

## Peter Symonds College

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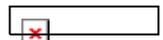
**Basic information about the college**



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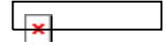
Name of college:	Peter Symonds College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Neil Hopkins
Address of college:	Owens Road Winchester Hampshire SO22 6RX
Telephone number:	01962 852764
Fax number:	01962 849372
Chair of governors:	E M Harrison
Unique reference number:	130708
Name of reporting inspector:	Alex Falconer HMI
Dates of inspection:	1-5 November 2004

**Part A: Summary**



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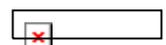
## Information about the college



Peter Symonds College is a sixth form college. Prior to September 1974, Peter Symonds was a boys' grammar school with origins traceable back to Christes Hospital in the 17th century. The current mission states 'the college values individuals, responds to learning needs and seeks quality'. The central ethos of the college and its official motto is 'counting in ones'. The college draws the majority of its students from the Winchester area. However, around 12% of the students come from across the rest of Hampshire and Wiltshire. The college has grown substantially over the past three years. In 2004, the total number of students aged 16 to 18 was 2,615. This represents a 15% growth over the last three years. The number of Learning and Skills Council (LSC)-funded, part-time adults enrolled has increased from around 1,600 to 2,600 in the past three years. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds constitute 2.8% of the college community. This is similar to the Winchester area where 2.5% of the population have minority ethnic origins.

The college's main site, which caters for students aged 16 to 18, is close to the centre of Winchester. On this site, there is residential accommodation for 80 boarders, of whom approximately 20 come from the Falkland Islands. The college's other site, the adult and continuing education centre, is at Weeke, three quarters of a mile from the main campus. Provision for students aged 16 to 18 extends from entry level to advanced extension awards, but the vast majority of courses are at advanced level. Around 97% of students aged 16 to 18 take advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level), general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses. Provision for adults ranges from basic skills through to foundation degrees. In addition, the college runs a Learndirect centre at its adult campus in Weeke. The college also offers a foundation degree in health and social care in partnership with the University of Southampton. Full-cost, short training courses for local employers, such as information technology (IT) and customer services are offered through the college's business development unit.

## How effective is the college?



The quality of teaching and the achievements of students are outstanding in science, mathematics, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, humanities, law, psychology and sociology and English, communications and modern foreign languages. Teaching and achievements are good in business administration and professional studies information and communications technology (ICT). The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- students' outstanding achievements
  
- excellent teaching and learning
  
- excellent strategic and curriculum management

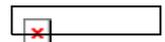
- outstanding leadership and governance
- students' outstanding progression to higher education (HE)
- outstanding guidance and support for students
- very good financial management
- excellent quality assurance and self-assessment
- successful estate management
- outstanding enrichment activities.

***What should be improved***

- the cramped accommodation in a minority of lessons.

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**

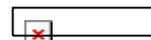


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
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Science	<b>Outstanding.</b> Pass rates in biology, chemistry and physics are very high. There are good retention rates on all courses. There is much innovative and stimulating teaching supported by good use of information and learning technology (ILT). Students benefit from effective assessment and monitoring. Curriculum management is very good.
Mathematics	<b>Outstanding.</b> Teaching is good and resources are excellent. There are very high levels of retention and pass rates. ILT is well used to promote learning and to motivate students. Curriculum management is excellent.
Business administration, management and professional studies	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses are high. Good and interesting teaching promotes learning. Assessment and monitoring of students' work are highly effective. Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities. There are declining pass rates on AS-level business studies.
Information and communications technology	<b>Good.</b> Retention rates are high. There are excellent pass rates on GCE A-level and vocational courses. Students benefit from much good teaching, and assessment and monitoring of progress. Pass rates in AS-level ICT are declining.
Sports, leisure and travel	<b>Outstanding.</b> Pass rates are outstanding and students achieve significantly above their predicted grades. Teaching and learning are very good. Practical facilities are excellent, but some rooms are cramped. Support for individual students is highly effective and curriculum management is very good.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Outstanding.</b> There are outstanding pass and retention rates and very good teaching leads to high-quality learning. Visual arts workshops are cramped. Students are given excellent guidance and their progress is closely monitored. There is strong curriculum leadership and management which is effective in raising standards.
Humanities	<b>Outstanding.</b> Students work well and achieve excellent results on all courses. Support for students is very good and retention rates are very high. Teaching is stimulating and students enjoy their learning, contributing well in lessons. Curriculum management is strong and promotes teamwork and high standards.
Law, psychology and sociology	<b>Outstanding.</b> There are high pass rates on most courses. Teaching is very good. Teachers provide excellent support for students. A good variety of methods and ILT are effectively used to stimulate and inspire students. Subjects and courses are well managed.
English, communications and modern foreign languages	<b>Outstanding.</b> Retention and pass rates are outstanding. Teaching is lively and enthusiastic and motivates students. Assessment, support and guidance are excellent. There is strong leadership and good management.

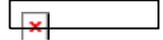
### How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are outstanding. Strategic planning and communications are very good and the college is well led. Teaching is outstanding and students enjoy their learning. Quality assurance and self-assessment processes are outstanding. Curriculum management is excellent. There are good and diverse staff development opportunities. The college is supported by a highly

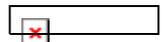
of the local community. Financial planning and management of resources are good and the college achieves good value for money.

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



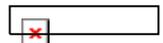
The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. The needs of full-time and part-time students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including mental health difficulties, are met effectively. Close partnership working with external organisations ensures that relevant courses are provided for adults who are not normally involved in education. Innovative programmes successfully encourage adults to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. There is good access to almost all areas of the college for students with mobility difficulties. Relevant staff training on aspects of equality and diversity takes place annually. The college routinely monitors student participation and progress by gender, disability and ethnic background. It has a comprehensive race equality policy and implementation plan and fully complies with the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). The addressing of equality and diversity issues is being developed in the curriculum across the college. Investigations into complaints are not always sufficiently thorough. The proportion of students and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly larger than in the local population.

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



Guidance and support are outstanding. The information, advice and guidance provided prior to enrolment for all students are very good. Initial guidance is particularly helpful for students with complex support needs. Initial assessment of individual support needs is thorough. Induction is informative and comprehensive. Personal support is excellent for students aged 16 to 18 and student support services are particularly well used and valued. Welfare, counselling and general help, including health and other advice, is readily available. Personal support for adults is very good. Learning support for students with dyslexia is outstanding. Students receive effective learning support in lessons, during individual appointments and in workshops. Training for guidance and support staff is very good. Learning support staff provide clear guidelines on students' individual needs. The tutorial curriculum is well planned and managed. Students receive very good support from the careers service when applying to HE or for employment. The system of monitoring attendance and reporting to teachers, tutors and parents is effective and attendance is very good.

### **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***

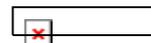
- the wide range of enrichment activities, especially trips, visits and fieldwork

- being treated with respect and as an adult
- friendly, supportive and approachable tutors
- good teaching
- good careers and HE advice
- the excellent facilities, especially the intranet
- the views of the students are listened to.

***What they feel could be improved***

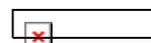
- the cramped accommodation and large class sizes
- too rigorous monitoring of absence
- the cost of food in the refectory
- timetabling
- deadlines for coursework
- insufficient car parking.

## Other information



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

## Part B: The college as a whole



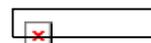
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & 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	88	11	1
19+ and WBL*	83	17	0
Learning 16-18	87	12	1
19+ and WBL*	67	33	0

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

\*work-based learning

## Achievement and standards



1. The standards of students' achievements are very high. Around 98% of the full-time students in the college are aged 16 to 19, the majority of whom are enrolled on AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Retention rates for these students have been very high and well above national averages for the past three years. Pass rates have also been at or above national averages. The percentage of students awarded A or B grades at AS level and GCE A level has been consistently high. Retention and pass rates on level 1 courses have been well above national averages for three years. In 2003, the level 2 overall pass rate for adults dipped below the national average, but recovered again in 2004. The retention rate for adult students on level 3 fell below the national

level 3 courses progress to HE each year.

### **16 to 18 year olds**

2. The performance of students aged 16 to 18 at GCE A level has been consistently good for the past three years. In 2004, three quarters of the GCE A-level subjects offered by the college had pass rates of 98% or better. A large proportion of students achieve high grades; just over half at A or B. Pass rates on advanced vocational courses are outstanding. On all five AVCE courses in 2004 students obtained 100% pass rates and over 60% were awarded high grades. At AS level, pass rates have also been very good for the last three years. In 2004, the overall pass rate was 93% which is 8% above the national average. Students taking general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate or general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses also achieved pass rates well above the national averages. Overall, these results are well above the national average for sixth form colleges.

3. The college has a good reputation for the quality of its provision and high examination successes. The college accepts students with five A\* to C GCSE grades on to advanced programmes. However, two thirds of the intake each year have considerably more than the required five A\* to C passes. Analysis of added value data shows that, on average, students taking GCE A-level programmes achieve better results than those predicted on the basis of their prior attainment. Most students taking AS-level courses achieve results at or above those predicted from their GCSE results. In addition, those taking vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 achieve grades well above those predicted from their achievement on entry to the college.

4. Students take part in a very wide range of enrichment activities. Many students regularly take part in sporting activities and the college fields teams in, for example, football, rugby, cricket, basketball, hockey, badminton, netball and tennis. College teams won national championships in hockey and badminton in 2004. Music performances, in addition to termly concerts, are staged weekly and individual and ensemble work is of a very high standard. In addition, drama and dance students regularly perform both at college, such as the summer outdoor Shakespeare performance, and in the local community. Other activities range from the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme to the Global Rock challenge and self-defence. The student council plays an active role in college life and has been successful in fund raising for charity and representing students' views to management.

5. Around 87% of students go on to HE each year and a further 7% start art foundation courses. The college has an impressive record in helping students to gain entrance to Oxford and Cambridge universities; for example, 49 students gained places in 2004. Students are well prepared for HE and demonstrate good independent study skills.

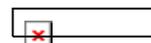
6. The college is committed to key skills development and all first-year students attend a key skills lesson each week. A handbook for key skills gives clear guidelines for students and staff. Considerable improvements have been made in the achievement of qualifications at levels 2 and 3. The number of students who achieved a key skills qualification increased from 75 in 2002 to 1,295 in 2004. In ICT, 43% of students achieved at level 2 and 48% at level 3 in 2004, considerably above national averages. Effective planning includes improved initial assessment and close monitoring of attendance in key skills lessons. Help from workshops is offered three times a week. A wide range of learning materials on the key skills intranet site is well used by students. The integration of communications and application of number into students' courses has helped to achieve earlier completion of portfolios. Teachers provide good support to students who do not always see the benefit of key skills.

### **Adult learners**

7. Since the last inspection in 1999, there has been an increase in the number of part-time courses for adults. LSC-funded enrolments for level 1 courses were 2,080 in 2003 and rose to 2,580 in 2004. Many adults also take part in non-accredited courses especially in ICT and modern foreign languages. Retention rates are high for level 1 courses which account for the majority of adult students. Pass rates on level 1 courses are also good and have been above national averages for

the past three years; in 2004, the overall rate was 95%. However, on the National Skill Profile short course in IT, the pass rate was low in 2003, but recovered in 2004. On level 2 courses, pass rates are good and have improved over three years whilst retention rates dipped to below national average in 2003.

## Quality of education and training



8. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and attainment in 164 graded lessons, 5 tutorials and a small number of one-to-one meetings and coaching sessions. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 88% of lessons, satisfactory in nearly 12% and less than satisfactory in less than 1%. This represents a 10% increase in the good or better teaching sessions since the last inspection in 1999. The best teaching is in mathematics, sciences, sport and English and modern foreign languages. There is little difference in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons that deal with theory, those that are mainly practical work or those that are a mixture of both. Average attendance was 90% which is 2% lower than that observed in 1999, but 5% above the three-year average for sixth form colleges.

9. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of teaching and learning activities to engage the interest of students. Teachers are confident, have good subject knowledge and effectively plan lessons that meet the needs of individuals and course requirements. Good use is made of ICT to enhance learning. Learning objectives are clear and shared with the students. Teachers have high expectations of their students and actively use question and answer techniques to encourage students' contributions. The result is that students demonstrate good analytical skills, enjoy their studies and work well with each other in groups. However, in a small number of lessons, insufficient account is taken of the range of students' abilities and as a result some students make less progress. Learning was good or better in just over 85% of the lessons observed, satisfactory in 14% and unsatisfactory in less than 1%. Learning was best at level 3, the vast majority of the observed lessons. At level 2, learning was good or better in 70% of sessions. In the small number of level 1 lessons observed, learning was judged to be good or better in 50%.

10. Teachers are highly qualified and experienced in their subjects and almost all hold teaching qualifications. Many staff have other roles which are highly beneficial to students and provide excellent professional development. These include working with national awarding bodies as external examiners and moderators, undertaking lesson observations in other colleges and demonstrating subject expertise through writing books and publishing articles. Staff training occurs frequently and enables college objectives and individual development needs to be met.

11. The college provides a very pleasant and attractive environment for day, evening and boarding students. The grounds of the main campus are spacious and include a number of sports fields, an area for outdoor drama productions and external social areas. Shops, vending machines and refectories are conveniently located around the two main college sites. The large, modern student services reception is well positioned at the entrance to the new student lounge. The adult education centre is very welcoming and attractive. Most teaching rooms are modern, well equipped with ILT and contain informative wall displays. The science laboratories, sports, media, drama and music facilities are particularly good. Accommodation for a minority of lessons is too small for the numbers of students present and the art area contains too limited a range of resources in workshops. Students make good use of the very well-equipped learning resource centre. It is open for long hours throughout most of the college year. The extensive and popular DVD and video collection supports students studying and researching different subjects. Technical support is readily available to students using the IT drop-in centres. A wide selection of newspapers, journals and books are available and frequently borrowed. Students routinely use the specialist resource bases and project rooms in some areas of learning. The good stock of learning and assessment materials on the college intranet can be accessed by students from home and at college. Regional awards have been won for the college's basic skills materials used by adult students. All courses and important facilities

of the college are accessible to students with mobility difficulties.

12. Assessment and monitoring of students' learning are very good. Procedures for assessment are clearly defined and rigorous, particularly for students aged 16 to 18. Guidelines for the management of assessment, verification and moderation are thorough and consistent. Assessment is well planned and students are aware of the appeals procedures. Regular standardisation meetings are held for courses for students aged 16 to 18 and for courses for adults. When issues are identified in external reports, prompt action is taken.

13. Initial assessment is thorough. Interviews prior to admission include a diagnostic assessment of individual learning and support needs. Teachers set challenging individual targets in progress reviews for students aged 16 to 18. These course targets are highly specific and students are aware of their learning goals. Parents are regularly informed about students' progress. Students are clear about assessment criteria in work set and how target minimum grades are used to measure their performance. Coursework is consistently well marked with constructive comments. Homework is set regularly, returned promptly and cross moderated by other teachers.

14. There is some inconsistency in the rigour of targets set in learning support plans, where there is insufficient liaison between subject teachers and learning support. Short-course objectives are clearly defined for part-time adult students. However, target setting is weaker in some adult learning plans.

15. Curriculum planning takes careful account of local needs for both students aged 16 to 18 and for adults. Feedback from students, market analysis and discussions with a range of external organisations help the college to identify changing needs.

16. A full analysis of student destinations is also undertaken and used effectively to shape the curriculum offer.

17. The college mainly provides courses at levels 1 to 3, with very small provision at level 4. The curriculum is socially inclusive and students with mobility difficulties are able to gain access to all areas of learning. The great majority of full-time courses are at level 3 and taken by students aged 16 to 18. They include 43 AS-level and GCE A-level courses, AVCEs and a Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national certificate. A wide range of courses is provided in humanities. In mathematics, a large proportion of students continue to study at GCE A level after AS level. The range of provision in other subjects at level 3 is good. A small number of full-time students study at levels 1 and 2. Recently, one student who came to the college for level 1 study has progressed successfully on to university. All level 2 students have appropriate work experience integrated into their programmes.

18. The range of enrichment activities is outstanding. The rich and varied programme is very well attended by students. Sporting, cultural and subject related activities are well managed and resourced. A good number of visits are made to America and Europe. Field trips and visits in the United Kingdom are highly effective and sometimes fundamentally change students' attitudes. Visiting speakers are also well used.

19. Innovative approaches, including close work with partners, at the adult and community education centre have successfully involved adults who are not normally engaged in education. Local adult males have been targeted effectively in order to develop their basic skills. Adult students have excellent opportunities to learn flexibly. Part-time courses cover many subjects and are available at levels 1 to 3. They are held during the daytime, evenings and weekends at college and at a useful range of community settings. Courses are also provided for employers and at employers' premises.

20. Guidance and support for students are outstanding. These services are well planned and managed effectively. The college has a shared priority of enabling individuals to achieve full potential on their chosen courses and of developing their wider skills and abilities. Arrangements for recruiting and supporting students are responsive to the needs of individuals, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Learning support staff visit specialist schools in Year 9 linking with

prospective students and their parents to inform and advise them on opportunities. Information is clear and thorough for all students. Well-attended open days and taster days are held and a range of information is made available in booklets, on CD-ROM and on the college Internet site. Specific information is made available for adult students and for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Advice and guidance are impartial and effective. Retention rates of full-time students are excellent. Of all students aged 16 to 18 enrolled in September 2003, there were only 65 students who transferred to different courses. Very good support is given to these students in workshops and teachers give individual help in their own time to enable them to catch up with the coursework they have missed.

21. Induction programmes are well planned and informative. Improvements have been made to incorporate the student handbook into a useful diary that also gives general information on matters such as equal opportunities, health and safety and the student charter.

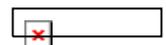
22. Initial assessment of support needs is thorough. Students are referred for further diagnostic tests by specialists where appropriate, most frequently for dyslexia. Students with sensory and physical disabilities are well catered for. Effective links with external agencies ensure best practice is followed in providing for students with complex needs. Laptops are provided and appropriate adaptations are made for those with sensory, learning or physical disabilities. Students receive particularly good support from the careers service. Students make individual appointments with a Connexions personal advisor based in college and there are no waiting lists. Particularly good support is given with applications to HE.

23. In the current year, 2004/05, 347 students are receiving learning support of some kind. Support for these students is outstanding. It is well planned and co-ordinated. Full-time students receive highly effective learning support in lessons, at individual appointments with teachers in free time, and in workshops. A drop-in learning support workshop is available throughout the working day. However, although this is well used by students, attendance is not well monitored. The impact of learning support is now being measured.

24. Training for guidance and support staff is very good. Learning support staff are well qualified and experienced. However, in a few lessons, the contribution from learning support assistants is not always fully utilised. Lesson plans do not always include specific activities for the support assistant to cover, and insufficient briefing takes place. Information provided by teachers to learning support tutors on future work to be covered is inconsistent. Subject teachers receive clear guidelines on their students' individual needs when a student is referred to learning support.

25. The tutorial curriculum for students aged 16 to 18 is well planned and managed, and is integral to the overall approach to student learning and support. Tutors offer good personal support and guidance in two half-hour sessions each week. Lead tutors take prompt and effective action to respond to concerns of students and teachers. They monitor absence and involve teachers and parents in providing jointly agreed plans for improvement or arrange support that is sensitive to the young person's needs. The college takes steps to ensure that all aspects of its child protection policy are implemented.

## **Leadership and management**



26. Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the last inspection in 1999, the college has put considerable effort into maintaining its excellent reputation. The areas identified as needing improvement have been dealt with effectively. Quality assurance is more rigorous; students' achievements have been maintained at high levels and new buildings added to meet changing curricula and the continued growth in student enrolments. Governors, staff and students celebrate the college's motto 'counting in ones'. Individuals are valued and encouraged to grow. Levels of student and staff satisfaction are high and the college is categorised as excellent by the local LSC.

27. The principal and the senior managers constitute a highly effective team. They share a common sense of purpose and put students and their achievements first in all that they do. There is an open style of management and the principal is seen as an effective leader. The management structure is clear and lines of accountability are short. Strong curriculum and administrative teams have been built and staff morale is high.

28. Teaching and learning are outstanding in seven curriculum areas and good in two. As a result, retention and pass rates have been maintained at high levels over the past four years. Pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level courses are very good and the proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who obtain A and B grades is well above the national average. The proportion of students progressing to HE each year is excellent and 49 students went on the study at Oxford or Cambridge in 2004. Inspectors were impressed by students' enthusiastic involvement in their learning. Staff set challenging targets for students. There is an uncompromising expectation that significant value will be added to students' prior achievements.

29. Strategic planning is excellent. The recent review of the college's mission was informed by consultation with staff, governors and local partners. In addition annual local needs analyses, self-assessments from college teams and local LSC priorities such as widening participation, meeting employers' needs and improving students' achievements were all taken into account. The new three-year strategic plan created by governors and staff is well written and provides a sound basis for development and planning for the college. The plan is comprehensive and details the college's current market position and its development priorities as well as outlining the associated resource implications. An annual operational plan is also prepared which successfully enables managers and teams to monitor progress on strategic priorities.

30. Communication within the college is highly effective. Staff are well informed through weekly briefings, bulletins and an intranet. Line managers, including senior staff, are accessible and supportive. There is regular contact between senior managers, team leaders and departmental staff. Task groups and committees effectively draw their membership from all sections of the college. Part-time staff are paid to attend meetings and in-service training and are kept up to date through e-mail. The student council is very active and is involved in a range of social events and fund raising for charity as well as representing students' opinions to the staff. Students' views are systematically collected through surveys and taken into account.

31. Curriculum teams are well organised and curriculum management is excellent. Learning is well planned and teams meet regularly to share good practice and to monitor students' progress. Teachers are thoroughly familiar with the quality assurance procedures and timetables and produce thoughtful course reviews with realistic action plans to address identified weaknesses. There are very high standards of support and guidance for students and the tutorial programme is well organised. Students with special needs or with physical disabilities are well supported as are any students who require learning support. In a recent survey, 98% of the students aged 16 to 18 said they would recommend the college to others.

32. There is an ethos of commitment to equality, diversity and meeting the needs of the local community. Implementation is overseen effectively by committees for staff and students. Promoting equality and diversity is a specific objective for the heads of faculty, each of whom is supported by an equal opportunities project manager. There are student groups for disability and race relations and a quiet room for prayer and reflection. Close links are maintained with local special schools. Prospective students with special needs are contacted in Year 9 and later offered taster days. Outreach programmes for adults, organised in partnership with voluntary and statutory organisations, promote good parenting and social inclusion. The college has responded effectively to the requirements of Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000, and SENDA legislation. There are associated staff development programmes. Some 92% of the college's buildings are accessible to those with physical disabilities. Complaints are systematically recorded, but not always investigated with sufficient thoroughness.

33. The college engages in a wide variety of educational and other partnerships. The principal is a board member for the Association of Colleges and the Universities Central Admissions System (UCAS). The college collaborates effectively with other further education (FE) providers through a

number of local initiatives. These include the External Quality Review scheme and the college leads a Hampshire colleges value added development. In addition, the college received a national award for its partnership with the Science Museum and a local IT firm to develop a science website for the Making of the Modern World project. Through 16 to 18 vocational and adult programmes, there are extensive contacts with public and private employers and community organisations which ensure the relevance of the curriculum in meeting identified needs. Relationships with local secondary schools are good and the college is currently involved in 14 to 16 enrichment activities for local pupils in Year 11.

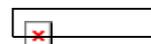
34. Governance of the college is outstanding. The corporation members are well informed, highly capable and work well together in committee. The broad range of skills they bring help them to take a balanced view of the issues facing the college. Members are representative of the college, the students and the local community. The chair and clerk ensure that business is efficiently conducted through a planned annual cycle. Equality and diversity issues are considered conscientiously. Governors are fully involved in strategic, curriculum and financial planning and in risk management. They are involved in the college's self-assessment process and carefully review targets for financial performance, recruitment, attendance, retention and pass rates. The corporation expects managers to take prompt actions to address weak performance. Skills audits inform recruitment of new governors who then receive effective induction. Governors evaluate their own performance effectively and attendance at meetings is very good. However, governors do not receive monthly management accounts, only bimonthly, nor do they receive any analysis of staff absence rates.

35. Staff value the good and diverse staff development opportunities. A well-constructed annual staff development plan results from the college objectives, curriculum self-assessment reports and needs identified in individual appraisals. There is careful evaluation of outcomes. Managers are actively encouraged to develop leadership, management and technical skills. The college leads a partnership of 22 providers developing value added measures for vocational courses. It makes a significant contribution to sharing good practice in the sector. The college runs a well-organised and effective appraisal scheme for staff. For teachers, this incorporates national criteria for performance management. There are supportive induction arrangements for new staff and newly qualified teachers. The college's Investor in People status was renewed in 2003.

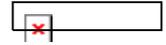
36. Quality assurance is rigorous. Course reviews are effective in critically evaluating relevant issues and focus on the quality of teaching and learning. There is a confident self-critical culture and unremitting commitment to continuous improvement. College policies and procedures are robust, clear and consistently applied across the college. The lesson observation programme is very good and produced a grade profile in 2004 for teaching, learning and attainment very similar to that of the inspection team. Target setting is systematic and management information is well used to support planning at team level.

37. There is good financial planning and management of resources. Most of the college's estate is owned by Christes Hospital Foundation which provides three governors. The college has category A financial status and participates in the national pilot for reduced audit. Resource allocation and forecasting is based on a mix of central allocation and team estimates derived at course and student level. Accommodation for teaching is good and building programmes have been well planned and carried out. Five major building projects were successfully completed in the last eight years. The next building phase is already being discussed. Staff and other resources are efficiently and effectively deployed. Implementation of health and safety checks lack rigour. The college represents good value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



## Science



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

### **Strengths**

- very high pass rates in biology, chemistry and physics
  
- good student retention rates
  
- innovative and effective teaching
  
- good use of ILT to enhance students' learning
  
- highly effective monitoring of students' progress
  
- excellent curriculum management.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rate in AS-level environmental science in 2004.

### **Scope of provision**

38. The college offers GCE A-level and AS-level courses in biology, chemistry, environmental science, human biology and physics. A GCSE course in science has started in 2004 and a biology option on the access to HE programme has run for a number of years. The science provision has grown over the past three years and there are currently 1,556 total enrolments of which 1,229 are on AS-level or GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry and physics. Most students attend full time and are aged between 16 and 18.

### **Achievement and standards**

39. Pass rates in biology, chemistry and physics have been excellent over the past three years. In 2004, the AS-level pass rates in biology, chemistry and physics were all at least 10% above national average. In addition, the percentage of students achieving A to B grades at AS level and GCE A level was much higher than the national averages in these three sciences. For example, at GCE A

level, 75% of chemistry students and 60% of physics students achieved A or B grades, around 20% above national averages. Pass rates in AS-level human biology have improved from 62% in 2002 to 82% in 2004, which is above the national average. However, there were low pass rates in AS-level environmental science in 2004. Students' achievements on the AS-level and GCE A-level courses are above the level that might be expected from their qualifications on entry.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	241	251	273
		% retention	96	98	97
		% pass rate	90	92	97
AS-level environmental science	3	No. of starts	*	55	104
		% retention	*	93	92
		% pass rate	*	84	69
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	178	177	153
		% retention	97	94	98
		% pass rate	92	92	99
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	116	111	114
		% retention	99	99	98
		% pass rate	98	98	100
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	126	179	192
		% retention	100	99	100
		% pass rate	98	99	97
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	105	135	141
		% retention	99	98	100
		% pass rate	98	98	98

*Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)*

\* course did not run

40. Retention rates are very high. For example, the retention rate for GCE A-level biology and chemistry was 100% in 2004. The retention rates on the AS-level courses in biology, chemistry and physics were 97% or above in 2004. Students are punctual to their lessons and attendance is high, at 92%.

41. Students are highly motivated, work productively and demonstrate good academic knowledge and understanding. The quality of students' assignments and project work is very good. Students develop a wide range of skills in their practical assignments and field trips. For example, a party of biology and environmental science students visit Belize each year to study bird migration, rain forests, swamps and coral reefs. Students' attainment is good. They analyse data with confidence, carry out practical work carefully and critically evaluate their experimental results. A high number of students progress to HE each year.

***Quality of education and training***

42. Teaching is innovative and stimulating. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are

demanding and clear. Teaching activities are varied and include exposition, question and answer, group work, practical work, presentations and discussion. Teachers frequently and skilfully use targeted questions to check students' learning and understanding. Presentations using electronic whiteboards allow high-quality visual materials to be used in conjunction with real-time calculations. Very good use is made of practical work to reinforce theory. For example, in a physics lesson, students estimated the energy emitted by the sun using a 200W light bulb as a model. They estimated the heat emitted from the lamp and applied this to a number of other relevant estimates to arrive at a reasonable value.

43. Students pursue practical work with care and enthusiasm. Laboratory activities are well organised and teachers manage group practical work safely. For example, in a chemistry lesson on redox potentials, students were required to determine the manganese content of a metal paper clip. They safely oxidised the clip and determined concentration of manganese in the resulting solution colorimetrically. Whilst studying enzymes, AS-level students worked safely and at a good pace to determine the optimum temperature for the breakdown of starch by pancreatic amylase.

44. Teachers make effective use of ILT to enhance students' learning. All rooms have data projectors and networked computers. Most have electronic whiteboards and staff make excellent use of them. For example, in a good GCSE lesson, the teacher introduced a study of the solar system through an interactive powerpoint presentation and followed this with well-constructed group work and exercises that enabled the students to deepen their knowledge about the planets and gravitational forces at work. The intranet sites are highly informative and well developed and students make good use of the Internet for research. For example, environmental science students made good use of ILT and other resources when preparing presentations on the legal and environmental consequences arising from businesses that discharge pollutants.

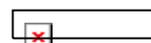
45. Students' progress relative to their target minimum grades is monitored effectively. Assignments are carefully devised, well planned and lead to purposeful learning. Homework is set regularly and work is marked carefully. Most teachers make constructive comments and give helpful feedback which enables students to improve. The daily workshops effectively provide valuable individual tuition related to each student's particular needs. These sessions are appreciated by students who use them to get additional help from subject teachers or to catch up with practical work.

46. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their field. The science laboratories are located in modern purpose-built accommodation and are well furnished and appropriately equipped. They are well serviced by a dedicated team of technicians. There is a good combination of fixed benches and moveable tables that enable the rooms to be flexibly used. There are stimulating wall posters in all areas and good examples of students' work are displayed in the biology laboratories. The library is stocked with up-to date books, journals and CD-ROMs that are well used by the students.

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

47. Curriculum management is very good. There are good communications between all staff. The large AS-level and GCE A-level teaching programme is co-ordinated effectively. There is an excellent team spirit and staff readily and productively share teaching resources and good practice with each other. The well-developed, self-assessment reports are rigorous and set out clear action plans. For example, actions were taken that have resulted in the significant improvement in AS-level human biology pass rates over the last three years. Target setting is very well established and data relating to students' pass rates and value added data are monitored and carefully analysed. There is a robust internal lesson observation scheme. Students welcome the willingness of management to address their concerns raised through surveys, and to publicise their response.

### **Mathematics**



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

**Strengths**

- very high levels of students' pass rates
  
- very high retention rates
  
- high standard of students' work
  
- creative, stimulating and highly effective teaching
  
- strong support for individuals
  
- outstanding curriculum management.

**Weaknesses**

- no significant weaknesses.

**Scope of provision**

48. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in mathematics and further mathematics along with GCSE mathematics. Recruitment to mathematics is very good and in 2004/05 over 580 students are studying AS-level or GCE A-level mathematics. Further mathematics is also very popular and 289 students are currently enrolled on the AS-level and GCE A-level courses. In addition, over 100 students take GCSE mathematics each year. The department also provides support for a range of application of number courses and workshops at level 2 and level 3 and support for students to achieve free standing mathematics qualifications.

**Achievement and standards**

49. Retention rates have been excellent on advanced level courses for the past three years. Pass rates for AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics and further mathematics have been very high for over three years. Pass rates at grades A and B on these courses have also been exceptionally high. The A\* to C grade pass rate on GCSE mathematics has been well above national average for the past three years. Students arrive punctually and attendance at the lessons observed was 89%. Progression from AS level to GCE A level is very good. In 2004, just over 90% of successful GCE A-level mathematics students and all GCE A-level further mathematics students progressed to HE.

Overall students achieve higher grades in mathematics than would have been predicted from their qualifications on entry.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	127	115	124
		% retention	84	83	82
		% pass rate	52	59	66
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	346	354	323
		% retention	97	95	96
		% pass rate	93	87	90
AS-level further mathematics	3	No. of starts	34	31	42
		% retention	100	97	100
		% pass rate	94	97	98
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	184	238	231
		% retention	98	99	98
		% pass rate	98	98	98
GCE A-level further mathematics	3	No. of starts	20	25	28
		% retention	97	100	96
		% pass rate	100	100	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

50. The work students complete in lessons is of a very high standard. Class work is very well presented and demonstrates good knowledge and understanding. Students use the college computers with confidence to access data and mathematics software. Computer software is used effectively by students to produce diagrams, graphs and tables in assignments. In GCSE lessons, students show good number skills and confidence while working with probability and equivalent fractions. At AS-level, students are confident simplifying complex expressions and equations. Some students, although making satisfactory progress, lack confidence with algebraic manipulation. In GCE A-level lessons, previous work in calculus and solution of equations are reinforced well. Students show a growing confidence in their problem-solving skills and in applying existing knowledge to new situations.

***Quality of education and training***

51. Teaching is excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and all teaching was good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach with confidence. In many lessons, very effective use is made of electronic whiteboards to access information or to extend the scope of topics. In a GCSE lesson, the teacher developed ideas of probability and chance through a series of problems displayed on the electronic whiteboard. Not only was this motivating for the students, but it also contributed to the pace and challenge in the lesson. This resulted in some very good understanding and reinforcement of learning. In an AS-level lesson on the equation of a circle, the teacher successfully used graphics software with the electronic whiteboard. This allowed students to display their ideas, discuss the results and modify their solutions appropriately.

52. Lessons are very well planned and the objectives are routinely shared with students. Teachers know their students' strengths and weaknesses well and make good use of targeted questions to monitor progress and understanding. In an effective GCE A-level lesson on Spearman's rank

correlation coefficient, students' responses to targeted questions led to a productive discussion and deepened understanding.

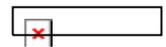
53. Individual support for students in lessons is a strength of the teaching. In many lessons, this is a key element in supporting the range of ability within the group. In a GCE A-level pure mathematics revision lesson, a combination of information on the whiteboard, example sheets for students to work through and the individual support from the teacher resulted in students being confident in presenting their solutions to the rest of the class. Subsequent discussion in the class demonstrated that much effective revision had taken place for all students.

54. Relationships in the classroom are very good. Students feel confident to ask teachers for help outside lessons and comment on the high level of support which they receive. Homework is set regularly and marked work is returned promptly, often with extensive and helpful written comments on how to improve. Resources for independent learning in the department are good. Lunchtime workshops are well attended and support is available from members of staff and from volunteer students.

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

55. Mathematics is exceptionally well managed, with an emphasis on raising and maintaining achievement. Clear delegation of responsibilities results in a good team spirit with much co-operation and collaboration. The staff are enthusiastic and work exceptionally well as a team to support the teaching groups. Courses are very well managed and co-ordinated. Common teaching schemes and assessment schedules encourage the sharing of ideas and resources. Marking is moderated effectively across all teaching groups. Curriculum planning is very good. Course reviews are thorough and result in careful, realistic action plans.

### **Business administration, management and professional studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on most courses
  
- outstanding pass rates on GCE A-level courses
  
- much good teaching on GCE A-level and AS-level courses
  
- highly effective assessment and monitoring of students' work
  
- strong programme of enrichment activities.

### **Weaknesses**

- declining pass rates in AS-level business
- insufficiently demanding learning activities in a minority of lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

56. The college offers full-time courses in AS-level and GCE A-level business and economics, AVCE business and a level 2 national certificate in business. It also provides the levels 2 and 3 Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) courses. Part-time courses for adult students are available in book keeping at stage 1 and British Sign Language at levels 1 and 2. The college also offers the certificate in FE teaching at stage 1 and a range of text processing courses. There are 602 students enrolled on full-time courses and 36 on part-time programmes. Students aged 16 to 18 account for the vast majority of full-time enrolments.

### **Achievement and standards**

57. Retention and pass rates have been at or above the national average for most full-time courses. In 2004, pass rates for GCE A-level business, economics, GNVQ intermediate and level 1 book-keeping were 100%. The number of high-grade passes achieved on full-time courses was outstanding. Economics high-grade passes were 52% at AS level and 80% at GCE A2 in 2004. Pass rates on AS-level business have declined over the last three years and are now below the national average. Retention rates on some part-time courses are below the national average. Student attendance is very good at 90% and lateness to lessons is appropriately challenged by teachers.

58. Most students' work is of a high standard. They have thorough knowledge of business terminology and they use it precisely and accurately. AS-level business students have a clear understanding of the impact of changes in business and the economy on potential sales and profits. GCE A-level economics students demonstrate thorough understanding of price discrimination. AVCE students produce well-written and well-researched assignments. Most students demonstrate good analysis and evaluation and make productive use of ILT. Over 80% of students progressed on to HE on completion of their courses in 2004.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Practical book-keeping stage 1	1	No. of starts	*	26	18
		% retention	*	69	72
		% pass rate	*	78	100
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	216	195	207
		% retention	92	94	92
		% pass rate	94	87	83
AS-level economics	3	No. of starts	115	126	133
		% retention	99	96	98

		% pass rate	94	95	91
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	160	139	117
		% retention	100	98	97
		% pass rate	99	97	100
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	61	85	84
		% retention	98	100	99
		% pass rate	98	100	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* course did not run

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

59. There is much good teaching. Lessons on GCE A-level and AS-level courses are carefully planned and well matched to the needs of individual students. Teachers have high expectations of students and set targets for individuals which are demanding but achievable. Teachers use searching questions well to help students develop and clarify their ideas. A range of effective methods is used to assess students' learning, including short practical activities, targeted questions, pair and small group discussions and presentations. In the best lessons, students relate theory to business practice well. Teachers use a range of exciting teaching materials and methods to ensure that theory is related effectively to business practice. In one lesson, the teacher made particularly good use of airline tickets of varying prices from the same company, to demonstrate the impact of price discrimination. Teaching in vocational lessons does not always ensure that all students make productive use of time. Tasks set are sometimes insufficiently demanding for students to progress as quickly as they are able.

60. Most teachers make good use of resources to develop learning. In one lesson, products from a supermarket were imaginatively used and stimulated students' thinking about consumer purchasing decisions. However, up-to-date teaching resources which assist students to learn very effectively are not always shared by teachers in business. ILT is used well and students effectively research key information about, for example, human resources. The college intranet contains learning resources and detailed, useful information for students about assignments. It also contains relevant tips and hints on examination technique and essay writing. Accommodation is generally good, but some rooms are small for the numbers of students. In these rooms, teachers move around and carry out informal assessment with some difficulty.

61. Assessment is thorough and regular. Homework is set weekly, is marked accurately and annotated with useful comments that enable students to improve their performance. There are detailed, shared marking schemes for GCE A2 and AS-level courses. Final coursework and assignments are effectively moderated on all courses.

62. The provision in business is well matched to local needs and meets the expectation of the students and the community. Enrichment within the curriculum area is strong and includes not only additional curriculum options but a wide range of visiting speakers, visits locally, nationally and overseas. Students on AVCE and level 2 courses benefit from relevant work experience placements and the productive relationship the college has with employers. Strong links with past students enable students to benefit from the experience of mock interviews. They also receive helpful support in improving their presentation techniques from people in the business and commercial sector.

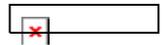
63. Students receive very good guidance and support both before and during their courses. College staff visit local schools and offer taster days and information to help students in making decisions. Teachers maintain accurate and up-to-date records of the individual needs of students and their progress. Teaching and support workshops effectively meet their individual needs. Extra workshops are readily provided to help students with their subjects. Very good guidance on progressing to

courses within the college, HE or employment is provided to students at all levels.

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

64. Communication is good and teachers are fully involved in team meetings and the self-assessment process. Data are analysed effectively to identify issues in students' attendance, retention and pass rates. Challenging targets are set for improvements and they are closely monitored. Students' views are sought and contribute to improvements in curriculum management. Quality assurance is robust. However, the pass rate for AS-level business studies has declined over three years. Subject managers have a clear vision of the need for continuous improvement and closely analyse data relating to gender and ethnicity. Weekly team meetings are productive and include up-to-date monitoring of students' progress and achievement, health and safety issues and staff development and support. There is a well-documented lesson observation scheme. Staff development and support needs are identified and met.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates
  
- excellent pass rates in vocational and GCE A-level courses
  
- much good teaching
  
- good assessment and monitoring of full-time students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- declining pass rates on AS-level ICT.

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

65. The college offers a wide range of full-time courses in ICT and computing to around 340 full-time and 725 part-time students. Full-time courses include a GNVQ intermediate, and AS-level and GCE A-level courses in ICT and computing. Part-time courses include computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) as well as courses in computer applications at entry level and at levels 1 and 2. In 2004/05, 59% of students were male and 7% came from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

### **Achievement and standards**

66. Most students on full-time courses achieve high pass rates and a high percentage progress into HE. At GCE A level and on the vocational courses, pass rates have been very good over the past three years. Retention rates were also high, particularly on part-time courses. However, retention rates on the AS-level computing and ICT courses have declined since 2003. In addition, pass rates on AS-level ICT have declined from 91% in 2001/02 to 75% in 2003/04, which is below the national average. The percentage of students achieving A and B grades on vocational and computing courses was higher than the national averages. Students achieve grades on most courses that are above the level that might be expected from their qualifications on entry. The performance of some adult students on part-time or short courses declined for 2002/03, but recovered in 2003/04.

67. The standard of students' work is good. Most full-time students can use the Internet effectively for research. Advanced level students are able to draw on abstract and complex concepts such as binary conventions when using negative numbers. Part-time students have good learning skills, and develop confidence to use IT skills outside the classroom. Attendance rates are high, classroom discipline is good and students arrive punctually to lessons.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2002 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
National skills profile - IT (pilot)	1	No. of starts	200	279	487
		% retention	100	97	100
		% pass rate	100	59	91
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	17	23	16
		% retention	88	87	69
		% pass rate	100	100	100
AVCE IT	3	No. of starts	21	38	20
		% retention	81	74	85
		% pass rate	82	96	100
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	122	108	92
		% retention	98	94	89
		% pass rate	86	84	89
AS-level ICT	3	No. of starts	150	127	109
		% retention	91	91	88
		% pass rate	91	82	75
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	66	70	59
		% retention	98	94	98
		% pass rate	95	94	98

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

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

68. Teaching is good. In the best lessons, there is a variety of activities such as group work, discussion and presentations. Teachers use learning technology well to maintain students' interest. They are careful to encourage student contributions and to weave students' interests and enthusiasms into lessons. In one lesson, the teacher encouraged students to debate how best to

include a VAT calculation in a spreadsheet design. A number of approaches were discussed and the teacher used the opportunity to introduce students to absolute cell references. This brought the debate to a useful conclusion and allowed students to see an effective solution in a business context. In key skills lessons, tasks are well devised to meet the needs of students from different subject areas. The students feel very well supported and make good progress. Teachers effectively encourage independent study for both full-time and part-time students. In a minority of lessons, however, lesson planning is not effective. Some group tasks are insufficiently demanding to keep more able students busy and they lose concentration.

69. Computing rooms are well equipped with projectors and electronic whiteboards. Teachers make good use of these to demonstrate key points and to illustrate complex information. Workstations are spacious enough to allow for workbooks and student notes. Assistive technology provided for people with disabilities is good. In addition, teachers place learning materials on the college network and students can access these away from the main site. Students have access to computers for independent study even at busy times and benefit from a library that is well stocked with course textbooks, journals, CD-ROMs and other materials.

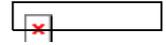
70. Initial assessment is accurately used to identify literacy and numeracy support needs of both full-time and part-time students. Assessment of students' progress is consistent and fair. It is very effective on most full-time courses, where teachers assess learning frequently and accurately. They identify potential underachievement against expected grades quickly, and provide good extra support. Students are given clear written feedback and use it to improve. There is a wide range of enrichment activities for full-time students. These include visiting speakers from local companies, presentations on the history of the college network, and opportunities to enter national competitions. A trip to Euro Disney was organised so that students could study large-scale computer operations in a business setting. The wide range of part-time courses provides good opportunities for adult students. These include informal sessions aimed specifically at men with basic skills needs and use of laptop computers to take learning into local communities.

71. There is particularly good individual support for full-time students. Targets for retention and pass rates are set with reference to their prior attainment. Progress reviews are detailed, thorough and are related carefully to target grades. Teachers agree detailed action plans with students and provide good advice when students want to access specialist support services. Support for learning is very effective. Teachers use team meetings to review the progress and performance of the students against target grades. Students who have missed lessons or find topics difficult, are referred to regular workshops. However, attendance is voluntary at the workshops and some are not well attended. This has been recognised and action taken to follow-up absences more rigorously. Learning support for full-time students with additional learning needs on ICT and computing courses is good. Initial assessment identifies needs rigorously and students' take up of the additional support offered is good.

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

72. Management is good and has been successful in maintaining high pass and retention rates on most courses. Action plans are in place to address the decline in performance of AS-level ICT students. Quality assurance arrangements are thorough and effective. Data relevant to students' progress and achievements, management information and value added analyses are used to identify underperforming groups of full-time students and inform curriculum development. Assessment information is also well used to review full-time course performance and guide programme development. However, the performance of part-time courses is less effectively analysed, particularly where significant numbers of students do not complete qualifications. Staff appraisal is formal and completed regularly. Managers observe all teachers every year and ensure that development needs are identified and linked to in-service training. A system of peer observation allows good practice to be shared systematically. Teachers promote equality of opportunity well in lessons.

## Sports, leisure and travel



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

### **Strengths**

- outstanding pass rates
  
- very good teaching
  
- excellent practical facilities which enhance learning
  
- highly effective individual support for students
  
- strong curriculum management.

### **Weaknesses**

- some cramped accommodation.

### **Scope of provision**

73. The college provides a GNVQ in leisure and tourism at foundation and intermediate levels, an AVCE in travel and tourism, a BTEC national certificate in sport and performance, AS level in sport, games and recreation and GCE A level in sport and physical education. The majority of students are full time and aged 16 to 18. Currently, there are 495 enrolments on courses. Part-time courses offered as part of the college's enrichment programme include the community sport leader's award and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme silver and gold awards.

### **Achievement and standards**

74. Pass rates are outstanding. In 2004, pass rates for all courses were above national averages. Pass rates on the GCE A2 sport and physical education and the AVCE in travel and tourism have been 100% for each of the last three years. The pass rate on GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism rose from 92% in 2002 to 100% in 2004 and was significantly above the national average. Students achieved at a significantly higher level than predicted by their previous results at GCSE. High achievement was especially significant on the AS level in sport games and recreation and on the GCE A2 sport and physical education course.

75. Retention rates are high. For example, between 2002 and 2004 the retention rate for AS-level sport, games and recreation rose from 91% to 95% which is significantly above the national average of 87%. This has been achieved alongside increasing numbers of enrolments. However, the retention rate for the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism fell from 100% in 2003 to 75% in 2004, which is 8% below the national average. In 2004, the college basketball team were southern region runners up in the men's under-19 basketball competition and national winners of the sixth form and tertiary colleges' men's hockey competition. A number of students have been rewarded with national and international scholarships to HE institutions.

76. Work produced by students is of a high standard. One successful assignment, focusing on customer service skills, required students to interview staff in hotels and travel agencies. Completed assignments were well presented, made good use of IT, and contained extensive details on the different approaches taken in customer service. In a sports lesson, students made good use of powerpoint to present information on key legislation which is currently impacting on the sport and leisure industry. They then successfully related their findings to the effect the legislation might have on local employers of part-time workers.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Community Sports Leader Award	2	No. of starts	80	67	*
		% retention	88	93	*
		% pass rate	89	74	*
AS-level sports games and recreation	3	No. of starts	158	153	185
		% retention	91	93	95
		% pass rate	99	99	100
GCE A-level sport and physical education	3	No. of starts	85	125	127
		% retention	100	99	99
		% pass rate	100	100	100
AVCE (double award) in travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	17	*	18
		% retention	53	*	83
		% pass rate	100	*	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\*data not available

***Quality of education and training***

77. Teaching is very good and enables students to learn effectively. Students learn quickly and make very good contributions in lessons. Teachers skilfully use a range of teaching and learning strategies to interest students and develop their understanding. Lessons are well planned and schemes of work are available to students in workbooks and on the intranet. In one very good lesson, audio and video tape clips were used to demonstrate how professional athletes use visualisation techniques when preparing for performance. Students responded with great interest and undertook further analysis of the concept through identifying and carefully considering similar examples. Visual aids were used imaginatively and promoted learning effectively.

78. In a minority of lessons, the classrooms are cramped for the number of students using them and opportunities for group work are restricted. ILT is used well in leisure and travel. Students use the intranet confidently in many lessons. Easy access to many linked websites is available and frequently used, and learning is readily extended in this way during lessons. Staff are well qualified

and experienced. Practical sports facilities are excellent and enhance learning. There is a well-equipped sports hall and fitness centre which is readily accessible by all students and which provides facilities for a wide range of sports. Additionally, there are a number of outdoor pitches and three all-weather tennis courts. Most of the teaching rooms have good resources to support effective teaching and learning. There are informative displays of student work and other relevant materials which create stimulating learning environments.

79. Students' progress is effectively monitored by systematically reviewing their progress against individual target minimum grades and against subject specific criteria. Teachers assess work thoroughly and provide constructive feedback to help students to improve their performance. Students make good use of the extra tuition they receive during regular lunchtime workshops. The college has recently introduced a foundation level GNVQ in leisure and tourism. Students have transferred on to this course from local secondary and special schools and are making good progress.

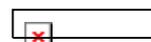
80. There is highly effective individual support for students. Learning support assistants provide support in lessons which makes a valuable contribution to students' progress. Students speak positively about the support they receive. Much support for students takes place outside formal lessons. Advice and guidance on HE opportunities are very good. Progression to HE is very high, at 90%. Attendance rates are good and rigorously monitored. At the time of the inspection, attendance was 89%.

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

81. Leadership and management are very good and there is a strong team ethos. Communications are good and the course teams regularly review course performance. Quality assurance arrangements are effective. Comprehensive self-assessment reports and clearly focused action plans are produced at course level. Staff are well supported and have a good range of development opportunities which support their responsibilities well.

82. Students' views are collected systematically and are used effectively to inform curriculum planning. Risk assessments are comprehensive, rigorous and updated regularly. Equality of opportunity is dealt with sensitively. External links with other institutions are productive, enriching the curriculum and facilitating student progression to HE and employment. In 2003, the college became a regional base for an academy of rugby excellence supported by London Irish RUFC. Students have benefited from coaching by premiership staff and by watching professional players train.

### **Visual and performing arts and media**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- outstanding pass rates
  
- outstanding retention rates
  
- much good teaching and high-quality learning

- very good accommodation and equipment for media, music and performing arts students
  
- excellent guidance and monitoring of students' progress
  
- strong curriculum leadership and management.

**Weaknesses**

- cramped specialist workshop space to support art students.

**Scope of provision**

83. There is a wide range of courses for students aged 16 to 18 in performing arts, visual arts and media. AS-level and GCE A-level courses include art, textiles, photography, dance, performance studies, media, film studies, music and music technology. Courses for adults are offered from entry level to level 2 in a range of subjects in the visual arts. At the time of inspection, there were 1,154 enrolments on full-time courses. Around 72% of enrolments were on visual arts and media courses and 28% in music and performing arts. Over 200 adult students undertake part-time courses on the main campus or at the adult education centre nearby.

**Achievement and standards**

84. Pass rates have been outstanding over the past three years. The percentage of students achieving A and B grades at AS level and GCE A level was much higher than the national average over the past three years. Retention rates of students are excellent on all courses. Pass rates on advanced courses are higher than might be expected from their prior attainment. Overall, students demonstrate a high standard of practical skills. In one lesson, students quickly developed a scene from the Edward Bond play *The Sea*. They chose appropriate lighting and sound effects, and showed a high level of group skills within the lesson.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 2002 to 2004**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level art	3	No. of starts	223	224	234
		% retention	92	96	94
		% pass rate	91	90	94
AS-level film studies	3	No. of starts	66	62	81
		% retention	94	89	91
		% pass rate	98	98	100
GCE A-level art	3	No. of starts	108	148	137

		% retention	98	100	99
		% pass rate	99	97	99
AS-level performance studies	3	No. of starts	64	66	57
		% retention	91	97	95
		% pass rate	100	97	100
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	112	133	105
		% retention	99	97	98
		% pass rate	100	98	99
GCE A-level music	3	No. of starts	31	38	49
		% retention	100	95	96
		% pass rate	97	97	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

85. In a photography lesson, students quickly learned and applied framing and border techniques to their prints. In art, students keep high-quality sketch books which they use effectively to develop final pieces. Film and media students produce well-scripted and edited films. Progression rates to HE courses are very good. Students attend punctually and show a high degree of focus and concentration. Attendance was good at 89% during the week of the inspection. Students' commitment and enjoyment of their studies is evident.

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

86. There is much good teaching which encourages high-quality learning. Most teachers use a wide variety of methods in lessons to motivate and secure students' interest. Teachers know their students well and provide feedback which helps them improve their learning. Recent development of the college intranet provides excellent materials to aid teaching and learning. In an innovative specialist music lesson, students were given a short project to create a diagrammatic representation of a Mozart piano sonata. Having first analysed the score to discover its structure, students then drew the component elements on paper to provide an accessible reference. This approach successfully provided students with a memorable alternative to description in essay form. In an outstanding media lesson, students were asked to analyse and grade magazine cover designs. Using carefully targeted questioning and support to different groups, the teacher enabled the students to develop their judgements applying theoretical conventions in their analysis to a high level. However, in a small number of lessons in media, teachers place insufficient emphasis on reinforcing key learning objectives and have lower expectations of their students.

87. A wide range of opportunities exists for students to participate in enrichment activities. These develop greater breadth and depth to their learning. Each year, dance students attend a five-day residency with Treloar College and the CandoCo Dance company who work with performers with disabilities. This leads to a performance at Theatre Royal, Winchester. Around 20 students each year are supported by the college on the Hampshire Specialist Music Course which is a route for talented musicians to enhance their skills in preparation for a professional career. Teachers create a supportive and dynamic environment for learning. A significant feature of the provision is the amount of feedback available to students to develop their skills and knowledge, practical and performance skills in order that they may progress.

88. There is a very high standard of specialist equipment and accommodation for music, media and performing arts students. Teachers and technicians are well qualified with good levels of subject specialist knowledge and experience. Media and film students are taught in a variety of well-equipped rooms. The dance studio is light and airy with a sprung floor. A large theatre provides plenty of space for performances. The facilities for musicians are excellent, with good access to instruments including Steinway pianos, practice rooms, sequencing, editing and recording

equipment.

89. There is cramped and limited specialist accommodation for art students. The textiles, ceramics, photography and printmaking workshops, whilst well equipped, are too small for the numbers of students accessing them. The range of learning activities that can be used by students is thus limited. There are no dedicated facilities for specialist work in three-dimensional and limited opportunities for students to develop creative graphic design and digital skills utilising computer-aided design (CAD) packages.

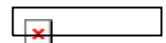
90. There is excellent guidance and monitoring of students' progress. Assessment is rigorous and accurate. Regular tutorials ensure that students are aware of their progress and know how to improve. Teachers provide regular and constructive feedback in lessons. The range of extra curricular activities is very good and includes a good number of trips, visits, music clubs and art activities. Recently, art students visited New York and media and film students will be visiting Los Angeles in 2005. Students took part in the national Global Rock Challenge dance competition and won a 'best student initiative' award in 2003. Take up of enrichment activities is good and adds value to the students' learning.

91. Student guidance is excellent. Prospective students attend open days and receive impartial advice. Induction is provided through tutorials early in the first term to confirm that students are enjoying their courses. Progress reviews take place regularly. These focus on students' progress against target grades and provide feedback so that students can continue to improve. Learning support needs are identified at the start of courses and specialist support is put in place as necessary.

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

92. Curriculum leadership and management are strong. Communications are effective for full-time and part-time staff. Regular meetings at subject and faculty level keep staff informed and provide a channel for communication with managers. Quality assurance is good and data for retention and pass rates are thoroughly analysed. However, variations in examination results between some teaching sets are not analysed sufficiently thoroughly. Self-assessment reports and development plans are rigorous and contain challenging targets and action points to address identified weaknesses. Staff development is well organised and staff appraisals are completed on time.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- outstanding pass rates
  
- outstanding retention rates
  
- much very stimulating and enjoyable teaching and learning

- high standard of students' work and contributions in lessons
  
- very good support for students
  
- strong curriculum management.

**Weaknesses**

- there are no significant weaknesses.

**Scope of provision**

93. Classical civilisation, geography, government and politics, history, philosophy and religious studies are taken at AS level and GCE A level. There are 1,244 enrolments, all by full-time students aged 16 to 18. Recruitment is high in each advanced level subject. For example, there are over 300 students on AS-level courses. In history, students can choose to study either early or late history.

**Achievement and standards**

94. Students achieve well on all courses and pass rates have been consistently above the national averages. GCE A-level religious studies has had a pass rate of 100% over the last three years. In 2004, 71% of the students who completed GCE A-level government and politics and 78% of students who completed GCE A-level philosophy achieved A or B grade passes. Most students achieve higher grades than those predicted by their GCSE results, notably in geography, history and religious studies. AS-level classical civilisation has been less successful, with a lower pass rate in 2003 and fewer students gaining higher grades over three years. Retention rates have been consistently high on all courses from 2002 to 2004, and often well above national averages. Retention rates in GCE A-level geography and history has been above 98% for the past three years. Progression from AS level to GCE A level has been consistently good in all subjects, and the progression on to HE is very good. Attendance during the inspection was very good, at 92%.

95. Many students produce written work of high quality, characterised by cogent argument, clear and accurate writing, and good use of supporting evidence. For example, classical civilisation students wrote compelling and lucid explanations of why the Greeks repelled the Persian invaders in the fifth century BC. In most lessons, students make confident and well-informed contributions, and add significantly to the quality of lessons by doing so. In one AS-level history lesson, students were asked to explain what 'foreign policy' was. They quickly produced some extremely impressive explanations.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 2002 to 2004**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level classical civilisation	3	No. of starts	92	74	89
		% retention	95	100	91
		% pass rate	95	89	99

AS-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	40	63	89
		% retention	90	94	89
		% pass rate	86	98	89
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	96	139	130
		% retention	100	98	99
		% pass rate	100	99	100
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	37	46	29
		% retention	100	100	97
		% pass rate	95	100	100
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	122	186	209
		% retention	98	99	98
		% pass rate	99	99	99
GCE A-level religious studies	3	No. of starts	24	24	18
		% retention	100	96	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

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

96. Teaching is very well organised and stimulating. Students and their tutors work together with evident enjoyment and good humour. Courses and individual lessons are well planned to promote successful learning through varied activities, and a range of impressive resources. In a history lesson, students benefited from an extremely comprehensive course handbook on the reign of Henry VII. Students talked with confidence about his use of arranged marriages as an instrument of foreign policy. In a religious studies lesson, the tutor used students' reactions to an apparent sudden 'illness' suffered by a student to demonstrate aspects of Buddhist teaching about personal well-being. In the same lesson, Buddhist teaching about the futility of personal cravings was illuminated by examining the words of the Rolling Stones' song: *I can't get no satisfaction*. In most lessons, students learn actively, but in a minority teachers provide too many ideas and information, and students lack sufficient opportunities to contribute.

97. Many teachers have made significant progress in using ICT in learning. The college intranet, which students can access from home, contains a wealth of information and linked websites on many topics covered. In some lessons, the electronic whiteboards are used very effectively. In a geography lesson, the tutor demonstrated some of the material which could be accessed to show the conflict between supplying basic material needs and preserving the environment in developing countries. Teachers and students appreciate the range of materials available at the learning centre, and its responsiveness to requests for books, or other resources. Good displays in classrooms give a strong sense of subject identity. Some classrooms and staff work areas are overcrowded at times.

98. There is an impressive range of opportunities to extend learning through trips and visits. In a geography lesson, students used the information gained on visits to coastal sites in Hampshire and Dorset to inform answers to questions on coastal erosion and management. Classical civilisation students have an opportunity each year to visit sites in either Greece or Italy to provide first hand evidence of what they learn about architecture and the ancient world. The experience of visiting the Temple of Zeus at Olympia was beneficial in one lesson observed, enabling students to understand and appreciate pictures of carved stone figures at the temple.

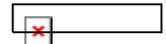
99. Students are well supported in their learning. Tutors know their students well and give them the individual help they need in lessons and in their own time. Good study guides and handouts help

students to prepare their work. Marked work is carefully annotated to indicate specific concerns, with summarising comments to explain the marks given. Consistency is achieved by using clear mark schemes that follow awarding bodies' assessment criteria and which are shared with students. In some cases, summarising comments do not set out sufficiently clearly the measures needed to improve or consolidate standards. Regular workshops in each subject provide valuable support for students. Individual reviews give students clear indications of their progress in relation to their predicted grades. Some targets for further improvement are not sufficiently clear. Guidance provided on applications to HE is highly effective and valued by students.

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

100. Curriculum management is strong and effective. Subject co-ordinators successfully encourage teachers to work closely together and share good practice and resources. There is a strong will to do the very best for students and help them to achieve their full potential. Individual self-assessment reports are thorough, rigorous and largely accurate. They clearly identify precise needs and address them purposefully. Reliable information is used about achievement including analysis of results matched against students' predicted grades. Internal lesson observations have produced realistic judgements and contributed significantly to improving teaching and learning. New teachers receive valued help from the teams they have joined. Unauthorised student absence, lateness, and late work are monitored rigorously.

### **Law, psychology and sociology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most GCE A2 and AS-level courses
  
- high retention rates on most GCE A2 and AS-level courses
  
- highly effective use of ILT to support learning
  
- very good assessment and monitoring of students' progress and work
  
- extensive range of well-designed enrichment activities
  
- outstanding support for students

- o outstanding curriculum management.

**Weaknesses**

- o individual students' needs insufficiently met in a minority of lessons.

**Scope of provision**

101. The college provides AS-level and GCE A-level courses in law, psychology and sociology mainly for full-time students aged 16 to 18. Some 406 students are studying psychology at AS level and 219 at GCE A level. Some 170 students are enrolled on AS-level sociology and 131 on GCE A-level sociology. There are 190 students studying law at AS level and 92 at GCE A level. There are 45 adult students on part-time AS-level and GCE A-level courses across all three subjects with a further 30 taking access to HE courses in psychology and sociology.

**Achievement and standards**

102. Students' achievements are excellent on the majority of courses. Pass rates and retention rates have been consistently high in GCE A-level psychology and sociology. AS-level pass rates and retention rates are high, and have been at or above national averages for the past three years. The proportion of students gaining high grades is significantly above national averages. For example, in both GCE A-level law and psychology the percentages of students gaining grades A or B was 11% higher than national averages in 2004. Most students achieve examination grades at or higher than those predicted by GCSE results. However, students in AS-level psychology achieved grades lower than predicted by their GCSE results in 2004.

103. Students produce high-quality work. They consistently express views confidently in lessons and make reasoned and coherent contributions to discussions. Most students work at a consistently high level and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Many ask perceptive questions and can apply relevant psychological or sociological theories to their work. Students have a very good appreciation of research methods in both psychology and sociology and they produce well-considered written assignments. Law students demonstrate good knowledge of the legal system and the application of law to complex case studies.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in law, psychology and sociology, 2002 to 2004**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	80	138	135
		% retention	96	98	97
		% pass rate	86	90	89
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	219	266	364
		% retention	95	95	96
		% pass rate	94	92	91
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	203	219	186
		% retention	95	94	92
		% pass rate	93	88	92

GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	*	52	91
		% retention	*	94	97
		% pass rate	*	88	93
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	120	154	189
		% retention	100	99	100
		% pass rate	99	100	98
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	126	144	151
		% retention	98	97	97
		% pass rate	98	96	99

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* course did not run

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

104. Teaching and learning are very good. Many lessons are characterised by effective and comprehensive planning, clearly stated aims and objectives and a variety of tasks to stimulate learning. Students contribute frequently through question and answer sessions, discussions and group work. In the majority of lessons, teachers facilitate learning skilfully and enable students to develop analytical thinking. Students participate enthusiastically and are fully involved in the learning process. For example, in a very good psychology lesson on sleep deprivation, a group of students led discussion with incisive and valid comments and used their findings both from research and experimental work to good effect. In a sociology lesson which developed students' understanding of Functionalist and Marxist perspectives on education, students applied their own experiences of school in a lively debate. This led to an identification of the effects of the 'hidden curriculum' on students themselves and on society. In a law lesson, students took part in a thought-provoking debate on what sentencing aimed to achieve. Students developed good understanding of the complexities of sentencing, in attempting to reconcile the need for punishment with reform of the offender. In a minority of lessons, the needs of more able students are not sufficiently met. ILT is used very productively in most lessons. In a psychology lesson, students entered data from their group experiments on to an electronic whiteboard. Data were quickly transformed and displayed graphically to the whole class for further analysis and study.

105. Support for students is outstanding. Teachers provide excellent encouragement and support for individual students in most lessons, as well as and extra help outside lessons and with additional learning support if required. Homework is regularly set, marked and returned promptly. Most students' work is assessed very effectively with full attention paid to accuracy and detail. Written comments are well focused and provide useful constructive advice for students on how to improve. Student self-tracking sheets enable them formally to map their own progress. Frequent workshops provide very effective extra tuition and are well used by students. Extra support is also helpfully provided for students through a buddy system using second-year students as 'learning champions'. Students make good use of revision materials, lesson notes and extension exercises on the college intranet as well as e-mailing teachers for advice.

106. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their fields. There are excellent resources for law, psychology and sociology. Many well-resourced teaching rooms are equipped with interactive whiteboard, data projectors and audiovisual facilities. There are up-to-date sets of textbooks and high-quality handouts. Valuable aids such as good study guides, handbooks, and study materials for individual topics are also provided.

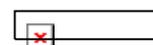
107. A very wide range of interesting and beneficial additional activities enriches and broadens students' experience of their subjects. Examples include visits to the Court of Appeal in London, the Freud Museum, the European Parliament and Commission in Brussels, taking part in the national

finals of the Bar National Mock Trial Competition, an annual sleep deprivation experiment, visits by guest speakers and a psychology film club.

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

108. Leadership and management are outstanding. Courses are well organised and very effectively managed. Schemes of work are well written and include clear and detailed information about course contents, teaching and learning activities and resources. Quality assurance is very good with keen attention to detail. Key sources of evidence including students' views, pass and retention rate data, and lesson observation grades are carefully evaluated during self-assessment. Action planning for improvements includes the setting of realistic targets which are agreed and met. Staff training and development is thorough and targeted effectively. Teachers share good practice both through formal mechanisms, such as regular peer observations and informally in their regular team meetings. Communication is clear and effective. Action points from meetings are closely monitored and followed-up. Staff have high morale; they feel valued and are well supported. Equality and diversity are actively promoted through the curriculum and as a standing item on meeting agendas. College values and a statement on equality and diversity are included in student and course handbooks and through the subjects' intranet sites.

### **English, communications and modern foreign languages**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- outstanding pass rates
  
- outstanding retention rates
  
- enthusiastic and lively teaching motivating students
  
- rigorous meticulous assessment
  
- excellent support and guidance
  
- strong leadership and management.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- o no significant weaknesses.

### **Scope of provision**

109. The college has a very large provision in English and modern foreign languages. Currently, 1,094 students are enrolled on English courses at GCSE, GCE AS level and GCE A level. There are 971 students enrolled on AS-level and GCE A-level courses. There are 416 enrolments on modern foreign languages (French, German, Spanish and Italian). Some 47 students are enrolled on GCSE courses in Spanish and Italian, and the remaining 369 students are working towards AS-level or GCE A-level qualifications.

110. In the Adult Continuing Education Division, there are 22 language courses which cater for some 310 students. Some 28 students are on English-related courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

111. Achievement is very high. In 2004, A or B grade pass rates were significantly above national averages in many subjects, for example, AS-level English language, English literature and Italian. Pass rates were also significantly above national averages at GCE A level in English language, French and German. The vast majority of students make better progress than their prior attainment would suggest. This progress is particularly marked in communication studies, French and German. GCSE English A\* to C grade pass rates have improved steadily and were well above national averages in 2004. However, both Italian and Spanish were slightly below average in 2004 after achieving very good results in the two previous years. Retention rates are very high. Students make good progress in lessons and demonstrate good retention of learning over time.

112. In English literature, students display well above average analytical skills, familiarity with technical terminology and debating and discussion skills. In English language, students are accustomed to specialist terminology and adept at arriving at reasoned conclusions, both independently and in peer groups. In both disciplines, they are fully involved in lessons and are confident speakers. The standard of written work is high. One witty and acerbic review of *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* was memorable for its high quality.

113. Students' ears are well tuned to the constant use of the foreign language in lessons and on the corridors. Consequently, their listening and comprehension skills are well developed. For their time on course, students are confident speakers and have no inhibitions about initiating discussions in the appropriate language. Written work is generally well conceived, but not always free of careless errors.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in English, communications and modern foreign languages, 2002 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	203	219	210
		% retention	98	96	99
		% pass rate	98	94	98
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	237	221	250
		% retention	97	96	96
		% pass rate	100	93	98
AS-level French	3	No. of starts	161	113	99
		% retention	94	96	99

		% pass rate	92	88	93
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	109	144	149
		% retention	98	99	98
		% pass rate	100	98	99
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	148	178	164
		% retention	98	99	98
		% pass rate	100	99	99
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	64	83	68
		% retention	100	99	97
		% pass rate	94	95	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

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

114. Teaching is very good and occasionally outstanding. In the very best lessons, enthusiastic, skilled teaching energises students. Potentially dry topics are brought vividly to life through imaginative tasks and activities. For example, in an English lesson, students' dormant interest in etymology was awakened by some imaginative and enjoyable activities. Students thoroughly enjoyed what they were doing and learned rapidly, acquiring specialist vocabulary at the same time. They participate readily in paired and small group work and are mutually supportive and encouraging. Emphasis is placed on promoting independent learning. In a Spanish beginners' lesson, students had well above average listening and speaking skills for the early stage of the course. They participated eagerly in the learning activities using their newly acquired Spanish with obvious pleasure and confidence. A wide range of appropriate tasks and activities sustains the progress of lessons. Students work hard and maintain their focus. Staff and students are increasing their use of modern technical resources such as the excellent intranet. In a small minority of lessons, there is too much theory and too few contextualised examples and, on occasion, cramped accommodation inhibits learning.

115. Specialist learning equipment and learning resources are good. The college intranet and the new computerised language laboratory are excellent tools. The availability of foreign language assistants for each language makes a valuable contribution to language work. Accommodation is good, but sometimes the shape of the room, the furniture layout and overcrowding can negatively affect students' learning. Attractive and informative wall displays in classrooms and on corridors embellish the learning environment.

116. The care, quality and accuracy of the marking of written work are exemplary. Students know exactly how their marks are awarded and what they need to do to improve. New targets are often set so students can progress to the next stage of development. Well-monitored paired and small group work enables teachers to assess their students informally in most lessons. More formal assessment by means of student progress reports is rigorous. Individual specific targets are set to promote further progress.

117. Students choose from a wide range of enrichment activities. Language students have opportunities to go to Europe on study visits; they enjoy their workshops, conversation groups and have initiated a foreign film club. Students of English have a similarly wide range of subject-related options. They participate in a 'Summer Shakespeare' production which is staged in the open air. The attractively produced booklet of photographs and poems written by students and staff to commemorate a visit to the battlefields of the Somme reveals what a life changing experience it turned out to be for many participants.

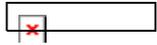
118. Guidance and support for students are outstanding. Problems associated with learning

difficulties, disabilities and medical conditions are addressed so that students are enabled to learn. The combination of helpful teachers, learning assistants, workshops and specialist guidance keeps support at high levels. Students confirm that individual help is always available in and outside lesson time. Advanced students sometimes volunteer to help newcomers.

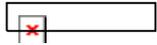
**Leadership and management**

119. Leadership and management are strong. Everything runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the vision of continuous improvement is being achieved as the upward trends in pass and retention rates testify. The open-door style of management has fostered a strong team spirit and communications are good. Quality assurance is successful in bringing about improvements. For example, there is very close correlation between internal observation and inspection grades. The staff development programme is particularly well developed, as is the thorough and rigorous appraisal system. Regular formal and informal meetings facilitate the sharing of best practice.

**Part D: College data**



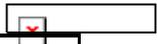
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	1	30
2	11	5
3	79	4
4/5	0	0
Other	9	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in 2004*

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03**



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	4,437	457	18
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	194	0	1

Business administration, management and professional	719	151	3
Information and communication technology	2,703	850	13
Retailing, customer service and transportation	1	54	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	607	889	6
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	6	48	0
Health, social care and public services	166	566	3
Visual and performing arts and media	1,077	1,651	10
Humanities	4,527	710	20
English, languages and communication	3,873	566	17
Foundation programmes	1,833	513	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,143</b>	<b>6,455</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in ILR

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	123	67	229	227
	Retention rate %	94	91	86	78	77	81
	National average %	81	75	83	71	72	73
	Pass rate %	84	84	90	91	91	86
	National average %	67	75	72	68	73	75
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	347	377	421	207	234	197
	Retention rate %	88	85	86	74	84	89
	National average %	80	82	81	71	70	69
	Pass rate %	85	91	87	84	83	64
	National average %	84	84	86	69	70	74
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	8,481	9,183	10,331	239	282	189
	Retention rate %	93	96	96	72	81	64

	National average %	80	89	90	65	72	73
	Pass rate %	92	89	88	67	79	79
	National average %	86	87	88	67	73	77

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 2000/01 to 2002/03: College ISR.

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	89	10	0	140
Level 2 (intermediate)	82	11	5	17
Level 1 (foundation)	66	33	0	6
Other sessions	100	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>164</b>

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