Derby College

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Derby College
Type of college:	General Further Education and Tertiary College
Principal:	David Croll
Address of college:	Pride Parkway
	Derby
	DE24 8UG
Telephone number:	01332 757570
Fax number:	01332 576301
Chair of governors:	John Holmes
Unique reference number:	130642

Name of reporting inspector: Sandra Tweedie HMI

Date (s) of inspection: 17-27 March 2003

Part A: Summary
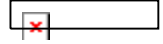
Information about the college
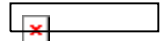
The population of Derby is approximately 221,708, with the total Derbyshire population 928,000. Major employers within the city are aero-engineering, car manufacture, railway engineering, health, education and administrative services. There is a growth in tourism and hospitality and a high demand for training in information and communications technology (ICT). Derby College was established in March 2002 as a result of a merger between: the former general further education (FE) Mackworth College Derby; Derby Tertiary College, Wilmorton; and Broomfield College, a specialist agricultural college. The college is located on the three sites used formerly by those colleges and enrolled its first students in September 2002. The Pride Parkway and Prince Charles Avenue sites serve the needs of students who live in the city of Derby and close to the city boundary. Students at Broomfield come from the wider region and nationally. The majority of full-time students live in the south of the county. Currently, 33% of students aged 16 to 18 live in areas of the city whose postcodes indicate that they have a high level of deprivation. The ethnic composition of students enrolled in 2001 included 74% white and approximately 10% from Asian heritage or black backgrounds. The background of over 14% of students is not known. The new college is re-organising its provision post merger with the aim of avoiding duplication. It makes provision in all 14 areas of learning. In 2001, the college recorded 31,600 students. Of the 3,450 full-time students on long courses, approximately two-thirds are aged 16 to 18. Over 25,470 adult students study part time. Most enrolments for both age groups are at level 2, with large numbers in health and social care, ICT, computing and information technology (IT), business management and professional, and engineering. The largest number of enrolments is for part-time adult provision, with over 35,192 enrolments of which around 18,000 are for short courses. Enrolments have increased in 2002/03 to 60,000.

The college mission statement is `success through quality, innovation and diversity'.

How effective is the college?
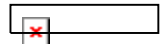
Inspectors judged the quality of provision to be good in three of the curriculum areas inspected and satisfactory in nine, with two curriculum areas unsatisfactory. Standards of teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory or good. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- o   strong leadership

- good teaching, learning and attainment at level 1

- good teaching for adult students

- effective promotion of equal opportunities and diversity

- constructive local partnerships

- good enrichment opportunities for most students

- governors' good strategic overview of the college.

What should be improved

- management action to raise levels of achievement

- teaching from satisfactory to good levels

- access to and the staffing of additional support

- quality and frequency of students' progress reviews

- use of ICT in teaching and learning

- staff use of data for quality improvement and course review

- rigour of quality assurance.

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

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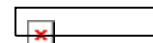
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	**Satisfactory.** Pass rates for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) mathematics are significantly above average but they are low for General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) chemistry and physics. Retention rates for GCE A2 and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) sciences are good, but they are low for GCSE science and GCE AS chemistry and physics. There is much good teaching but limited use of ICT. Progression to higher education (HE) is good for science-based subjects. The reviewing and monitoring of academic progress of students during their courses is inadequate.
Land-based provision	**Good.** Retention rates have been good for the last three years. Pass rates are satisfactory and very good in horticulture. Practical teaching is very good. Resources are extensive and well used. Standards of students' work are high. The management structure is incomplete, resulting in some ineffective course management. There is insufficient foundation and work-based provision.
Construction	**Satisfactory.** Retention and pass rates on most level 1 and 2 courses are good, as are students' attendance and punctuality. Good use is made of assessment to support and improve the learning experience. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning. There is no technician support in painting and decorating and additional learning support is inadequate.
Engineering	**Good.** There are good pass rates on most courses and much good teaching. Students receive good subject support but there is a lack of initial screening for some students and progress reviews in the workplace are inadequate. Resources at one college site are insufficient. Students have frequent and rigorous assessment, although there is low achievement of the modern apprenticeship frameworks.
Business management and professional	**Satisfactory.** Pass rates are good on GCE AS and Advanced-level (A-level) business. Pass rates are poor on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 and level 3 accounting and are declining on many secretarial courses. Teaching is good or better in most lessons, with effective support. Resources are excellent for secretarial courses. Assessment methods are good for work-based learners but there is poor achievement of modern apprentice frameworks. The range of part-time professional courses is narrow.

ICT, computing and IT	**Satisfactory.** Students develop high standards of practical skills. Some pass rates on IT user courses have been consistently poor. Most teaching is satisfactory or better but there is insufficient checking of learning in some lessons. Access to IT learning centres is excellent, and partnerships with employers and external organisations are effective. Some students are on inappropriate courses. The curriculum area is well organised and managed.
Sports, leisure and travel	**Satisfactory.** Pass and retention rates are poor on most courses but students' work is of a high standard and well presented. Sports practical teaching is good. Behaviour management in some lessons is poor. There are good specialist resources for travel and tourism. Curriculum management is effective. Provision is narrow at level 1.
Hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies	**Unsatisfactory.** Pass rates for hairdressing are unsatisfactory; retention rates are poor on most courses. Full-time students have no planned work experience. Resources in the majority of hairdressing and beauty salons are outdated and insufficient. Pre-course guidance is unsatisfactory for many students. There is good teaching in beauty therapy. Pass rates are very good on beauty therapy level 3 courses. Standards of work in holistic therapies are high.
Health and social care	**Satisfactory.** Most teaching is good or better. Students develop good research and analytical skills. Pass rates are high on most college courses. Retention rates on full-time courses and achievement of frameworks for modern apprentices are poor, although achievements on NVQ courses are good. The delivery of key skills is ineffective. Pastoral support for students is carefully managed but college-based students are insufficiently aware of their progress. Links with employers and the community are productive.
Visual arts	**Satisfactory.** Pass rates on foundation diploma and GCE AS fine art courses are good and high standards are evident in painting, ceramics and garment construction. Teaching is good on part-time courses. Additional learning support is effective, with good progression. Where courses are combined, there are low retention rates and students make slow progress. Critical analysis skills on national diplomas and GCE A-level courses are underdeveloped. Resources are ineffectively deployed.
Performing arts, media and multimedia	**Good.** Most teaching and learning are very good and excellent in a few lessons. However, in film and media lessons, students are not sufficiently involved. There are high retention and pass rates on most courses. Standards of performance are high. Leadership and management are effective and there is very good enrichment and partnerships with the profession.
Humanities	**Unsatisfactory.** Teaching of adult learners is very good but much teaching of students aged 16 to 18 is dull, undemanding and fails to meet individual needs. Pass rates on sociology courses are good. In-year retention rates on GCE AS courses are unsatisfactory. Pass rates for GCE AS are consistently poor in law and geography, and have declined further in history and psychology. Monitoring and review of students' progress are inadequate.
Foundation literacy and numeracy	**Satisfactory.** The majority of teaching is satisfactory but there are too few suitably qualified basic skills staff. There is good progression from entry to higher levels and an effective mentoring system. Good behaviour management fosters the development of self-esteem and social skills. Comprehensive initial assessments are not used to set targets for literacy and numeracy or plan lessons to meet all students' needs.

Foundation provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	**Satisfactory.** Most teaching is satisfactory. Whilst there is good progression and achievement, initial assessment is not used sufficiently in target setting for individual learning plans. Planning for additional support and teaching is insufficient to meet the complex needs of some learners. Support for students with hearing impairment is good and it is satisfactory for students with dyslexia. Management of discrete provision is good.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior managers and governors have made rapid progress in establishing the new college and in promoting a positive image to external partners and the local community. Governors have a good strategic overview of the college. Effective communication and consultation arrangements have helped to promote good teamworking among staff. The college has quickly established a robust management information system and an up-to-date and well-implemented policy for equal opportunities and diversity. Target setting at college and course levels is underdeveloped and there is inconsistent use of management information. The management of curriculum areas is satisfactory but there is ineffective staff deployment in some areas. Quality assurance systems are underdeveloped and strategies for sharing good practice are ineffective. Financial management is satisfactory. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The approach to diversity and equal opportunities is wide ranging in its promotion and implementation. The college has taken effective measures to implement its race policy. Retention and achievement are analysed effectively by age, gender, level and minority ethnic origin and used to inform the college's strategic and operational plans. The college makes a significant contribution to increasing educational access for students in the City of Derby and the wider community through productive partnerships with schools, university, parents, community groups and industry.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Pre-entry guidance and support are satisfactory. Induction programmes are well planned and show good collaboration with subject tutors. Mentors provide good personal support and guidance; they monitor attendance and punctuality effectively. Initial assessment is thorough but it is not used well to monitor students' progress. Subject-based tutorial support varies in quality and the monitoring of targets is not always effective. The college provides a wide range of specialist support for individuals, however, some additional support staff lack specialist qualifications. Support for hearing impaired students is good. A range of careers education and guidance is available, including close partnerships with Connexions personal advisors. Students' receive good support with their applications for HE. The college provides good welfare services, these include counselling, childcare, free transport between sites and assistance in finding accommodation.

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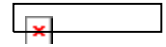
Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

What students like about the college

- being treated as adults and the good atmosphere

- very supportive teachers

- good subject knowledge of teachers

- enrichment activities, great educational visits and residentials

- a second chance to study

- excellent resources in IT for adults.

What they feel could be improved

- discrepancies in resources between the three college sites

- access to IT facilities and the poor quality of computers in some classrooms

- frequency and timing of the college bus

- timetables with long gaps between lessons

      o   library facilities and library opening times for part-time students.

Other information
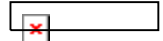
The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole
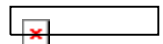
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	55	38	7
19+ and WBL*	75	22	3
Learning 16-18	52	39	9
19+ and WBL*	73	26	1

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards
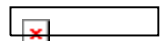
1. In 2001/02, 70% of enrolments were of students over the age of 19 and 30% were of those aged

business, hairdressing, care and construction. A third of the students aged 16 to 18 live in areas of deprivation.

2. Generally the performance of students aged 16 to 18 is slightly better than that of adults, particularly at levels 1 and 3, although only close to national averages. When compared with the national averages for disadvantaged students aged 16 to 18, some rates are slightly higher. For adults, retention and pass rates are lower than national averages.

3. On short courses, pass rates are similar for both age groups, at 77% in 2001/02. Significantly more students aged 16 to 18 than adults study key skills. Retention and pass rates are close to national averages but the comparison is with a low national average pass rate of around 30%.

4. The college has recently changed its method of calculating value added and has not yet carried out an analysis of students' progress for this year. In-year retention data, at the time of inspection, show rates at over 90% at all levels for both age groups, apart from level 1 for students aged 16 to 18 where the retention rate is 82%. Attendance of students overall is satisfactory. It is very good in engineering, construction and land-based provision, but poor in business management and professional, where students' achievements are affected. Punctuality is occasionally poor but is particularly good in construction.

5. In almost all areas, the standard of work produced by students is good or very good. In land-based provision, ICT, computing and IT, sports, leisure and travel, visual arts, and performing arts, media and multimedia, high standards of work were seen. Practical work is generally carried out with confidence, leading to good skill development. In construction and engineering, work is completed to industry standards. Students on ICT, brickwork, music, media, horticulture, and childcare courses have won national awards in the last two years. Students' attainment in lessons observed was particularly high in land-based provision and performing arts, but there was significant unsatisfactory attainment for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students attending `routes to leisure, tourism and sport' are gaining confidence, self-esteem and developing good personal and social skills during their time at the college. Portfolios of evidence are mostly well organised and presented. In a few areas, however, students are not reaching their full potential and their critical analysis and grasp of concepts is below what is expected. Progression in many areas is good. In science, there is good progression onto HE and in ICT and health and social care there is good progression to other levels. For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there is good progression onto mainstream college courses.

16 to 18 year olds

6. At level 1, numbers of students taking courses have doubled from 1998 to 2001 and over 4,000 enrolled in 2001/02. At level 1 and level 2, retention rates are now near the national average, as are pass rates. At level 3, retention rates have improved to above the national average, but pass rates are lower that the national averages. However, pass rates are slightly better if the proportion of students from disadvantaged areas is taken into account. Retention rates on key skills courses have improved but pass rates have declined.

7. There are over 1,000 enrolments on GCE AS courses. Retention rates have improved steadily and are now close to national averages as are pass rates. On some courses, notably sociology and biology, pass rates are above the national averages. Retention rates at General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) level 3 were around national averages in 2002 but pass rates declined from well above to well below the national averages. At GNVQ level 2, pass and retention rates are below national averages. Both pass and retention rates for national and first diploma and certificates have fluctuated and are now both above the national average; retention rates significantly so at level 2.

8. At all levels, retention and pass rates for NVQ courses are below national averages. Retention rates are significantly below national averages at levels 1 and 2. Pass rates are significantly below national averages at levels 1 and 3.

9. On GCSE courses, retention rates are close to national averages, although they fell significantly

from 2000/01 to 2001/02. Pass rates, however, are well above national averages.

10. For work-based learners, achievement of the modern apprenticeship frameworks overall has been poor. In 2001/02, the pass rate for foundation modern apprentices was 18% and for advanced was 24%. Retention rates overall were much better, at nearly 70%, for foundation and advanced modern apprentices. Current retention rates in most areas show significant improvement. Achievement of frameworks is affected by the achievement of key skills, which the college is addressing. NVQ pass rates, although not good, are significantly higher than those of frameworks. Students' portfolios indicate a good standard of work.

Adult learners

11. Approximately 13,850 adults are enrolled at level 1, 14,000 at level 2 and 5,000 at level 3. At all levels, retention rates have fluctuated but are below the national averages. This applies also to pass rates, but the pass rate at level 1 was significantly below the national average in 2001/02. Retention rates on short courses are high, at 94%, and pass rates satisfactory, at 77%. GCE AS pass rates are well above the national average, although retention rates are close. Pass rates improved significantly from 2000/01 to 2001/02. Adults do well at GCSE, pass rates being significantly above national averages. Around 200 students take access courses and pass and retention rates are close to national averages.

12. Few students take GNVQ courses, most taking the precursors. At levels 2 and 3, pass rates are well above national averages, although level 2 retention rates are well below. Large numbers of adults take NVQ courses: over 1,800 at level 2 and around 6,000 at levels 1 and 3. Pass rates are all above national averages, having much improved from 2000/01 to 2001/02. However, retention rates at level 2 and level 1 are over 10 points below the national average.

Quality of education and training
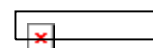
13. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 245 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 62% of these, satisfactory in 33% and less than satisfactory in 5%. Teaching and learning for adults were considerably better than for students aged 16 to 18. The teaching in 77% of lessons for adult students was good or better, compared with only 55% for younger students. The quality of learning and attainment followed a similar pattern. Lessons for adults, or predominately for adults, in ICT, construction, health and social care, and humanities are significantly better than for students aged 16 to 18. The best teaching, learning and attainment were on level 1 courses, where no lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in 5 of the 14 curriculum areas. Teaching was very good in land-based provision and performing arts, and there was a high proportion of satisfactory teaching in several areas, particularly construction, literacy and numeracy and foundation provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In humanities, science and mathematics, and hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies, there was more unsatisfactory teaching than in other areas.

14. In the best lessons, teaching and learning are good and effectively combine theory with practical work, particularly so in land-based provision and engineering. Teachers are skilful, using a wide range of methods to reinforce aims and objectives, and students are interested and highly motivated. In good lessons in construction, teachers provide timely explanations that students use to enhance their work. In lessons with less effective teaching, students are not involved enough or make slow progress during the lesson. Some teaching is undemanding. Although teachers' lesson plans consider the individual needs of students, this is not always apparent in the actual lessons. Learning outcomes from individual or small group work are not effectively reinforced to the whole group. In many curriculum areas, there is a lack of sharing of good practice. In humanities, whilst teaching to adult learners is well crafted and allows students to move through work very effectively, in other lessons, students are not encouraged to think critically. The use of ICT is underdeveloped in much

teaching and learning, particularly in science and mathematics and humanities. In construction and health and social care, work-based learners receive good training with a wide range of practical tasks. In health and social care, work-based learners make excellent progress.

15. The effectiveness of lessons in key skills varies widely. For work-based learners on business courses, key skills are effectively integrated into learners' on-the-job training. In several curriculum areas, key skills are not taught in a relevant vocational context and students lose interest. Some teachers are unsure what level students are working towards. The college has adopted an innovative approach to the organisation of workshops to develop key skills in IT and application of number. Attendance is good and students are well motivated.

16. The college estate on three main sites is well managed. Much work is being carried out currently to improve the accommodation inherited from the merger and improvements are being made where students will benefit. Recently refurbished reception areas are welcoming; common rooms, refectories and student shops have also been refurbished. Most of these areas are comfortable, well appointed and valued by the students. Access to most areas for people with restricted mobility is good. However, there is restricted access to some upper floor areas of the Broomfield site and one area on Pride Parkway.

17. Classroom accommodation is generally satisfactory. Many classrooms are well decorated and furnished. In some areas where they are not, staff work hard to improve the appearance by organising bright and colourful displays of technical materials and students' work on the walls. Classrooms for mathematics, hairdressing and beauty therapy are unsatisfactory, with a lack of teaching aids. In business management and professional, some rooms are too small for the size of the groups. Workshop accommodation is generally satisfactory. There is a particularly good advanced manufacturing centre in engineering. However, motor vehicle and electrical engineering workshops are poor and the brickwork workshop is often overcrowded.

18. The college has libraries on each of the main sites. Library staff meet weekly and some good work has been done on sharing good practice. Libraries are generally well stocked, however, there is a lack of up-to-date books on visual arts and insufficient computer-based material for humanities. Some younger students complain about limited access to IT facilities and workspaces.

19. IT resources are well managed. There is now an appropriate strategy for IT and for information and learning technology (ILT). Since the merger, a minimum specification for computers is set and reviewed annually. Some 90% of the computers in the college meet or exceed the minimum specification. Staff and managers monitor response times against service level agreement targets and carry out a user satisfaction survey. Although these analyses show a high degree of satisfaction from the users, some students complain about the frequency of computer malfunctions. There is insufficient access to computers in several curriculum areas, for example: construction; science and mathematics; hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies; sports, leisure and travel; and humanities.

20. Staff are generally well qualified with a high proportion holding or working towards teacher training and assessor verifier qualifications. Some staff do not have sufficient recent industrial experience and there is an over reliance on part-time staff in mathematics and hairdressing.

21. The college has clear procedures for assessment. There are detailed guidelines regarding feedback to students. The standard of marking is generally good, in many cases thorough, with constructive written and oral feedback to students. Occasionally, staff fail to correct errors in spelling or grammar. Some staff use their examining experience effectively. In some subjects, students are involved in self-assessment, which develops their critical skills. In most cases, students are informed about assessment schedules although, on some courses, several assignments are set at the same time. Assessed work is usually returned within specified deadlines although 20% of students in a recent survey stated that work was returned late. Assessment in the workplace takes place regularly and is effective in helping students to make progress. Work-based assessors use a diverse range of evidence in making judgements; assessments are well planned and executed. The integration of key skills into assessments has only begun recently.

22. The college academic progress review process requires a review each term, but some have been late. The college has recognised this and is taking action. Some individual learning plans are incomplete and of poor quality. Targets set in reviews are not always clear. Value added systems are not used effectively in several areas and predicted grades are not sufficiently challenging. Although work-based learning reviews take place regularly, some are not adequate, students do not get copies of the reviews and there is insufficient involvement of employers in the process. Recording and monitoring of students' progress in the flexible learning centres are good.

23. Internal verification is thorough and well planned in most areas, including work-based learning. External verification reports indicate that most internal verification meets with the awarding body requirements and in some cases is very good. Reports that are received from external moderators are commented on by the college quality manager with requirements for action. Most staff have appropriate assessor and verifier awards.

24. Progress reports are completed three times a year for all full-time students. Those aged 16 to 18 see their report and are consulted with, before a copy is sent to parents or guardians. This is followed by evening meetings with parents. Attendance at these meetings has been low and the college is reviewing its approach. Reports on part-time students are completed twice a year and copied to employers, where applicable, although the approach is inconsistent between curriculum areas.

25. There is a broad range of courses to meet individual needs. In most curriculum areas, progression routes from level 1 to HE courses are clear. There is a significant work-based learning provision, which is managed through the college's skillhouse division. Overall, there are 802 modern apprentices in engineering, business, hairdressing, care and construction. For students on hairdressing and ICT courses, the quality of initial guidance varies and some are following inappropriate courses. For example, many students on hairdressing courses leave their courses early and some ICT students have found their course undemanding when compared with their previous knowledge and skills. There are incomplete progression routes in some curriculum areas, such as sports, leisure and travel at level 1 and land-based provision, where animal care and equine studies have no lower level or part-time courses. Work-based programmes in this area are very few.

26. The college has good collaboration and partnership arrangements with local universities, employers, schools and the community. A partnership arrangement with a local, internationally renowned company has resulted in an application for Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status. Innovative community and employer projects have been successful in widening participation and are aimed at young people and adults. Collaboration with local companies has resulted in new initiatives to meet training needs by providing basic skills courses and NVQs for minority ethnic employees, some of whom have progressed to traditional college courses. The curriculum has clearly been developed to benefit learners individually and in the community, particularly for those who would not normally enter FE or work-based learning.

27. There are over 5,000 students on franchised programmes. The college has contracts with 16 organisations, including charity, community and private training providers. Courses are offered to women returning to education and employment, the homeless and unemployed, ex-offenders and community organisations. Marketing, publicity and information literature is well designed for the diverse student body, with good examples informing staff and students of the religious and cultural needs of a range of minority ethnic groups.

28. There is a broad range of courses and good progression opportunities for local school pupils. In partnership with 13 schools, 500 pupils attend college on vocational courses. These are promoted and publicised through career events, taster courses and other marketing activities. Pre-entry, entry and level 1 courses are offered for young people who have left school and may have additional learning needs.

29. Most students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities that include external and residential visits and cover personal, social and ethical issues. Activities include competitions, links with local universities, diversity week projects, visiting speakers, industrial visits and field trips. Groups of engineering students have taken part in work experience projects in Germany; others

have travelled to Russia to take part in technology, science and mathematics competitions and cultural visits. Success is celebrated regularly in each group of curriculum subjects or `academy,' through the awarding of two `student of the month' awards, one for students aged 16 to 18 and one for adults.

30. There is clear strategic and operational planning for student support. However, procedures are new and there is not yet a coherent system across the college. Learning mentors have been appointed to support the personal needs of students. They are based in curriculum areas and work closely with subject tutors, parent and students. Mentors are appropriately qualified to deal with a range of student issues, such as attendance or punctuality, or help with homelessness, debt or personal problems. During a well-managed induction process, mentors screen all full-time students for literacy, numeracy, preferred learning style and additional support needs.

31. The quality of pre-entry guidance and support is improving. Well-designed college guides provide prospective students with helpful information. The college shop based in the centre of Derby is welcoming. College staff make visits to schools regularly and attend careers events. School students visit the college for an introduction to college life and to sample vocational work.

32. Students are allocated a tutorial time each week with a subject tutor and their learning mentor. Currently, there are different models of subject support, which ranges from very good to inadequate. There is a lack of clarity between the roles of subject tutor and learning mentor. Not all mentors have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum area to provide effective guidance.

33. Procedures to identify students' additional support needs are clearly stated, with good support for students with hearing impairment who are particularly well integrated into ICT, computing and IT, business management and professional, hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies, visual arts, and performing arts, media and multimedia. The initial screening and availability of additional support in curriculum areas is variable, with some support staff lacking specialist qualifications and some curriculum staff failing to meet individual students' needs.

34. The college provides a good range of welfare services. These include childcare, counselling, financial advice, transport, accommodation and help with books and equipment. Over 100 students benefit from funded childcare placements at one of the college's two nurseries or in privately arranged placements. The number of students applying to the college's learner support fund is high, and around 800 have been supported in 2002/03. Careers education and guidance is offered through mentor, subject and advice sessions. Students also have access to specialist careers advice. A personal advisor from the Connexions service is based at each of the three college sites. Many curriculum areas also invite visiting speakers to give advice on specific career routes. Students are very well supported when making applications to HE institutions and 315 students progressed to HE in 2002. There is a good programme of visits to institutions and well-produced handbooks give good guidance on the application process to both staff and students. Adults in community provision are encouraged to have high aspirations and make good progress to FE and HE courses.

Leadership and management
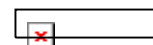
35. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior managers and governors have quickly established and clearly communicated the mission, strategic aims and values of the new college to staff and to local partners. They have successfully promoted a clear identity and made good progress in securing staff understanding of and support for its strategic aims and corporate culture. The college has a positive image in the community and support from a wide range of community and business partners. Managers and staff have confidence in their ability to develop a successful college.

36. The college's strategic aims are focused appropriately on establishing an effective, financially sound and self-critical institution that is responsive to national and local needs and works closely with external partners. Governors are well informed about the financial and academic performance of the college. They have taken successful and appropriate measures to make themselves known to staff and students and to liaise directly with community leaders in Derby. They have recently established a student committee on which the majority of members are students. Effective implementation of the accommodation strategy has resulted in major improvements in accommodation and resources, though, as the college has recognised, there is still some way to go.

37. Good arrangements for communicating and consulting with staff take account of the multi-site nature of the college and the large number of staff who are new to each other. Staff at all levels feel well informed and consider they have good opportunities to give their views. Good links between service and curriculum staff help joint working and compliance with service functions and procedures. Meetings schedules are publicised well in advance. Student representatives attend course meetings.

38. Curriculum management is satisfactory overall. A good start has been made on establishing clear lines of reporting and accountability. In most curriculum areas, responsibilities are clear and staff from the three former colleges work together well as consolidated teams. In a minority of areas, staff are still unsure about their roles and there are instances of non-compliance with important college procedures. In all areas, the new staff appraisal system is well established and effective. Good progress has been made in establishing policies and procedures, particularly for personnel and staffing, equal opportunities and diversity, and complaints. Though the health and safety policy is comprehensive, there are a few instances of non-compliance.

39. Strategies for sharing good practice to promote excellence in teaching and learning are not working. The learning directors' arrangements for sharing good practice are too informal. Staff development sessions focused on improving teaching and learning are well designed but have made little impact. Participation of staff is voluntary and has been poor. In over 200 lesson observations carried out earlier this year, a number of teaching techniques were identified as needing improvement. Little progress has been made, as they closely mirror the weaknesses in teaching and learning identified by inspectors. A skills audit of college staff has not yet been carried out. There is ineffective staff deployment in some areas. Some staff are inappropriately qualified or experienced for their teaching and learning support roles.

40. Quality assurance systems are underdeveloped. Internal quality audits have not yet started. Staff experienced in quality assurance were appointed recently to give support to the academies in quality assessment, but have not yet made an impact. The college has acknowledged that the lesson observations carried out this year were graded too highly. However, the self-assessment process is clear and well implemented. The curriculum self-assessment reports identified most of the key weaknesses identified by inspectors.

41. The college quickly developed a new management information system tailored to its needs. The system is reliable and subject to effective procedures to assure and check accuracy. Currently, it can deliver a wide range of paper-based reports. The system is able to produce information about the running costs of individual courses and senior managers use this to assess the efficiency of courses.

42. There are well-advanced measures to give managers direct access to the database to improve ownership of data and effectiveness of checking. A training programme in using the new system is to be available for managers at every level. However, currently the use of management information is inconsistent. Managers do not analyse and interpret data to identify strengths and weaknesses of courses. Data are not being used effectively to evaluate the performance of students, for example, there is insufficient use of value added data to assess performance where this would be appropriate.

43. Target setting is underdeveloped at both college and course levels. The college's strategic plan for 2002/03 to 2004/05 did not include a full needs analysis to support the curriculum offer. Targets for recruitment are not always based on clear evidence of need. Research reports used last year were not well analysed and did not provide curriculum managers with specific enough information about market and community requirements. Consequently, few curriculum managers had a clear

evidence base for identifying an appropriate curriculum portfolio and setting realistic targets. Some courses have run with small numbers this year and enrolment targets for adults have not been met. Targets for improvement of attendance, retention and achievement are not communicated effectively, agreed and monitored in all academies. Managers make insufficient use of data to analyse retention and pass rates so as to set realistic but demanding targets. Targets in some curriculum areas are not sufficiently challenging.

44. The college effectively promotes equal opportunities and diversity. The policy has been updated to meet the requirements of recent legislation. The equal opportunities strategy group has produced an action plan that covers all aspects of the students' college experience as well as staff recruitment, training and development. The college is successfully attracting students from the range of local minority ethnic communities. Senior managers use management information systems reports to show how different groups of students fare on their courses by age, ethnicity and course level. A benchmarking group further monitors the performance of specific student groups against the average. The college works closely with the youth service and, in partnership with Derby City Council, is using youth workers to provide appropriate guidance and support to younger students from minority groups. There is good communication with parents and effective liaison with the community leaders. The college provides a safe and secure environment for students. Well-trained security staff apply safety procedures across the college sites.

45. Financial management is satisfactory. Though there are some financial issues inherited from the former colleges, there are now sound frameworks for financial management and governance and their operation in practice is satisfactory. The college's franchised provision is well managed and monitored by a senior manager. Though there are some courses with low numbers, in-year retention has improved and the majority of provision was judged to be satisfactory. Inspectors judged that the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas
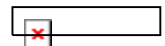
Science and mathematics
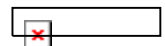
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   significantly above average pass rates for GCSE mathematics

- o   much good teaching

- o   good progression to HE

o   good retention rates on GCE A2 courses and AVCE science.

Weaknesses

o   low retention on GCSE science, GCE AS chemistry and physics

o   low pass rates on GCE AS chemistry and physics courses

o   little use of ICT in lessons

o   inadequate review and monitoring of academic progress.

Scope of provision

46. The college provides a wide range of science and mathematics courses for both students aged 16 to 18 and adult students. GCE AS and A-level biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and environmental science courses, and GCSE courses in both single and double award science, mathematics and biology are offered. Courses are now mainly available at the Prince Charles Avenue site, but there is some provision at the Pride Parkway site. The college also offers AVCE science, which attracts a small number of part-time students from a local employer. Adult students study science and mathematics at a range of levels from 1 to 3 as part of the access and options programme within the science and humanities academy.

Achievement and standards

47. Pass rates for GCSE mathematics have been significantly above national averages for the past three years, with 52% of students achieving grade C or above. On GCE AS physics and chemistry courses, pass rates are below the national averages, with 64% and 55% of students, respectively, passing in 2002. Pass rates for GCE AS mathematics are low but are at national averages and there are improvements for full-time students re-sitting module tests in January 2003. The pass rates on other courses are around the national averages. Retention rates on GCE A2 programmes are high, with 96% to 100% of students completing the course in 2002. Retention rates are also good on the AVCE science course. On GCE AS physics and chemistry and GCSE science courses, retention rates are low, with 56%, 65% and 57% of students, respectively, completing these courses. The in-year retention figures supplied by the college show that there has been an improvement.

48. Most students are well motivated and work productively. The quality of students' work is good and some make good use of IT in their assignments and coursework. Science students carry out practical work with confidence and pay good attention to working safely. Progression rates to HE are high and, in 2002, over 60% of advanced level students who took at least one science or mathematics course went to university.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	195	220	258
		% retention	70	73	67
		% pass rate	48	52	52
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	60	46	60
		% retention	82	52	57
		% pass rate	67	67	47
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	*	81	89
		% retention	*	84	80
		% pass rate	*	53	62
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	66	61
		% retention	*	67	79
		% pass rate	*	36	44
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	47	34
		% retention	*	87	65
		% pass rate	*	63	55
GCE A-level biology (including A2)	3	No. of starts	58	50	23
		% retention	68	57	100
		% pass rate	74	71	75
GCE A-level mathematics (including A2)	3	No. of starts	63	50	18
		% retention	73	44	100
		% pass rate	60	77	83

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

49. The majority of teaching is good. The best lessons are well planned, organised and have variety to give purpose and focus. In an AVCE lesson, students made a model of DNA from rubber tubing and cocktail sticks. This was used effectively to explain how DNA replicates and has its own unique pattern. In another lesson, the adult students, who had little experience of science, investigated the role of a catalyst in reaction rates. They showed good levels of understanding and participated in the activity with enthusiasm. The practical sessions observed were well organised, offering good opportunities for skills development. Students handle equipment confidently and with due regard to safety.

50. There is some unsatisfactory and uninspiring teaching. These lessons are poorly planned with too much didactic teaching that does not check on students' understanding often enough. In one lesson, the teacher talked for an hour without effectively checking students understanding. Insufficient use is made of IT in lessons. There are no computers in science laboratories and in the mathematics workshop the suite of computers is unable to run the software used effectively at a different site before the merger.

51. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced and make good use of their specialist knowledge. There are some good examples of written resources used by some staff. Subject

support sessions are available in all subjects, although this was only made available recently. Not all students take up this support. Much of the accommodation is poor and does not provide a stimulating learning environment. The science laboratories are old and poorly designed, inhibiting movement around the laboratory.

52. Target setting and the use of individual learning plans for students are at an early stage of development and are not effective yet. Students are not made sufficiently aware of the extent of their progress. Monitoring arrangements for students' attendance and punctuality are not successful. Attendance and punctuality are poor on several courses and particularly so in GCSE classes. Poor punctuality of students, both at the start of the day and after breaks, has a disruptive effect in many lessons. Coursework assessment is good. The marking closely matches external standards, except on the AVCE science course where the internal verification has yet to be planned for this year.

53. There is a good range of science and mathematics enrichment activities available to students, including a `who wants to be a mathionare' competition, links with local universities, visiting speakers, industrial visits and field trips. Students also work as paid technicians supporting the transfer of the science department to the new site.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory although there are areas of concern. Since the recent merger, the academy has become a more cohesive unit, with a shared vision to expand and progress. The self-assessment report identified many strengths and weaknesses but progress on the action plan has been slow. Self-assessment failed to identify the problems of low achievement on some courses. The policies for recruitment, progression and examination entries for GCE A-level students are not applied consistently. These weaknesses are acknowledged and are being addressed for future students. Data on students' achievements as compared with their previous achievements are not being used or collected effectively to evaluate the performance of students or individual subjects.

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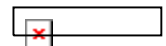
Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- o good retention rates

- o very good achievement in horticulture

- o highly effective practical teaching

- o high standards of students' work

- o extensive and well-used resources.

Weaknesses

- o slow implementation of new management structure and procedures

- o insufficient foundation and work-based courses.

Scope of provision

55. Courses in agriculture, horticulture, animal care, equine, countryside management, arboriculture and floristry are based at Broomfield Hall. The majority of courses are at levels 2 and 3 and include first and national diploma and certificate courses. Most are full-time students on these courses, which are also offered on a part-time, modular basis for adults. There is also a horticultural skills course at level 1 and a link course at entry level for students aged 14 to 16. Enrolments have risen, from 519 in 2000/01, to 842 in 2002/03. Some 45% of enrolled students are over 19. All full-time students aged 16 to 18 develop key skills in communication, working with number, literacy and ICT. Students taking horticulture, arboriculture and countryside courses are offered a number of additional qualifications such as safe use of pesticides, chainsaw operation, four-wheel driving and basic first aid.

Achievement and standards

56. Retention rates, currently over 90%, are good. Pass rates are very good for horticulture, but there has been a fall in 2001/02 on the animal care and equine studies courses. Pass rates for key skills tests are in line with national averages. Students' work is of a high standard. It is very well researched, planned and presented. In one case, a level 1 horticultural student produced a portfolio containing a photographic sequence of the propagation of a tomato plant from seed to semi-mature plant. Students' attainment in classes is at an appropriate standard.

A sample of retention and pass rates in land-based provision, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 9383 horticultural skills	1	No. of starts	24	39	30
		% retention	100	100	93
		% pass rate	83	84	87
National certificate in horticulture	2	No. of starts	8	17	9
		% retention	75	94	89
		% pass rate	100	80	100
First diploma in animal management	2	No. of starts	44	32	32
		% retention	91	53	91
		% pass rate	88	94	76
First diploma in horse	2	No. of starts	16	11	9

studies		% retention	81	64	89
		% pass rate	92	100	50
National diploma in animal care	3	No. of starts	35	52	32
		% retention	77	52	75
		% pass rate	93	100	75
Royal Forestry Society certificate in arboriculture	3	No. of starts	*	14	20
		% retention	*	100	95
		% pass rate	*	93	63

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

57. Most teaching is good or better. Practical teaching is very good. Practical sessions are particularly well planned, with good worksheets and appropriate tasks to ensure that all students are fully engaged throughout. In one riding session, the teacher ensured that all students worked at their own pace and capability by giving very clear instructions to each student. The teacher extended the more able and encouraged and motivated those needing support. All riders were set challenging targets, which they achieved. Students participate fully in all class activities. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide range of teaching methods. These include powerpoint presentations, videos, slides and individual and group class work. A lesson on plant propagation held the attention of learners well, the teacher used practical demonstration and appropriate technical language with good reference to practical solutions. Good awareness of health and safety procedures was emphasised appropriately in a lesson on tree climbing. The teacher questioned students individually and they responded attentively to instructions. All were involved in the practical activity and were able to demonstrate good understanding of aerial techniques. Students have received clear guidance on note taking in class, resulting in a high standard of notes and class work.

58. Resources are very good in most areas and are used effectively. The grounds and campus are a particularly good horticultural resource, with extensive glasshouses and stock production areas. Good use is made of external resources where the college does not have its own facilities and a wide range of effective educational visits is undertaken. The equestrian students take all the riding and practical sessions at local riding centres, which are maintained to a high standard. Animal care courses use external resources to supplement the good college resources, including the use of the local hedgehog rescue centre for their wildlife rehabilitation module and to support their enrichment programme. There is an extensive library and learning resource centre with drop-in computer facilities. Opening hours have been extended to meet students' needs.

59. Assignment briefs are clear and feedback gives students good guidance on how they can improve their grades. Key skills are not integrated into the vocational studies, although teachers have started to cross-reference them to vocational assignments where evidence is not fully developed. Internal verifier comments ensure that assessors understand the need to show students how to improve their performance. The cross-college internal verification procedures are not implemented in all areas and some are still using older procedures.

60. Courses cover a good range within levels 2 and 3, however, there is not complete subject coverage at level 1. The `link' course and the level 1 horticultural skills course give some entry and lower level provision, but this does not extend across the curriculum. Animal care and equine studies have no lower level full-time courses. There is a good range of additional courses in horticulture and countryside management but none in animal care or equine.

61. Good advice is given to students before entry, both through careers events and course leaflets.

Vocational staff are very supportive to students and give sound advice on progression and personal issues. Although all students are screened for additional support needs, this is not always provided and some have to wait a long time before support starts. Learners are set goals through tutorial and or mentoring sessions, however, these are not specific or demanding enough. Personal skills development is dependent upon the member of staff conducting the tutorial or mentoring session. The development skills survey for the curriculum has focussed staff to recognise individual student's needs although this new innovation has yet to be proved. The student forum is ineffective and in many cases course representatives have not been elected.

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management are satisfactory in the land-based area. Following the merger with Derby College, new corporate systems and structures have been introduced at Broomfield Hall. Staff changes have resulted in some lack of clarity of job roles and poor course management where there has been a delay in appointing new staff. Some courses have been without a leader for a whole term. However, communication has improved, regular course team meetings are held and actions recorded and implemented. High standards of work have been maintained. College-wide quality assurance arrangements have been introduced and these are not yet fully implemented. Self-assessment is rigorous and has been developed with input from students and staff. It is also closely linked to strategic objectives. Sound professional advice has been sought and given from the governing body to effectively restructure the college farms.

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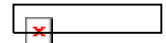
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   good retention rates and high pass rates on most level 1 and level 2 courses

- o   consistently good attendance and punctuality of students

- o   good use of assessment to support learning.

Weaknesses

- o   insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning

- o   no technician support for painting and decorating students

- o   inadequate additional learning support.

Scope of provision

63. The college offers a broad range of construction courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Most students are following level 1 or 2 courses. Craft courses are offered in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing, and electrical installation. Technician national certificate and diploma courses are offered in construction and civil engineering. Specialist provision includes plastering and gas fitting courses. Students can attend full-time, day-release, block-release or evening-only courses. In 2002, the college enrolled 477 students, of whom, 62 study full time. There are 135 students aged 16 to 18 and 342 aged 19 or over. There are 178 students on level 1 courses, 237 on level 2 courses and 62 on level 3 courses.

Achievement and standards

64. There are good retention rates and high pass rates on many level 1 and 2 courses. On three of the five most significant courses in the provision, retention rates in 2002 were significantly above the national averages. Pass rates on level 1 courses in trowel occupations have been consistently above the national average for the last four years and are currently 11% above. Pass rates on level 1 and level 2 wood occupations courses have been steadily improving and are currently well above the national average. However, there are declining and poor retention rates on wood occupations courses at level 1 and poor retention and pass rates on the new intermediate construction certificate course. The standard of work produced by students is generally satisfactory. There is a good standard of students' practical work in plumbing and painting and decorating.

65. Attendance and punctuality are generally very good. An attendance rate of 85% was observed during inspection week. Average attendance for some courses over the year exceeds 90%. Very good punctuality allowed students to make the best use of their time.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	27	26	15
		% retention	60	38	87
		% pass rate	93	83	85
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	25	28	11
		% retention	83	86	70
		% pass rate	50	71	86
NVQ mechanical engineering services plumbing (one year)	2	No. of starts	*	16	12
		% retention	*	100	82
		% pass rate	*	0	67
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	37	20	27
		% retention	43	60	96
		% pass rate	44	83	94
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installation	2	No. of starts	21	15	15
		% retention	90	87	93
		% pass rate	74	46	79

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

66. Most teaching is good or better and a significant minority is outstanding. Learning and attainment follows a similar profile. However, there is insufficient sharing of the good practice from the better lessons to improve the less-good teaching. In the better lessons, teachers catch the attention of the students early and hold it throughout the session. The students are provided with challenging tasks and materials suited to their individual needs and abilities. Teaching is related directly to students' jobs or the industry. Some teachers make very good use of their recent industrial experience to generate discussion and add interest and value from current practice. One session cleverly used cards with questions and answers on health and safety legislation to consolidate learning from previous lessons and stimulate discussion. The lesson concluded with a quiz, which gave a good indication of students' attainment and understanding.

67. There is some outstanding support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Technical and support tutors worked exceptionally well together in a practical lesson in which students developed good hand skills in cutting dovetailed joints. The less-good sessions often place too much reliance on a single teaching method. For example, in one session, students were working with learning packs under the supervision of a teacher. The teacher adopted a passive role and, although students worked well independently, the session was lacking in drive, challenge and interest. Other sessions are too teacher-centred and rely on students passively absorbing information presented to them. The teachers in these sessions often talk for too long and do not provide sufficient challenge or meet individual needs.

68. Resources are generally satisfactory. The classrooms are clean and comfortable and all have bright wall displays. Staff are generally well qualified with appropriate experience. There are some good-quality visual aids, and teaching and learning materials, including computer programs, are often used to good effect in the teaching. However, there is insufficient access to computers for software to be used effectively. Workshops are generally of adequate size, clean, tidy and well laid out. Some of the machinery and equipment is dated and is nearing the end of its working life. The brickwork shop is too small and work is often accidentally damaged because of this. There is no technician support in painting and decorating. This has an adverse effect on students, as teaching staff often have to break off from teaching to supply materials and manage resources.

69. Assessment is well used to support learning. Feedback to students is generally good and helps students to improve. Students in many areas have the opportunity to practise assessment tasks prior to formal assessment. Students carry out a self-evaluation before receiving comments from teachers. This process develops a critical awareness of their work and skills. Assessment is generally fair, accurate and reliable. Internal verification is satisfactory in craft areas. Standard documentation is used consistently and planning is good. Feedback to assessors is helpful. Internal verification of technician courses is unsatisfactory. There is little planning and the internal verifier does not keep records. Documentation is not fully completed in accordance with quality procedures.

70. There is inadequate additional learning support for students. Initial assessment is ineffective. Not all students are initially assessed for basic skills and the results of initial assessment are not used to provide effective targeted support for students. Not all students identified as needing support are receiving it. At the start of their courses, students complete many documents whose purpose is not clear and results are not used effectively. For example, students are given a learning styles questionnaire and action plan. Very few complete the action plan and the results of the questionnaire are not used effectively in the classroom.

71. Many documents contain language too advanced for many students. However, the mentor system provides good personal support.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The area is beginning to stabilise after a long

period of disruption in which there have been eleven managers in nine years. There has been good management of change in the past year. Standards of achievement are being maintained, with good retention rates and high pass rates on many level 1 and 2 courses. Staff work well together in teams. There are some good and developing links with schools, the community and HE. However, there are few formal links with industry. There is little staff development for technical and industrial updating through courses or industrial secondment. Staff do not have a clear understanding of the strategic direction of the department. A realistic and accurate self-assessment forms a good basis for ongoing improvement.

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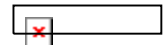
Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   good pass rates on most courses

- o   much good teaching

- o   rigorous assessment on work-based learning programmes

- o   good subject support

- o   highly effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- o   poor achievement of advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks

- o   insufficient resources at one site

- o   lack of initial screening for some students

o   inadequate progress reviews in the workplace.

Scope of provision

73. There is a broad range of courses in mechanical, electrical and electronics, fabrication and welding, manufacturing and computer-aided engineering for full-time and part-time students and work-based learners. Courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels are offered, with progression to higher national certificate and diploma. There are 743 students enrolled, of whom 51% are adults. Some 114 work-based learners are working towards vocational qualifications in electricity distribution and transmission, motor vehicle, engineering manufacture and textile technology. There are 53 advanced modern apprentices and 60 foundation modern apprentices and one student studying an NVQ course.

Achievement and standards

74. Pass rates are good on the national certificate and diploma in engineering and NVQ engineering manufacture, electrical installation and mechanical production competencies courses. For example, on the mechanical production competencies programme, the pass rate is 32% higher than the national average. However, on the GNVQ intermediate course, the retention and pass rates are below the national average. Retention rates on most college-based courses are satisfactory. There are poor pass rates for the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. Only 36% of students are successful in completing the full framework.

75. In college workshops, students manufacture a wide range of high quality components and assemblies. Students take ownership of their work and self-assess the finished components. There are excellent examples of high-quality portfolios containing a diverse range of evidence. On level 2 craft courses, manufactured articles are produced to a high standard. In the workplace, students achieve a high standard of practical work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Engineering part 1 electrical installation	1	No. of starts	24	22	31
		% retention	63	59	77
		% pass rate	60	85	71
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	37	22	15
		% retention	44	68	33
		% pass rate	81	60	40
NQV engineering manufacture	2	No. of starts	11	51	31
		% retention	91	76	81
		% pass rate	90	79	71
Engineering mechanical production competences	2	No. of starts	18	18	32
		% retention	72	72	91
		% pass rate	54	77	96
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	73	15	77
		% retention	65	93	88

		% pass rate	91	100	90
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	31	52	26
		% retention	63	44	71
		% pass rate	72	92	88

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

Quality of education and training

76. There is much good teaching in a high proportion of lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In the most effective lessons, challenging targets are set and teachers inspire their students. Most students respond enthusiastically. Teachers make effective use of detailed planning documentation and a wide range of teaching styles. Theory and practical activities are linked effectively and good use is made of practical equipment in theory lessons. For example, in a computer-aided design lesson, the teacher took the students to an adjoining workshop and effectively used examples of machinery to develop their knowledge and understanding of assemblies before producing detailed drawings on the computer-aided design system. Work-based learners receive good training on a wide range of practical tasks.

77. Good resources enable students to achieve all aspects of their NVQ work. The advanced manufacturing centre is modern and well equipped. However, at one site there are insufficient resources for motor vehicle courses. Classrooms used for electrical training are untidy, poorly decorated and overcrowded, and there are distractions to learning from a noisy practical class in the adjacent work area. Full-time teaching staff have appropriate technical qualifications and nearly all have a teaching qualification.

78. Students have good subject support in the workplace and at college; they speak highly of the help and support that tutors provide. Particularly good support is given to students with hearing impairment. Students' progress files contain detailed information on entry qualifications, support requirements, medical information and details of progress reviews. Students contribute with information on their knowledge and understanding, areas for improvement, career action plan and personal targets. Progress reviews take place once a term. Reports on attendance, progress and attitude are included in the file. Some files clearly indicate additional support requirements and how the students are receiving this support. The engineering mentor regularly uses the files but the process is new and is not yet fully embedded.

79. Assessment and monitoring of progress on work-based learning programmes is rigorous. Assessors visit students at least monthly. Good use is now made of a range of diverse evidence. Students demonstrate a good understanding of the assessment process. There are several examples of well-structured portfolios. Assessors monitor progress on a regular basis and information is readily available to inform assessor and management decisions on slow progress. Employers are supportive of students and have a good knowledge of the qualification framework.

80. There is a lack of initial screening for part-time students for additional support needs. Some students have been delayed in receiving the support identified by the screening test. The students have now been given appropriate relevant support in a positive and encouraging manner.

Leadership and management

81. There is highly effective curriculum management, which is having a positive impact on achievement. The well-planned management strategy has strong support from staff. This has led to effective improvements and a direct influence on students' experience. For example, refurbishment and reorganisation of the learning environment has significantly improved the facilities for the students. Recently purchased equipment in workshops and increased workshop capacity have been introduced. Close partnership arrangements exist with local employers and schools. The engineering academy is working towards CoVE status in partnership with an internationally renowned company.

There is a clear strategy of encouraging young people into engineering and well-planned changes to the provision. Targets are set to improve students' achievements. Regular and effective meetings of tutors, assessors and managers are held leading to significant improvements in the sharing of good practice. Observations of trainers and assessors are carried out by independent staff. Staff receiving low grades are given additional support. This policy is proving effective.

Business management and professional
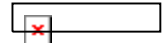
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o good achievements on GCE AS and GCE A2 business courses

- o good or better teaching in the majority of lessons

- o strong guidance and support for individual students

- o excellent learning materials and computer facilities for secretarial courses

- o good variety of assessment methods for work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- o poor pass rates on NVQ accounting and administration courses at levels 2 and 3

- o poor and declining pass rates on many secretarial courses

- o poor completion of modern apprenticeship framework

- o narrow range of part-time professional courses.

Scope of provision

82. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses, from foundation level to advanced and higher levels. There are full-time courses in business, and part-time courses in business, secretarial studies, management and accountancy. The AVCE business course is offered as a full-time double award and a part-time single award. A wide range of single subject secretarial courses is delivered through IT workshops. These courses are offered from level 1 to level 3, and include text and word processing, audio-transcription and legal and medical secretarial programmes. The college runs an innovative `women into management' course for adult learners. The college offered GCE AS courses in accounting and economics, level 1 book-keeping and the national certificate in e-business, but these did not recruit sufficient numbers. The range of professional courses offered on a part-time basis is narrow, restricting opportunities for progression. There are around 200 full-time and 600 part-time students. Of the full-time students, around 175 are aged 16 to 18. There are 11 advanced modern apprentices and 29 foundation modern apprentices on administration courses.

Achievement and standards

83. Achievements are good on GCE AS and A2 business courses, with pass rates above the national averages, good retention on the GCE A2 programme and a good standard of oral and written work. Pass rates are well above national averages on level 3 management courses, including the NVQ management and management certificate. Retention and pass rates on the AVCE business programme are broadly in line with national averages and there is good and improving achievement on GNVQ business at intermediate level. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 and level 3 courses in administration and accounting are significantly below national averages. There are poor and declining pass rates on many secretarial courses, although the achievements of students currently studying at the college are good. Completion of foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks is low. The rate of progress made by students and the standard of work across the programme as a whole are satisfactory. Students' attendance on some full-time vocational business courses is poor and is adversely affecting their progress.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Word processing (short course)	1	No. of starts	453	1,019	889
		% retention	98	95	97
		% pass rate	54	53	47
NVQ accounting foundation (one year)	2	No. of starts	40	33	29
		% retention	85	79	90
		% pass rate	74	69	58
NVQ administration (one year)	2	No. of starts	129	105	33
		% retention	62	64	64
		% pass rate	63	39	33
Inductory management certificate	2	No. of starts	83	41	69
		% retention	98	95	100
		% pass rate	97	77	81
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	61	42	16
		% retention	80	71	94
		% pass rate	84	96	74
GNVQ busines / AVCE	3	No. of starts	81	74	65

business *		% retention	80	74	68
		% pass rate	90	80	50
Word processing (one year)	3	No. of starts	14	85	71
		% retention	100	95	87
		% pass rate	43	41	55
NVQ accounting technicians	4	No. of starts	37	22	29
		% retention	92	91	90
		% pass rate	38	20	58

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

* GNVQ business changed to AVCE business in 2002

Quality of education and training

84. Much teaching is good or better. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make effective use of case studies and handouts to explain theoretical concepts in a practical business context. In a full-time AVCE business lesson, the teacher made effective use of materials to explore the role of government in business, and used a wide range of teaching and learning activities to promote sustained interest and effort by students. In a part-time management lesson, the teacher followed an informative presentation with effective syndicate work and case study analysis on the structure of major British organisations. Students were articulate and hard working, and showed a good understanding of the issues. Strong guidance and support is provided to students on full-time business studies and part-time management programmes. In work-based learning, students are coached at work by supervisors and there is good integration of key skills portfolio building with on-the-job training. Students on secretarial courses demonstrate an ability to work well independently and to manage their learning. For example, one student had successfully completed a level 2 secretarial award in the flexible IT workshop, and was currently working towards a level 3 medical secretaries award alongside their full-time qualification. In a small number of lessons, there is a lack of pace and variety and insufficient attention is placed on students' different ability levels. Students on secretarial courses receive little structured tuition and for some this adversely affects the rate at which they make progress.

85. Internal verification is satisfactory. Appropriate procedures exist on all courses for reporting to parents and employers. On work-based programmes, a good variety of assessment methods is used, including work projects, observation reports and oral and written questions. Students undertake basic and key skills diagnostic assessment, and results guide provision of individual support. However, students do not always have clear interim targets for completion of NVQ units or key skills, and are unable to chart their progress effectively through the framework.

86. A good programme of tutorial support is provided through course tutors and mentors. Strong support is given to full-time students with additional learning support or personal support needs, and examples were seen of effective support for deaf students, a student with dyslexia and a student with learning difficulties and disabilities, enabling them to participate fully in class. Effective support is given to adult students on part-time management and professional courses. On several courses, specific time is allocated for individual meetings, portfolio review and discussions about personal issues. Work-based learners benefit from systematic support.

87. Teachers are well qualified: many have relevant vocational experience but some lack recent industrial experience. Teachers on part-time courses leading to secretarial qualifications have developed an extensive range of manuals to support independent study in the flexible IT workshops. The general standard of IT equipment in the college is good. The Optimum IT workshops provide an outstanding learning environment, with high levels of equipment and accommodation. Classrooms are well equipped although some rooms are small for the size of groups. The range of learning

materials in learning resource centres is satisfactory. The lack of computers in the main suite of classrooms at Pride Parkway hampers teaching and learning on the part-time professional accounting programme.

Leadership and management

88. Managers and teachers have responded positively to changes brought about by the merger, and there is a strong commitment to students and the college. Managers provide clear leadership and direction, and programmes of study are well organised. Work-based learning is effectively managed and co-ordinated. Some self-assessment reports lack specific reference to weaknesses, for example, poor and declining pass rates on many secretarial courses. There is insufficient use of students' achievements and value added data to assess performance and some teaching appointments are too recent to have had an impact on students' achievements.

ICT, computing and IT
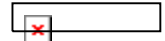
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   high standards of practical skills for all students

- o   excellent access to flexible study

- o   effective partnerships with employers and external organizations

- o   well-organised and effectively managed provision.

Weaknesses

- o   poor pass rates for IT user qualifications

- o   inappropriate courses for some students.

Scope of provision

89. The college offers a very broad range of ICT courses for adults at introductory, intermediate and advanced levels. This includes courses in integrated business technology (IBT) and the certificate

for IT users, which are available at various venues in and around Derby. There were over 4,500 enrolments on these courses. Full-time courses include the first diploma for IT practitioners, the national diploma in computer studies and GCE AS and A-level courses. A range of options is available on full-time courses. The first diploma offers networking and user support units. In 2002/03, there were 669 students on full-time computer courses and most were aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

90. Over the past three years, pass rates have been no more than satisfactory on full-time courses and less than satisfactory on IT user qualifications for adults. For example, both IBT stages 2 and 3 and the European computer driving licence (ECDL) have been well below national averages for all three years. Pass rates for IBT are very poor. In 2001/02, at IBT stages 2 and 3, 44% and 22% of students passed, respectively. Over 14,000 people enrolled on the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) qualification over the three-year period 1999/2000 to 2001/02 and both retention and pass rates were below national averages in each year. Retention rates on most qualifications are around national averages and on the national diploma in computer studies course they are good.

91. Students develop good practical skills in IT. They are self-reliant and confident when handling technology and use a wide range of software applications with ease. The quality of research, analysis and presentation using ICT is high and students develop a good understanding. Full-time students are enthusiastic about extending skills and knowledge to new computer technologies. A student on the national diploma in computer studies course has recently won a gold prize in a national competition for work in multimedia computer game production.

92. There is good progression to higher levels of study. In 2001/02, most national diploma students progressed to HE. Many students in the flexible learning centres continue their studies from beginner through to advanced levels.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) CLAIT	1	No. of starts	5,582	5,152	3,071
		% retention	78	80	76
		% pass rate	58	42	54
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	94	91	89
		% retention	73	79	79
		% pass rate	62	92	67
IBT	2	No. of starts	2,036	1,474	1,235
		% retention	88	81	81
		% pass rate	50	43	44
City and Guilds 726 diploma in networking	2	No. of starts	*	48	80
		% retention	*	79	79
		% pass rate	*	74	87
IBT	3	No. of starts	326	225	216
		% retention	80	80	84
		% pass rate	21	28	22
National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	53	97	100
		% retention	79	80	79

		% pass rate	85	71	80
GCE AS IT	3	No. of starts	*	49	60
		% retention	*	67	75
		% pass rate	*	77	64

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

93. The majority of teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and enthusiastic. They expect students to be interested in their studies and consistently encourage them to produce work to deadlines. The better teaching considers the students' previous knowledge, captures their imagination and encourages them to draw their own conclusions. A minority of lessons for full-time students either have unclear learning aims or teachers fail to check on learning. In some lessons, teachers accepted answers to questions only from those most ready to respond. Teachers often miss opportunities to recall theory covered in previous lessons. There is some poor planning and sequencing of learning activities. For example, national diploma students were asked to consider an introductory video on human computer interface design several weeks after the start of the unit and it proved to be of little value. Staff in the learning centres are welcoming to new students and responsive to their needs, though there are insufficient opportunities for students to learn through group work or discussion.

94. Opportunities for flexible study in IT skills are excellent. Learning centres are open for 12-hour periods during most weekdays and for morning sessions at weekends. This provides excellent flexibility to enable students to attend at convenient times. Centres provide well-planned and well-structured materials that enable students to progress systematically at their own pace. Centres have high standards of equipment but a small number of computers in classrooms are barely adequate and there are occasional breakdowns that disrupt learning. Few rooms have suitable projection facilities for IT teaching. Staff are well qualified and able to teach a range of courses.

95. The use of individual learning plans has been recently introduced. They are mostly effective in providing short-term goals and incentives, but some plans are vague and on some courses have yet to be introduced. Support for full-time students is good. Mentors and academic tutors work well together to monitor students' progress. They are effective in dealing with disciplinary aspects and give good support for progression to HE. Students value tutorials, particularly on a one-to-one basis.

96. The quality of initial guidance varies and sometimes results in students following inappropriate programmes. In learning centres, several students were studying programmes that were undemanding compared to previous knowledge and skills. One student on an introductory IT course had a high level of skill relating to her employment. In key skills lessons, students are invariably unaware of the levels of qualification they are aiming for and are confused about assessment requirements and test dates. Attendance at some key skills lessons is very poor.

Leadership and management

97. The curriculum area is well organised and effectively managed. Teams work hard to meet local needs, give a good learning experience to students and effect improvements in students' achievements. The curriculum range is constantly being extended to be more responsive to community and industry needs and to develop partnerships. Initiatives to promote equal opportunities have led to the recruitment of students from very diverse backgrounds. Internal communication is good with well-structured and regular meetings. Staff have yet to recognise the poor performance of some courses and they have not set measurable targets for improvement. Many of the processes and procedures are new and although early indications show improved retention rates it is too early to judge the effect on achievement.

Sports, leisure and travel
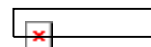
Overall provision in this area is s**atisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o students' work of a high standard and well presented

- o good and inspiring teaching on `routes to sport'

- o good specialist resources for travel and tourism

- o effective leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- o poor pass and retention rates on most courses

- o poor behaviour management in some classes

- o narrow range of provision at level 1.

Scope of provision

98. The college offers a range of sports, travel and tourism courses from entry level to level 3. At the time of the inspection, there were 176 full-time students, 121 on sports courses and 55 on travel and tourism courses. The main qualifications offered in sports are GCE AS and A2 physical education and national diplomas in sport fitness and development and in science (sports studies). Level 2 courses include a first diploma and an NVQ in sport, and a certificate in sport and recreation. Travel courses at level 3 are AVCE travel and tourism and at level 2 include GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, certificate in leisure and tourism and NVQ travel services. A broad range of additional qualifications is available. On many courses, there are opportunities for students to undertake visits or work experience placements either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Achievement and standards

99. Retention rates are poor on the initial award in sport and recreation, GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, AVCE travel and tourism and the travel certificate course. Curriculum staff are taking action to improve retention rates, for example, by interviewing students and with the appointment of a learning mentor in each area. Although it is too early to see the final impact, in-year retention rates have improved significantly on many courses. Pass rates are poor on most courses. However, students do achieve good pass rates on the sports leader award and develop good interpersonal and leadership skills to enhance their employment prospects.

100. All students' work is of a high standard and well presented. All work is word processed and includes images, graphs and charts to illustrate topics. At advanced level, the work is analytical and evaluative. At all other levels, the standard is above that expected. Students are able to present information using technical language in sport relating to physiological and psychological issues relating to sports performance. Leisure and tourism students planned an induction programme for new employees of a marine-life centre which was of an industry standard and gave detailed presentations to explain the induction to their peers. In practical lessons in sport, students show their understanding of theory in fitness testing.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Certificate in sports leaders award	2	No. of starts	*	55	66
		% retention	*	73	77
		% pass rate	*	21	90
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	28	40	13
		% retention	64	68	54
		% pass rate	63	58	73
Higher sports leaders award	3	No. of starts	41	36	30
		% retention	78	78	67
		% pass rate	81	14	90
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism / AVCE travel and tourism **	3	No. of starts	47	30	38
		% retention	66	77	29
		% pass rate	63	58	73
GCE AS sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	**	33	18
		% retention	**	70	78
		% pass rate	**	78	79
GCE A-level sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	27	12	13
		% retention	74	92	92
		% pass rate	85	82	75

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

* course did not run
** GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism changed to AVCE travel and tourism in 2002

Quality of education and training

101. Much of the teaching is good or satisfactory. Practical teaching on the routes to sport programme is good. In one lesson, the teacher was successful in building students' confidence, managing anger and re-engaging them in learning; they were inspired to improve and achieve. In

other well-planned lessons, teachers caught students' interest quickly and maintained a good level and range of activity and learning. In one lesson, an analytical quiz was set to identify seaside resorts located on a map of the United Kingdom. Teachers use well-presented and imaginative handouts or work packs to reinforce and engage students in the learning process. In these lessons, students are enthusiastic, motivated and contribute well to discussions and presentations. In a few less successful and effective lessons some teaching is dull. Students are badly behaved and allowed to disrupt learning.

102. Students benefit from the enrichment programme. Guest speakers are invited from local industry. Several sports students are planning to visit Sweden to undertake work experience as part of their programme. In travel and tourism, students have undertaken visits to Manchester airport and Toronto during the academic year to broaden their experience. A visit to Rome is planned, during which students will undertake a project to include key skills. Innovative assignment briefs in travel and tourism identify key skills assessment opportunities. Communication key skills are developed and assessed through subject lessons and assignments.

103. Feedback on marked work in travel and tourism is thorough and extensive and helps students to see how to improve and to monitor their progress. This is not the case in sport, where feedback on marked work is minimal and does not always clearly identify how students may obtain higher grades from their work.

104. Resources are generally satisfactory. Specialist resources for travel and tourism students are good, with an in-house travel agency and adjacent teaching area. For sports, there is a wide range of specialist equipment and sports facilities. Staff are well qualified and have relevant industry qualifications and experience, although a few travel and tourism staff have no recent industrial experience. There is a wide range of texts for sport, travel and tourism in the learning resource centre. Students have access to IT-based travel and tourism materials.

105. Additional support is good for students on the `routes to' programmes, where vocational teachers hold basic skills qualifications and support students well in the classroom. Support for students on other courses is available through key skills support workshops although, in some cases, it is late in being arranged. Mentoring support for students is good. Course team leaders and mentors maintain good records and make regular reviews. At team meetings, teachers discuss attendance and any other issues that affect students' progress. All students undertake initial diagnostic assessments and a preferred learning styles profile is made, which is shared with teachers. However, the use that is made of this information in planning varies in its effectiveness.

Leadership and management

106. Leadership and management are good. New managers for the area have been appointed recently. Curriculum teams are very positive about the management of the curriculum and the merger of colleges. They are involved in all decision making and are kept informed of developments. Learning mentors are working closely with teachers and this is having a positive impact in improving course retention rates. Teachers share good practice to improve teaching and learning. Curriculum managers and the Derby City Council leisure department work closely together to support developments and re-engage disaffected learners from local schools. The self-assessment report is honest and reflects historical weaknesses; the development plan addresses these weaknesses with strategies implemented to rectify them. It is early to judge the impact of these actions.

Hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies
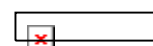
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- o good teaching in beauty therapy

- o very good pass rates on the NVQ level 3 beauty therapy course

- o good progression from level 1 to level 2

- o high standards of students' work in holistic therapies.

Weaknesses

- o poor pass rates on hairdressing courses

- o poor retention rates on most courses

- o insufficient and outdated resources in the majority of hairdressing and beauty salons

- o unsatisfactory arrangements for pre-course guidance for many students

- o no planned work experience for full-time students.

Scope of provision

107. The college offers a good range of qualifications in both hairdressing and beauty therapy, including NVQ hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3, a sports massage certificate and holistic therapy courses. Student numbers have increased significantly over the last two years. There are currently 135 full-time and 263 part-time beauty therapy students, with over 80 full-time hairdressing students and another 70 studying part time. The college has a franchise arrangement with a private provider to offer beauty therapy courses for over 300 students. The college offers work-based training in hairdressing for 217 students. Link courses are offered for school pupils.

Achievement and standards

108. In 2002, the pass rate on NVQ beauty therapy level 3 was 100%. Over the last three years, pass and retention rates on hairdressing courses have been below the national average. The pass rate on NVQ hairdressing at level 3 is 32 percentage points below the national average. Retention rates are unsatisfactory on most courses, except for NVQ beauty therapy courses at levels 2 and 3, which are above the national averages. Retention and pass rates are improving on holistic and complementary therapy provision but on some courses they are still below the average. In 2002, the pass rates for the full foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships frameworks were unsatisfactory. The average attendance during inspection was good, at 82%. Students on holistic therapies courses achieve high standards in their work. In one theory class, students worked independently, producing well-written assignments using good research and IT.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	1	No. of starts	14	11	41
		% retention	50	27	78
		% pass rate	100	100	63
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	63	43	72
		% retention	33	24	52
		% pass rate	45	20	41
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	2	No. of starts	46	25	45
		% retention	67	88	73
		% pass rate	73	91	85
NVQ hairdressing (one year)	3	No. of starts	21	9	28
		% retention	63	67	81
		% pass rate	67	50	45
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	3	No. of starts	19	13	11
		% retention	74	100	91
		% pass rate	64	73	100

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

Quality of education and training

109. Teaching in beauty and holistic therapy is good. In a successful lesson, students gave group presentations on complementary therapies, drawing on research they had carried out on the natural products used. The group used powerpoint to outline their findings, after which each student discussed their part of the project. The rest of the group were then asked to comment on the products through touch and smell. Students were well motivated and inspired by this lesson. The majority of lessons are less challenging for students. In hairdressing, some practical lessons are not well planned. In one lesson, students who did not have any clients waited around the salon, were not engaged in any form of learning and became bored with the lack of direction. In a theory lesson held in a hairdressing salon, the teacher made notes on a flip chart. The students' view was obscured by the layout of the building; they were not able to see what the teacher was writing and little learning took place. Key skills are not effectively integrated into hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. In one application of number class, the teacher was trying to explain to the students how to calculate percentages. The teacher led most of the lesson with no links being made to the vocational area. Students soon lost interest.

110. Accommodation for both areas is outdated and salons do not meet a good commercial standard. General housekeeping is poor and salons appear neglected and dirty. There is no technical support to assist teaching staff in practical classes. There is a shortage of sterilizing equipment for hairdressing and beauty therapy. The layout of the hairdressing salon does not allow teachers to have a clear view of students when they are teaching practical skills. Students have poor access to computers and they use IT only to complete their written assignments. The reception area does not have a computerised till to give students realistic training using IT. Staff have appropriate teaching and vocational qualifications.

111. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students have good formative assessment in practical sessions but written evaluation about their written work is inconsistent. Some teachers fail to correct spelling or grammatical errors. Assessment and internal verification procedures are new and have yet to be fully implemented. A new co-ordinator has been appointed to implement work-based assessment procedures. Students are not offered other qualifications in addition to their main course. There is no planned work experience for full-time students and generally they do not take up the enrichment programme on offer outside their main timetable.

112. Pre-course guidance arrangements are unsatisfactory for many students. Students are enrolled on courses regardless of their suitability and are not interviewed by vocational staff. Many students do not stay for the full duration of their course. All full-time students undergo initial assessment at the start of their course. Good support is offered in and out of lessons, although there are no tutorials for part-time students. `Skills champions' have been appointed to help develop vocational skills. In one beauty therapy class, a deaf student was supported well by a signer who worked alongside the teacher. The teacher used a hearing loop to communicate with the student.

Leadership and management

113. There is a new management structure in place. The beauty therapy provision is well managed but there is unsatisfactory management of the hairdressing provision. Quality assurance systems are weak. Actions arising from course reviews are not monitored and there has been little impact on improving unsatisfactory retention rates. Staff are involved in the formation of the self-assessment and development plan. There are difficulties in recording the retention and pass rates of students who study in flexible modes.

Health and social care
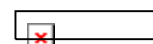
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   high pass rates on most college courses

- o   good achievements on NVQ provision

- o   productive links with employers and the community

- o good practice in the development of students' research and analytical skills

- o carefully targeted pastoral support for college and work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- o unsatisfactory retention rates on full-time courses

- o poor pass rates on modern apprenticeship frameworks

- o insufficient awareness by college students of their progress

- o ineffective delivery of key skills.

Scope of provision

114. The caring skills academy offers full-time courses, mainly for students aged 16 to 18, in health, care and early years, ranging from foundation to level 4. It provides NVQ courses from level 2 to level 4 in care and early years care and education for many occupational outlets, and other part-time programmes for teaching assistants, playwork, counselling, first aid and visual languages. There are 340 full-time and 485 part time students. The college works directly with companies and small-to-medium enterprises providing NVQs at levels 2 to 4 in care and early years care and education. It has a total of 716 students on these courses. Its work-based learning provision, which it took over in 2001, has 62 advanced modern apprentices and 5 foundation modern apprentices. All but two of them are on early years care and education programmes. A further 20 students are undertaking NVQ level 2 and 3 courses in care. All work-based learners are employed.

Achievement and standards

115. Pass rates are high on most college courses, especially in 2002. They are generally well above the national averages. The certificate in childcare and education and first diploma in caring courses had pass rates of 93% and 90%, respectively, in 2002, significantly above national averages. The certificate in counselling courses has exceeded the high national average of 94% for the past three years, with 100% pass rates in two of these years. NVQ pass rates have been consistently good for the past three years. The NVQ level 2 in care has retention rates above the national average and high pass rates of 94%, 90% and 97%, respectively, for the past three years. Similarly, for NVQ level 3 early years care and education, retention rates are above the national average of 86%. The pass rate has improved in 2002 to 71%, well above the national average. Data on work-based learning are not available for previous years, but pass rates for the full frameworks in the modern apprenticeship scheme in 2002 are poor. Only 23% of advanced modern apprentices achieved the full framework although retention rates are satisfactory.

116. Retention rates on all full-time courses are unsatisfactory. They are below the national averages and most have been so for the last three years. For example, the diploma in childcare and education, and its predecessor course, has declined, from 69% in 2000, to 63% in 2001, to 66% in 2002, against a national average of 76%.

117. Progression to the next level of study, to related employment and to professional training or HE is satisfactory. Some students reported that their aspirations had been raised by their courses. The majority of students' work is of an appropriate standard for the level of their course. In several lessons, students demonstrated research and analytic skills of a high standard.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	77	55	46
		% retention	72	73	64
		% pass rate	76	65	93
First diploma in caring	2	No. of starts	20	15	14
		% retention	60	73	71
		% pass rate	100	64	90
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	204	243	262
		% retention	96	87	88
		% pass rate	94	90	97
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	54	69	68
		% retention	69	63	66
		% pass rate	91	49	84
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	46	35	44
		% retention	70	83	66
		% pass rate	87	100	89
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	17	123	170
		% retention	88	87	89
		% pass rate	67	27	71

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

Quality of education and training

118. The majority of the teaching is good and students make above-satisfactory progress in just over half the lessons. In the better lessons, teachers use imaginative methods that sustain students' interest and develop their learning more quickly. In one lesson, the teacher used musical instruments to explore the nature of sound and to develop students' analytical skills. Students' responses indicated a good level of understanding, especially in the research they had undertaken on science for children. The teacher related this to their vocational aspirations and to the work they undertake with young children in their work placements by engaging them in a variety of activities, such as creating a three-way telephone system from yoghurt pots. Students enthusiastically engaged in these activities using the scientific principles they had learned. In another lesson, the teacher skilfully used the research students had undertaken on the symptoms and risk factors of a variety of diseases and illnesses to help them to identify generic health issues. Students contributed enthusiastically and asked perceptive questions to ensure they fully understood, often relating the content to their own experiences. In a third of the lessons observed, the teaching was insufficiently

demanding of students and progress in learning was slow.

119. Off-the-job training for work-based learners is of a good standard. Students' portfolios are well organised and presented and contain a rich variety of evidence. On work-based learning, which is sub-contracted, key skills delivery and co-ordination is weak. Some learners have been on programme over a year and have not yet started key skills. In college courses application of number and IT are not made relevant to the vocational curriculum. Teachers are just beginning to introduce IT into their teaching and assignments.

120. Staff are well qualified and experienced. They use their professional experience well to enhance students' learning. Teaching accommodation is good and has attractive displays of students' work reflecting themes in the curriculum and work placements. One teaching room has recently been installed with 12 computers and another with an interactive whiteboard. These are yet to be used to any extent.

121. Assessment is fair and accurate. Students generally receive detailed feedback on their work, which includes how they might improve their grades. There is delay in returning work promptly. Internal verification is effective and thorough for work-based learning.

122. The college offers good progression, from foundation to level 4, which is appropriate for school leavers and adults. Links with the community are effective and productive. They enhance students' learning experience through work placements and the use of speakers with current knowledge of the profession. The college offers many of its courses in community locations and on employers' premises. There has been a large growth in NVQ provision relevant to a wide range of occupational roles. Most employers supporting work-based learners are providing full assessment and training opportunities with suitably qualified staff.

123. Regular visits to the workplace provide good and consistent support to work-based learners. College students value highly the support and encouragement of their mentor. Retention rates have improved on most courses this year. Students also value the support and accessibility of most teachers for guidance. College students are insufficiently aware of their progress. Formal reviews of students' progress are in the very early stages of development, some students have only just had their first review in this academic year and some have yet to receive one. The quality of action planning and target setting varies widely.

Leadership and management

124. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Work-based learning is managed effectively but monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies and practice is poor. This is a totally separate operation from the academy of care skills. Staff here are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are beginning to cohere well as a team. There are regular course and academy meetings at which they are able to make contributions to the decision making process. They are aware of the priority given to improving retention rates, which are monitored formally on a monthly basis. Most of the key weaknesses were identified in the self-assessment report.

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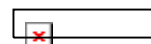
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   good pass rates on foundation diploma and GCE AS fine art

- high standards of work in painting, ceramics and garment construction

- good teaching on part-time courses

- effective additional learning support

- good student progression.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on combined courses

- underdeveloped critical analysis skills

- students make slow progress

- ineffective deployment of resources.

Scope of provision

125. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time provision, with courses available at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced level. Of the 215 full-time students, 87% are aged 16 to 18. There are over 500 part-time students; most are adult learners. Courses include open college units, photography courses, GNVQ foundation and intermediate art and design, NVQ visual art practice and graphic design, and AVCE art and design. National diplomas are offered in a range of art and design subjects together with a pre-degree foundation studies diploma and GCE AS and A-levels. Part-time courses are located at two local schools and in the community. The college is collaborating with one school to develop vocational GCSE art and design. Programmes are developed which respond promptly to local circumstances, such as one with a community arts organisation, where the college is offering training for visual arts practitioners to develop skills as art workers in business.

Achievement and standards

126. Pass rates on the pre-degree foundation studies diploma are very good, and those on the GCE AS fine art course were above average in 2002, at 85%. Pass rates on the two-year photography course have been consistently good for the last two years. On other courses, students are less

successful. In 2002, the pass rate for GNVQ intermediate art and design fell to 63%, well below the national average. Pass rates for GCE A2 art and design were below average, at 81%, but 48% of students received high grades, above the national average of 33%. Poor retention rates on some courses are a continuing trend. Students achieve high standards of work in painting, ceramics and garment construction, and on the GNVQ foundation course. For many students, the challenge of constructing large pottery vessels has been met with confidence and imagination. A foundation student produced jewel-like paintings with brilliant colour juxtapositions derived from overlays of many images. Each stage of the process was well recorded in many brightly coloured workbooks. Some students make slow progress. The quality of work in portfolios and sketchbooks is sometimes derivative. Skills of critical analysis are underdeveloped on national diploma and GCE AS and A-level courses. The attainment and experience of part-time adult learners is well developed.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds 9231 photography (two year)	1	No. of starts	44	56	38
		% retention	59	64	84
		% pass rate	62	77	78
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	21	22	41
		% retention	95	73	73
		% pass rate	90	75	63
National diploma in general art and design / national diploma in fashion and clothing *	3	No. of starts	26	28	14
		% retention	58	75	86
		% pass rate	80	95	92
GCE A-level / A2 art and design	3	No. of starts	27	32	28
		% retention	62	77	96
		% pass rate	85	80	81
GCE AS art studies / fine art	3	No. of starts	9	99	114
		% retention	78	77	81
		% pass rate	86	38	85
National diploma in foundation studies art and design	3	No. of starts	35	32	26
		% retention	89	75	81
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

* national diploma in general art and design changed to national diploma in fashion and clothing in 2002

Quality of education and training

127. Almost all teaching is satisfactory or good. The better teaching takes account of preferred learning styles, stimulates and maintains students' interest and involves small groups as well as individual work. Where students have the opportunity for first-hand visual experiences, high standards of work are produced. For example, students from the pre-degree foundation studies diploma course visited the Nottingham goose fair and GNVQ foundation students visited Broomfield Hall farm as an introduction to their `creatures' project. Teachers are confident and hold the attention of the whole group very effectively to reinforce important points. A good photography lesson in portraiture moved effortlessly from discussing the work of Diane Arbus into a practical session.

Teaching is good on part-time courses. Less successful lessons are structured poorly and lesson plans are not detailed enough. Teachers do not encourage students to extend their ideas beyond merely satisfactory conclusions and some are not asked to critically evaluate their learning. Groups have been combined where there are small numbers enrolled on national diploma and GCE AS and A2 courses and retention rates are lower. Some students make slow progress in combined classes.

128. There are discrepancies between the quality of resources and accommodation between sites. Ceramics, photography and fine art studios at the Pride Parkway site are well managed with good technician support. However, the pottery studio at Prince Charles Avenue is dirty. In the open plan design centre at the Prince Charles Avenue site, noise levels can be unacceptably high with an adverse effect on learning, particularly during presentations. There are insufficient up-to-date specialist books, journals and magazines in the library at Prince Charles Avenue and inter-library loans between sites can take two days. Staff are well qualified and most have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications.

129. Students are well informed about the deadlines for work and assessment. Assessment is effective at all levels, with thorough internal moderation. Work for assessment is presented in a variety of forms, ranging from group critiques, to written work and individual tutorials. Students receive verbal and written feedback and action plans where they have the opportunity to comment. Assessment information is not used to monitor and guide programme development.

130. Students are well supported from their first contact with the college. They receive regular, well-documented individual tutorials. Advice and guidance is readily available through the mentor system, although some students said they would prefer art staff as mentors. There is very good diagnosis of and provision for learning needs and those who receive additional learning support make very good progress. Students from Derby College for Deaf People are successfully integrated on the GNVQ foundation course and ably supported by a communicator. A good range of enrichment activities is available to complement studio experience with frequent visits to major city art galleries and museums.

Leadership and management

131. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good communication between management and staff. Strategies for development are shared, which has led to an improvement in morale. In the self-assessment report and improvement plan, identified action points are not leading to improvements in teaching and learning, lesson plans are not effectively used. There are discrepancies in timetables that frustrate students and teachers. The integration of key skills into courses and the use of value added measures to monitor students' progress are underdeveloped. Management at course level is responsive to the needs of the local community, for example, by providing courses in ceramics for the visually impaired. The curriculum manager is proactive and has established links with a range of external partners such as Derby Arts Forum, Business Link Derby, the Arts in Education Group and the University of Derby's arts advisory board.

Performing arts, media and multimedia
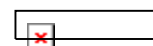
Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- o   high retention rates and pass rates

- o very good and excellent teaching and learning in most subjects

- o high standards of performance and written work

- o very good enrichment opportunities and partnerships with the profession

- o highly effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- o students insufficiently involved in film and multimedia media classes.

Scope of provision

132. The range of courses offered in performing arts, media and mulitmedia is predominantly at levels 2 and 3 and there is a growing number of entry and level 1 courses running under the name `routes to'. There are currently over 200 full-time and nearly 300 part-time students. In 2001, the college did not offer some courses due to falling numbers. It has re-launched the national diploma in performing arts course and offered greater focus on media and multimedia courses. The numbers of students joining full-time courses this college year has risen by 62%. The quality of community links and partnerships is exceptional and provides opportunities for students to perform in venues with professional performers. Popular music students recently took part in a specially commissioned performance with a professional orchestra. There are excellent enrichment opportunities through a wide range of visits, including visits abroad and relevant museum and exhibition visits in this country. Many full-time students study additional courses to gain extra qualifications, for example, a group of music technology students attend the part-time evening vocal technique class.

Achievement and standards

Retention and pass rates are high for performing arts, media and multimedia. Standards of students' work are very good. Retention rates are significantly above national averages, particularly for desktop publishing and GCE A-level film studies. At intermediate level, the performing arts retention rate is 96%. Low retention rates have given concern but college data for the current year indicates a significant improvement, with 100% retention currently on some one-year courses. Pass rates are high, particularly for performing arts level 2, and the national diploma pass rates are good. Pass rates on GCE A-level communication and media were 100% in 2001. Standards of students' work are very good. Written work is well presented and recorded media assignments show high levels of competence. Students are confident performers and some performances in practical rehearsal and performances in dance, drama, voice and popular music are excellent. Staff lead purposeful and energetic sessions. In dance classes, students achieve good technique through the encouragement of their teachers. On a part-time singing course, adult students sang confidently using a microphone for the first time.

A sample of retention and pass rates in performing arts, media and multimedia, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate media and production (one year)	2	No. of starts	15	15	14
		% retention	60	80	69
		% pass rate	89	67	67
Performing arts intermediate	2	No. of starts	*	74	58
		% retention	*	97	100
		% pass rate	*	72	96
GCE A-level film studies (one year)	3	No. of starts	24	21	16
		% retention	75	76	94
		% pass rate	89	81	87
GCE A-level communications and media (two year)	3	No. of starts	34	15	7
		% retention	74	67	71
		% pass rate	86	100	100
National diploma performing arts / AVCE performing arts **	3	No. of starts	13	6	5
		% retention	62	56	100
		% pass rate	100	56	80

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

** national diploma performing arts course changed to AVCE performing arts in 2002
* course did not run

Quality of education and training

133. Teaching and learning are very good in most subjects and some teaching is excellent. In a dance session, the tutor used an excellent combination of demonstration and specific skill and technique coaching to enable students to gain competence in dance techniques. In a GCE AS drama lesson, the teacher skilfully managed a discussion to help students to interpret the personalities of the characters they were developing. In all practical sessions, there are effective warm-up activities, which embrace the theme of the lesson. In a music technology composition lesson, students with little previous composition experience were confident about describing basic rules of harmony and were able to apply these rules to their composition. In a minority of lessons in film and multimedia, teaching is less effective. Lessons are unimaginative and fail to motivate and involve students or extend them. In a number of lessons, students are asked to work in groups but the outcomes of group discussions are not followed up.

134. Specialist resources for performing arts, media and mulitmedia provision at Pride Parkway are of a high standard but there is a shortage of resources at Prince Charles Avenue, which is affecting film studies students. Current arrangements are unsatisfactory. At Pride Parkway, most rooms are well decorated, with up-to-date specialist equipment. The Optimum centre is an excellent drop-in facility for adult part-time multimedia students. Staff have developed specialist software to give access to on-line course materials. This is an exceptional resource. Multimedia students have some lessons taught in shared accommodation at Pride Parkway, where teachers move specialist equipment into the room. Resources are at a lower standard for these students. Many staff have recent industry experience and benefit from regular short industrial secondments. Staff without a teaching qualification are working towards an appropriate qualification.

135. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is effective. Students are clear about what is required of them in assignments. Marking of work is thorough and staff comments are constructive and helpful. There are good arrangements for monitoring students' progress. Music technology

students receive critiques, before assignments are finalised, which are constructive and effective in encouraging improvement. Practical performances are analysed effectively and there are good examples of critical analysis of performance by peers. Relationships between staff and students are constructive and supportive.

136. Advice and guidance are effective. Staff and students speak highly about support arrangements in place. The student mentors provide pastoral and some academic support. They promote the college's group tutorial programme on subjects such as drug awareness and health and safety. Subject tutors provide academic support and there are good links between pastoral and academic tutors.

Leadership and management

137. Leadership and management in performing arts, media and multimedia are good. The vision department is an amalgamation of the subjects taught at the two sites. The strategies to improve recruitment in 2001 are having an effect and student numbers have increased significantly, by 60%. Staff are fully involved in making decisions about future developments of the curriculum and feel that managers are approachable, listen to their views and are active in promoting good practice and continuous improvement. There are many young teachers in the department and managers of the area provide good support for these staff through a system of mentors and learning directors.

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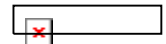
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- o good pass rates for GCE AS and A-level sociology

- o very good retention rates on most GCE A2 courses

- o very good teaching of adult students.

Weaknesses

- o unsatisfactory and poor pass rates on GCE AS courses

- o unsatisfactory in-year retention rates on GCE AS courses in 2002/03

- o much dull and undemanding teaching of students aged 16 to 18

Scope of provision

138. The majority of the 577 students taking GCE AS and A2 courses in geography, history, law, psychology and sociology are aged 16 to 18. More than 40% of these students are studying psychology. There are 12 students following a level 2 course in cultural studies, 35 adult students following evening courses in GCE AS history, law and psychology, and 173 students taking access to HE courses, which are offered during the day and evening and on a full-time or part-time basis. Some 22 students are taking a level 2 bridging course.

Achievement and standards

139. Retention rates are very good on most GCE A-level courses for 2002. Pass rates are good for GCE AS and A-level sociology. Retention rates on GCE AS courses improved last year to well above the national average in history and to around the average in all other subjects. However, between October and March 2003, almost a quarter of GCE AS students withdrew from their course. Some 29% of psychology students withdrew during this period. In contrast, sociology and law have retained all their GCE A-level students over the same period. Pass rates are consistently good for GCE AS sociology. Pass rates have fallen to an unsatisfactory level for history and are consistently poor for geography and law. Progression rates from GCE AS to A2 are low in all subjects. Pass rates on access courses vary from outstanding, for the small number of students on the two-year modular course, to satisfactory on one-year courses and unsatisfactory on the two-year access course. Only 20% of students taking an evening access course completed it in 2002.

140. A few students demonstrate strong analytical skills on paper and the ability to weigh up evidence from different sources, reaching sound conclusions. For the stage of the course reached, many students' grasp of subject specific concepts and terminology is below what is expected.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	71	40	19
		% retention	77	58	89
		% pass rate	60	57	82
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	129	92	44
		% retention	71	62	98
		% pass rate	84	77	74
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	63	39	38
		% retention	73	67	97
		% pass rate	88	85	86
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	90	95
		% retention	*	72	76
		% pass rate	*	82	88
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	127	211
		% retention	*	65	77

		% pass rate	*	71	66
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	*	59	95
		% retention	*	71	80
		% pass rate	*	43	46
Access to HE (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	62	55
		% retention	*	74	67
		% pass rate	*	80	95

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

141. Too little of the teaching of students aged 16 to 18 is better than satisfactory. In many lessons, teachers lack ambition for their students. There is much dull and undemanding teaching that is pitched at too low a standard and pays scant regard to the differing needs of individual students. In GCE AS and A-level geography lessons, students spent time copying very basic notes from the board. In both history and geography lessons, there was over reliance on question and answer, and only rarely did questioning challenge the more able students to think through an idea or patiently encourage the more hesitant to develop a fuller response. In a GCE AS psychology class on intelligence testing, the pace of learning of a lively and interested group of students was slowed down by the teacher choosing to spend twenty minutes reading out pages from the textbook, and then requiring them to re-read. Students lost concentration and few made more than the briefest notes. In contrast, in a very good GCE A-level psychology lesson on the concept of play, students worked through graded individual and small-group exercises in a well-designed workbook. The teacher gave very clear definitions of technical terms and linked their personal experience of play to particular theories. In a good sociology lesson, students worked for a short time in small groups exchanging their views on what constitutes poverty. The teacher provided helpful prompts to the groups that laid the foundation for the next part of the lesson, which introduced sociological studies of absolute and relative poverty. The teaching and learning of adult learners is very good. It is characterised by attention to the individual needs using a variety of learning activities.

142. Students' work is generally marked thoroughly with helpful indications about how to improve. Good use is made in psychology of a marking grid to give students clear feedback on strengths and weaknesses. There is no common marking policy within sociology. On access programmes, students receive encouragement and precise advice on written and oral assignments linked to improving their key skills.

143. There were inconsistencies in the initial guidance of GCE AS students last September, with different entry criteria used. Access students are well guided on to appropriate courses at levels 2 or 3, after diagnostic testing and an introductory programme. Their progress is carefully monitored so they can move forward at the right time for them. In contrast, monitoring and reviewing of the academic progress of students aged 16 to 18 is inadequate. A number of students have not had a progress review this year. Though subject reports are encouraging in tone and some explain how improvements might be made, others simply exhort students to improve and none judge performance relative to the minimum acceptable grade shared with the student at the start of the course. This value added system demotivates students in the way it is delivered by humanities staff. There is little evidence of action planning within individual learning plans, many of which are incomplete. Attendance was low during the week of inspection, averaging 73%, and students' lateness disrupted many lessons.

144. Very few enrichment activities are available. There are no extension classes for more able students. Though subject support workshops were launched in January, they are yet to start in history and geography or have low numbers attending. Law students' subject support is well

attended.

145. Most staff are appropriately qualified. Very few have done training in ILT. IT facilities are very poor on one college site. There was no use made of IT in any lesson during the inspection week, nor any reference to on-line materials. Libraries at both sites contain a large stock of relevant textbooks but little multimedia material. Many classrooms are light and spacious and enlivened with subject displays.

Leadership and management

146. Overall curriculum management is unsatisfactory. Not all course teams hold regular minuted meetings. There is no thorough analysis of performance at course level. The self-assessment reports of courses where there are serious weaknesses, for example, geography and law, lack rigour. Failing courses are not specifically monitored and supported by managers. Teaching and learning are not always planned in sufficient detail in schemes of work. References in these planning documents to students' activity, to differentiation, to key skills and to the use of IT are often perfunctory. The overall humanities self-assessment report clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses and the action plan shows a determination to tackle some of the issues. In the short time since the merger, the humanities academy has become a cohesive unit with good communications and supportive management from the lead director.

Foundation literacy and numeracy
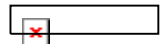
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   comprehensive initial assessment

- o   progression from entry to higher levels

- o   very effective mentoring system

- o   good behaviour management.

- o   good development of self-esteem and social skills.

Weaknesses

- o   inadequate targets for literacy and numeracy

- o poor planning of lessons to meet all students' needs

- o too few suitably qualified basic skills staff.

Scope of provision

147. Literacy and numeracy provision is provided through two academies. The academy of developmental skills manages the areas of basic skills, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), key skills and additional support. The academy for craft skills and services manages the `routes to' programme that aims to help disaffected young people to progress to suitable vocational courses. `Routes to' courses have a core of literacy and numeracy combined with a vocational strand that is taught in the relevant vocational area. Application of number and IT key skills are taught by developmental skills staff but communication key skills are largely taught in the vocational area. Students study literacy and numeracy from pre-entry level up to level 2 and accreditation is available through key skills and the adult basic skills framework. There is also innovative community provision for adults.

Achievement and standards

148. Judgements about trends over time in retention and pass rates are not possible. Data amalgamated from the three former colleges can not be attributed reliably to individual courses, some of which have changed due to the development of the adult basic skills core curriculum. In-year retention rates for literacy and numeracy courses in 2002/03 are good, with some at 100% and most above 80%.

149. There is insufficient use of data from the comprehensive initial assessment to develop literacy and numeracy targets in students' individual learning plans. Monitoring of achievement and progress is often concerned about personal skills and the completion of assignments and does not usually record specific progress in literacy and numeracy. However, students do make progress in literacy and numeracy and levels of achievement in lessons are mainly satisfactory. Some students have insufficient demands made on them in literacy and numeracy lessons and do not reach their full potential. They are often unclear about the qualification they are working towards and the standard they need in order to be successful.

150. The quality and standard of students' work is variable, but there is some outstanding coursework in routes to leisure, tourism and sport. Attendance and punctuality are regularly monitored through an effective mentoring system. Students gain confidence and self-esteem, and develop good personal and social skills during their time at college.

Quality of education and training

151. Most lessons are satisfactory or better. Teachers are highly motivated and have recently undertaken significant staff development activities to introduce the adult basic skills curriculum. However, much of the training is at an introductory level and some staff lack a deep understanding of how students learn in the early stages of literacy, language and number development.

152. In better lessons, teachers have good behaviour management strategies and encourage students to become independent learners; for example, teachers reinforce classroom rules at the start of lessons, encourage students to collect their own files, organise their work and encourage good interpersonal relationships. In one lesson, these strategies established a calm, mature atmosphere in which students demonstrated a good understanding of democracy through well-

managed discussions. Good lessons also employ a variety of strategies to improve literacy, for example, gapped handouts and good question and answer techniques that develop concepts and language. Satisfactory teaching is assignment led and relies on the interpersonal skills of the teacher to encourage students to make progress. For example, students with a wide range of abilities were given identical learning materials and activities and were only able to complete activities with considerable support from teachers.

153. Initial assessments of literacy, numeracy and learning style during induction are not used to inform teaching or set targets in individual learning plans. Teachers set targets associated with assignments and review these regularly, but assignments are not always vocationally focussed. Quality assurance of assessment is well managed. Resources and classroom accommodation are satisfactory and are being developed at Pride Parkway and Broomfield. Wall displays of students' work are good and the developmental skills workshop area is well resourced.

154. There are clear progression routes from entry to higher levels. Innovative community and employer projects help to widen participation for young people and adults.
Some 87 `routes to' students progressed to higher level college courses in 20002/03. An adult class for women is based in the nursery that their children attend. This is very successful with all learners who show much improved self-esteem; most are progressing to other FE, HE and training. Other community provision provides single-sex groups in minority ethnic community centres and on-site provision for large local employers.

155. Students speak highly of both the study and personal support that they receive. In particular, the mentoring system supports students with complex social and emotional needs. In one-to-one tutorials with mentors, students show pride and ownership of their negotiated targets. These range from strategies for getting up in the morning to renting and furnishing accommodation.

Leadership and management

156. Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. The developmental skills academy manages cross-college literacy, numeracy and key skills provision. A lead director has recently been appointed and the operational manager has begun to implement an innovative strategy to integrate key and basic skills provision. All full-time students on level 1 courses have access to the basic skills core curriculum and level 2 students have key skills that meet national specifications; the same accreditation route is being developed for both sets of students to allow for clear progression. The model of one basic skills specialist and one key skills specialist in each academy is also being introduced. The overall strategy for the management of key skills is clear and working well in some curriculum areas; however, the links to basic skills lack clarity and adult basic skills provision is underdeveloped.

Foundation provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
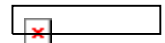
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o good progression

- o good range of provision for students

o good management of discrete provision

o good support for students with hearing impairment.

Weaknesses

o little use of initial assessment for target setting in individual learning plans

o insufficient differentiation to meet complex learning needs in discrete provision

o ineffective communication between specialist teams and vocational teachers

o insufficient specialist additional support for students with complex learning needs.

Scope of provision

157. The college provides a good range of programmes which are designed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with multiple and profound disabilities, people on the autistic spectrum and those with sensory impairment. Programmes are offered in ways that enable students to follow a good range of core units and vocational options. Provision starts at pre-entry level and students can progress through a variety of modules to entry level 3. There are currently 19 students on the pre-entry initial pathways course and 52 students on the entry level links provision. All students have the opportunity to gain unit certification. In addition, there are 290 students across the college with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are receiving additional learning support. Discrete provision is located in the academy of vocational skills with vocational options located in the appropriate academy. Additional support is located in the academy of developmental skills.

Achievement and standards

158. Judgements about trends over time are not possible. Data have been amalgamated from the three merged colleges and it is not possible to reliably attribute retention and pass rates to individual courses.

159. Students make good progress and achieve a good range of externally accredited unit certificates. In 2002, individual students achieved between 1 and 19 open college units. Portfolios of students' work are well organised to support external accreditation. Practical project work produced on some courses is of a good standard. For example, entry level woodwork students make birdhouses for sale and pre-entry ceramics students produce well-made pottery items. Those who have experienced problems in being with others learn to accept their presence and develop confidence. Some students on mainstream provision, receiving additional support, improve their

grades. For example, one student with dyslexia on a level 3 course who had previously received referrals had, through the support, achieved several recent merits.

160. Progression between pre-entry and entry level courses and on to foundation provision is good. In 2002, 60% of students progressed from pre-entry to entry level programmes. In addition, 24% of entry level students progressed to full-time foundation level courses within the college. A further 21% moved into full-time or part-time employment, whilst 18% progressed to further training. Attendance and retention rates are satisfactory, although punctuality is affected adversely by those students relying on external transport agencies.

Quality of education and training

161. The majority of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is very good in a minority of classes, where lessons are well planned, based on the particular needs of individual students and with clear strategies to support independent learning. For example, in an entry level woodwork class, a series of jigs have been produced by the teacher which students use to independently and safely construct their projects. In this lesson, activities were practical and demanding, with good individual instruction in the use of equipment. In a pre-entry ceramics class, a sequenced pictorial handout for students with severe and profound learning difficulties reinforced independent preparation on entry to the workshop. Other teaching is less well planned and does not take sufficient account of the needs of individual learners. Many staff do not have a clear understanding of how to differentiate activities and learning resources to meet students' individual needs and promote independence. Some of this teaching is uninspiring, with teachers relying too much on group and individual activities that fail to engage the interest of students.

162. Initial assessment for students on discrete provision is not effective in identifying individual needs. Initial assessment is not used enough to develop clear and challenging targets in students' individual learning plans. Targets for personal and social development are insufficiently clear. Individual targets are not strengthened through progress reviews. Students with sensory impairment or profound and complex disabilities may be assessed through specialist external agencies. Information from initial and specialist assessment is not always communicated effectively to the relevant vocational course staff. The outcomes of these assessments are, therefore, not always used to modify teaching and learning methods or to focus the work of the learning facilitator. Pastoral support for students on discrete courses is good. The recently introduced role of the mentor is being developed within discrete provision to enhance support for personal development and to promote inclusion within the college environment.

163. Only one member of staff on the additional support team is qualified to administer dyslexia assessments and to produce reports for examination concessions. There are too few people on the cross-college support team with the qualifications and expertise to provide specialist advice and guidance to staff on how to meet the needs of students with a range of complex and profound disabilities. In addition, most additional support is provided by staff who do not always have the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to effectively meet the needs of the students they are supporting. Insufficient staff training has been provided for additional support staff and vocational staff. However, note-taking support is satisfactory. Good support is provided by external specialist agencies for students with hearing impairment. A number of staff in the college have sign language qualifications and are competent in signed communication.

Leadership and management

164. The discrete provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities. The core staff work well as a team and communications are good with managers. There are weekly informal meetings and monthly formal team meetings. Staff are aware of areas requiring development. Self-assessment meetings take place every half term and improvements have taken place since September 2002, when the team was formed. Teaching observation has been introduced but is insufficiently rigorous. The management of cross-college additional support lacks coherence, with many informal management structures. There is no formal observation or review of the quality of the additional support provided. Little formal training has been undertaken with learning facilitators and there are some variations in the quality of this

support provided within classes. Some learning facilitators provide too much support, others take too passive a role within the class, whilst others provide a satisfactory level of support.
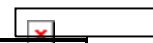
Part D: College data
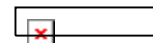
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age
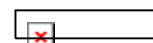
Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	29	36
2	40	38
3	23	13
4/5	0	1
Other	8	12
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	2,823	1,987	8
Land-based provision	288	511	1
Construction	419	1,254	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	623	896	3
Business administration, management and professional	769	5,213	11
Information and communication technology	1,990	9,146	20
Retailing, customer service and transportation	220	1,614	3
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	1,928	5,711	13
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	249	461	1

Health, social care and public services	1,259	6,081	13
Visual and performing arts and media	1,363	1,271	5
Humanities	1,098	927	4
English, languages and communication	1,446	1,373	5
Foundation programmes	2,724	3,010	10
Total	**17,199**	**39,455**	**100**

Source: provided by the college in spring 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	**2000**	**2001**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**
1	Starters excluding transfers	2,270	4,287	3,384	3,299	6,280	5,387
	Retention rate (%)	79	72	67	69	74	67
	National average (%)	80	80	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	59	79	66	66	70	47
	National average (%)	59	65	68	60	66	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,555	2,929	3,731	3,135	3,990	5,966
	Retention rate (%)	75	74	71	72	78	71
	National average (%)	76	76	76	79	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	62	70	60	61	66	57
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,389	2,153	2,692	2,505	3,295	3,037
	Retention rate (%)	74	74	74	77	76	74
	National average (%)	75	76	77	78	78	78
	Pass rate (%)	70	77	73	66	69	58
	National average (%)	72	74	76	62	66	69

4/5	Starters excluding transfers	6	6	1	140	230	139
	Retention rate (%)	100	83	*	86	88	80
	National average (%)	83	79	82	84	81	84
	Pass rate (%)	100	50	*	58	42	31
	National average (%)	64	66	55	56	56	53

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1999 to 2001: College ISR.

* data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	66	30	4	119
Level 2 (intermediate)	58	34	8	65
Level 1 (foundation)	78	22	0	27
Other sessions	44	47	9	34
Totals	**62**	**33**	**5**	**245**

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