but the lack of storage space results in the equipment getting dirty and not reflecting the standards required in professional childcare practice. Students have good access to IT facilities.

135 Assignments are clearly written and meet the awarding body requirements. Teachers' written feedback on assessed work is generally helpful and constructive. Students are well prepared for work placements. Students' overall progress is discussed with them and, where appropriate, with their parents. Internal verification arrangements are in line with awarding body requirements.

136 Most students speak highly of the support they receive from their teachers. Full-time students benefit from a well-structured induction period. Mature students on NVQ courses, however, did not feel they had received adequate information about their courses. Learning support is effective for those who have been identified as requiring it. Basic skills are well

integrated into the foundation course and students have a positive attitude towards them. Key skills assessment opportunities have been identified in schemes of work.

Leadership and management

137 Curriculum management lacks sufficient focus and rigour. Regular team meetings are held but they do not focus sufficiently upon improving learning and achievement. Course reviews are descriptive rather than evaluative. The self-assessment report is insufficiently rigorous and fails to identify weaknesses in key areas such as teaching and learning. Action plans arising from the self-assessment are insufficiently focused on remedying weaknesses. Equal opportunities are clearly promoted within the curriculum area; there are explicit aims, values and strategies relating to equality.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Art and Design, Performing Arts and Media

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

Strengths

- wide range of provision
- well-planned and effective teaching
- good pass rates on GNVQ art and design courses and GCE A level courses
- good standard of students' practical work.

Weaknesses

- some poor retention
- deficiencies in accommodation.

Scope of provision

138 The college offers a good range of art and design, performing arts and media studies courses. These include full-time courses leading to GNVQs at foundation and intermediate level, a first diploma, a number of specialist national diplomas, and a pre-degree foundation course. There are GCE AS/A level courses in dance, film studies, fine art, graphic design, media, music performance, photography, textiles and theatre and dramatic arts. The college has increased its range of courses in this programme area since the last inspection. These changes provide better progression opportunities for students and enable them to study at a level appropriate to their needs and abilities. Art and design, performing arts and media students can progress from level 1 to level 3 within the college.

Achievement and standards

139 The portfolios of students contain good work and demonstrate appropriate standards of vocational competence. Students' work in studios and in workshops is generally good. Most students develop

appropriate skills and technical confidence; they talk about their work with knowledge and enthusiasm. Media students display an appropriate understanding of information and communication technology in their assignment work. They make good use of desktop publishing and image manipulation and develop appropriate video production skills. Performing arts students often achieve good standards. There is a challenging programme of theatrical productions that enable students to test and demonstrate the skills they have acquired. Some students show exceptional individual flair and resourcefulness. The quality of students' work in textiles, photography and fine art is excellent. However, some graphic design students' skills in drawing, design development and process are underdeveloped.

140 Pass rates have been consistently high on GCE A level and GNVQ courses. Pass rates of 100% have been achieved regularly on GCE A level dance. By contrast, pass rates on the National Diploma in performing arts and pre-degree art and design foundation courses have been below average over the last three years. Pass rates on some media and performing arts courses have fluctuated widely, and have sometimes been below national averages.

141 Retention rates on GNVQ art and design courses, the first diploma in performing arts, the GNVQ intermediate media course and GCE A level music are consistently above national averages. Retention rates have been below national averages on several GCE A level and national diploma courses, although there have been some signs of improvement in 2001. Many students progress to higher level courses. Some gain entry to highly competitive degree programmes.

Quality of education and learning

142 The quality of most teaching is good. Students are set appropriately challenging work. Teachers integrate theory and practical work effectively. Project briefs are

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

well designed; they include clear aims and objectives, staged tasks, well-defined assessment criteria and deadlines for completion. The use of a wide and appropriate range of resources maintains students' interest and helps them to learn. Teachers encourage individual and group work for which they prepare students well. The students' capacity for making constructive criticism is developed effectively. Appropriate attention is given to the teaching of presentation skills. Teachers occasionally failed to interest students in the work. This was sometimes due to an inappropriate choice of activities or of teaching approach. Students' poor punctuality led to the disruption of learning in a few lessons.

143 Teachers monitor students' work thoroughly. Assignments and assessments are cross-marked and internally verified. Course teams maintain good records. Students receive regular and supportive feedback on their progress and are aware of how they are doing. Assessment procedures involve a variety of methods. Teachers build progressively on students' knowledge and give them confidence to undertake more demanding tasks. Many students speak highly of the support provided by their teachers.

144 Academic and technical staff are well qualified. Many have substantial educational or industrial experience. Part-time teachers are practising artists, designers and performers who bring their up-to-date knowledge into the classroom. Specialist resources are generally good. Students make good use of IT. There is an appropriate range of studios and workshops. The quality of the art and design and performing arts accommodation is poor. The buildings are shabby and poorly maintained. The layout of some of the accommodation leads to the disruption of lessons by staff and students passing through rooms. The lack of soundproofing in the music workshops disrupts activities in adjoining rooms.

Leadership and management

145 Courses are well managed. Communication between teachers and managers is good. Students benefit from enthusiastic and highly committed course leaders and teachers who work well together. Course teams meet regularly. Managers set targets for retention and pass rates and regularly monitor performance against these targets. However, target-setting for individual students is at an early stage of development. Managers and teachers are dealing effectively with issues identified through the quality assurance and self-assessment processes. Teachers are implementing successful strategies to improve students' attendance and punctuality. Issues raised from surveys of students' views have been tackled effectively.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Humanities

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

Strengths

- wide range of generally good quality provision
- high standards and achievements in much of the work, especially in courses for access students and GCE A level English and psychology
- good, careful marking of students' work in accordance with clear assessment criteria
- oral work of good quality in many of the courses.

Weaknesses

- variable standards in sociology at GCE A level
- inconsistency in retention rates across the range of courses
- a minority of lessons where teaching is insufficiently challenging or well-planned
- a lack of full clarity in curriculum management.
- inadequate course reviews and superficial self-assessment.

Scope of provision

146 There is a good range of provision that meets the needs and interests of learners, including some part-time provision for adults in the community. GCE AS and A level courses are offered in English Language, English Literature, sociology and psychology. The number of students following courses at AS level in sociology and psychology has increased this year with the introduction of Curriculum 2000. GCSE courses are available in English and psychology and there is a pre-GCSE certificate of achievement in English. There are full and part-time adult access programmes, offered in the daytime and in

the evening. Many students progress to higher education and professional training.

Achievement and standards

147 Standards achieved by students are generally satisfactory. Students respond well in lessons and are usually confident in putting forward ideas and arguments in discussions. Access students are particularly successful and skilful in presenting material to fellow students. Social science students are encouraged to develop research skills through coursework assignments. Inspectors saw several examples of high-quality work from advanced level and access students. Written work from some students in English demonstrated flair and originality. Attendance and punctuality were poor during the week of the inspection.

148 Retention rates on English courses are above national averages. The achievement rate on GCSE English has fluctuated, but has generally been considerably below the national average. In GCE A level English literature the pass rate rose to within 3% of the national average in 1999, but fell back to well below average in 2000. GCE A level English language pass rates were good in 1998, fell by 23% in 1999, and recovered in 2000 to 90%.

149 There are poor retention rates on most sociology and psychology courses. Pass rates on the two-year GCE A level psychology course and the access course were both above national averages in 2000. Pass rates on the two-year GCE A level sociology course have varied from year to year. In 1998 the rate was 20% below the national average; in 1999 it improved to 78%, and in 2000 fell back to 68%, which is well below the national average.

Quality of education and training

150 Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but with few real highlights and a minority of lessons where there are weaknesses. Teachers mark students' work

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

carefully, offering constructive comments to show them how to improve. The best examples of schemes of work and lesson plans are of good quality, but a minority lack full detail.

151 Often, teachers have high expectations. However, occasional lessons in English literature could have drawn more strongly on students' own experience as an aid to understanding. In GCSE English, the teaching in a minority of lessons was less than satisfactory.

152 In psychology and sociology, topical examples were often used effectively to interest students. Psychology and sociology students are expected to carry out independent research in order to complete assignments. In humanities more generally, there is scope for fuller use of external visits and visiting speakers, and for ensuring good access to IT.

153 Relationships between students and teachers are generally good. Most students, and particularly those on access courses, speak highly of the support they receive from their subject teachers. Teachers are generally well qualified and experienced but few have undertaken recent professional development. Most English classrooms are cramped and drab. There are no wall displays of students' work to reinforce learning and celebrate achievement. Examples exist of effective professional development activities, but these could be more consistently available. Accommodation is broadly satisfactory, though often rather cramped and lacking in lively use of display, for example of students' work, to support their learning.

Leadership and management

154 While the quality of work in humanities is satisfactory overall, it is not being supported by curriculum management which is fully effective and which could raise the general standards to a consistently good standard. Subjects are not always well co-ordinated, and part-time staff, who are relied

on heavily, do not always receive close support. There have been recent changes of personnel in key posts. For example, a new programme manager for sociology and access courses has only recently been appointed. Also, the team leader for English has been in post only since the start of this academic year, with a role which merits further clarification.

155 Implementation of the quality assurance arrangements needs to be strengthened (so that course reviews contain sufficient analysis of data and trends, as well as of students' views). The self-assessment report lacks clear focus in any weak teaching or learning. The 1997 inspection drew attention to the need for improvement in these areas, but further work is still required.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

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

Strengths

- effective teaching
- appropriate learning resources
- work placement opportunities for all learners
- effective partnerships with other organisations
- good personal support and guidance.

Areas for development

- insufficient recording of students progress on the adult education learning support programme
- insufficient co-ordination between college work and work experience
- insufficient classroom assistance on entry programmes

Scope of provision

156 Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities includes the adult education learning support programme in the outreach centres and the entry programmes on the college campus. All these courses are designed for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with severe and moderate learning difficulties. The learning support programme in the community offers part-time courses for adults in various mainstream adult education centres in the locality. Some of these provide progression routes onto mainstream college courses. Other courses are designed specifically to improve students' independence and daily living skills.

157 The entry programmes on the Brooklands campus provide full-time and

part-time individual learning programmes to meet the needs and aspirations of a broad range of learners of all ages. Learners can study individual modules in a variety of curriculum areas. Most of the courses are externally accredited. There are 76 learners on the entry programmes and 191 learners on the learning support programmes.

Achievement and standards

158 The individual programmes devised for learners include accredited units or modules as learning goals together with small, measurable, non-accredited targets to work towards. Since the college management information system is unable to collate this information, monitoring of students' achievements is only possible by tracking the progress of individual learners using their paper files. A large number of learners on the entry programmes progress onto mainstream college courses or into employment. There are no reliable data to compare these outcomes from year to year.

159 Students on the learning support programmes are initially based in a local adult education centre but can progress onto the 'independence programme' where they have work experience and spend a day a week at Brooklands College. Part of their programme includes travel training so that they are eventually able to travel to the college by themselves. Retention rates on both programmes are very good. In 1999-2000, for the entry level programmes there was 86% retention on pre-foundation courses and 88% retention on progression courses. In 2000-2001, on the learning support programmes, there is 98% retention. Learners' work is good in relation to their learning goals.

Quality of education and training

160 There is well-structured and effective teaching on all courses. Tutors have detailed schemes of work and lesson plans and prepare materials to meet the individual needs of the learners in their groups. They use imaginative and varied methods that

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

ensure that learners are fully involved and attentive during lessons. Booklets have been developed to enable learners to record their own progress.

161 Good use is made of classroom assistants to provide learning support. One is available for every teaching session. The group sizes are large on the entry programmes and there is insufficient time available for the classroom assistant to support all students and tutors fully. All learners have a period of work experience. Tutors visit the workplace infrequently, however, and there are few links between the work-based activities and the work training in college.

162 Assessments are well-planned and fully documented in the learners' portfolios on the entry programmes. There is little recording of the learning support provided for adults in the community and no overview of each student's progress.

163 Learners are very well guided and supported. Information is effectively passed to parents and community partners. The entry programmes have links with three special schools that cater for pupils aged 11–16 and 16–19. These links encourage pupils' progression into further education programmes. Links with the Employability Project support students' transition into employment. Entry programme learners who do not progress onto mainstream college courses are linked to their nearest adult education centre so that they can take part in the learning support programmes organised there.

164 The split site at Brooklands is confusing for new students on entry programmes. Some of the accommodation is noisy. This impairs the concentration of students who are easily distracted.

Leadership and management

165 The two programmes come under two different college departments, which impedes effective management. The

learning support programmes have been in the college for less than two years and staff are still finding out how they fit in and link with the entry programmes. Specialist support and equipment are available. Students on the learning support programme receive more classroom support than those on the entry programmes.

166 Internal verification and moderation arrangements are well documented and effective. Responsibilities are clearly allocated to specific teachers. Recommendations from the reports of external verifiers are carried out promptly. The self-assessment report covered only the entry level programmes. The judgements were sound and the action plan has been implemented.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

Basic Skills

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

Strengths

- well-planned teaching
- good development of students' personal and social skills
- well-managed provision
- good collaborative links with other providers.

Weaknesses

- more effective initial assessment for adult students
- insufficiently challenging targets in learning plans
- over-reliance on the use of volunteers in community provision.

Scope of provision

167 At the time of the inspection, 668 students were enrolled on basic skills programmes. Responsibility for these students lay with two separate departments. In addition, 150 students received help with their basic skills through the skills development unit. A small minority of students enrol on national award-bearing courses. The figures for basic skills recruitment in 2000/2001 represent a 10% increase on the previous year. The college is seeking to increase the range of its community-based basic skills provision. It is working successfully with a wider range of adult learners than previously: in the workplace, with the travelling community and with a local drug rehabilitation unit. It has also established good links with other providers across the Local Learning and Skills Council area and was responsible for setting up the Surrey Basic Skills Forum.

Achievement and standards

168 The standards achieved by the very small number of students entered for examinations are good. Evidence from the inspection indicates that targets set for adult students following initial assessment are usually insufficiently challenging. Targets set for 16–18-year-olds are closely aligned with the demands of their vocational programmes and are consequently more demanding.

169 The development of students' personal and social skills is good. Both adults and young people have gained in confidence and learned to relate well to their teachers and to one another. Students achieve well when they are set literacy or numeracy tasks as an integral part of their work in an occupational area. Younger students are encouraged to demonstrate independence and to argue their point of view, in order to develop their oral skills. In contrast, some community-based tutors and volunteers adopt an over-protective attitude to adult students, which impedes their development as autonomous learners.

Quality of education and training

170 Teaching is well planned. There are good schemes of work and detailed lesson plans. Staff have excellent relationships with their students. Teachers are sensitive to individual students' needs. They encourage students to contribute to group discussions and negotiate their individual learning plans.

171 All students undertake an initial assessment. For full-time students, this includes a check of their key skills which also identifies any deficiencies in basic skills. However, attendance at support sessions to make good any deficiencies is not compulsory. Initial assessment for adults is insufficiently diagnostic. The results are not used when planning teaching programmes or devising individual learning plans.

Curriculum and Occupational Areas

172 Much of the community provision is dependent on the varied teaching skills of a large body of volunteers. Some use only a narrow range of teaching methods and do not set sufficiently challenging tasks for students. Assessment and recording of adult students' progress and achievements are insufficient. The college does not monitor the effectiveness of the community provision adequately. Although the students receive strong personal support, they are not always referred to specialist support when this is needed.

173 Staff possess a range of qualifications. A few are qualified to meet all the diverse needs of students in the college and in community classes. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory overall, but some classrooms are shabby. Adult community venues are generally pleasant and networked computers are available in some of the learning centres. Paper-based resources are generally adequate.

Leadership and management

174 Both departments responsible for basic skills work manage their aspects of the provision well. The new policy on basic skills is comprehensive, but has yet to be implemented. In particular, there is much more to do to encourage all departments to attend to the basic skills needs of their students within vocational programmes. This approach is working successfully with GNVQ foundation students in art and design. This good practice merits wider dissemination.

175 Communication between managers and teachers is good; permanent staff undertake relevant training and updating. Staff are aware of equal opportunities issues and reflect this awareness in their teaching.

College Data

Part D: College Data

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

Level	16–18 %	19+ %
1	15%	33%
2	28%	20%
3	40%	19%
4/5	0%	5%
Other	17%	24%
Total	6,396	7,327

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001

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

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

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	total enrolments %
Science	1,091	1,227	17
Agriculture	14	57	1
Construction	0	18	0
Engineering	614	290	7
Business	396	811	9
Hotel & Catering	1,123	660	13
Health & Community Care	488	233	5
Art & Design	860	276	8
Humanities	1,468	2,164	26
Basic Education	342	1,591	14
Total	6,396	7,327	100

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001

College Data

Table 3. Retention and achievement

NVQ level (long courses)	Retention & pass rate	16–18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
1	Starters excluding transfers	582	345	527	1,084	900	860
	Retention (%)	84	87	87	78	74	80
	National average (%)	81	81	N/A	79	78	N/A
	Pass (%)	69	58	61	47	43	63
	National average (%)	58	61	N/A	61	62	N/A
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,622	1,324	1,379	971	813	687
	Retention (%)	86	85	85	82	80	86
	National average (%)	76	77	N/A	79	79	N/A
	Pass (%)	66	78	69	47	62	69
	National average (%)	63	67	N/A	65	66	N/A
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,739	1,736	1,783	776	798	813
	Retention (%)	82	80	80	85	80	82
	National average (%)	77	77	N/A	78	79	N/A
	Pass (%)	71	74	70	54	67	68
	National average (%)	70	72	N/A	64	66	N/A
H	Starters excluding transfers	23	9	28	478	504	249
	Retention (%)	70	89	64	89	87	88
	National average (%)	83	83	N/A	83	84	N/A
	Pass (%)	77	100	29	57	56	42
	National average (%)	65	65	N/A	58	62	N/A

Note: Summary of retention and pass rates for the period from 1997/98 to 1999/2000 by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE and tertiary colleges)

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 1996/97 to 1998/99: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000
2. College rates for 1997/8-1998/9: *Benchmarking Data 1996/97 to 1998/99: Retention and Achievement Rates*, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000
3. College rates for 1999/00: provided by the college in spring 2001

College Data

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

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16–18	52%	35%	13%
19+ and WBL*	76%	18%	6%
Learning 16–18	46%	42%	12%
19+ and WBL	72%	18%	10%
Attainment 16–18	36%	48%	16%
19+ and WBL	54%	28%	18%

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

*WBL= work-based learning.

Notes

