

# **Brockenhurst College**

**REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
1998-99**

**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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*College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circulars 97/12, 97/13 and 97/22. Inspections seek to validate the data and judgements provided by colleges in self-assessment reports. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work they inspect. A member of the Council's audit service works with inspectors in assessing aspects of governance and management. All colleges are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.*

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## Grade Descriptors

Inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use a five-point scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- grade 1 – outstanding provision which has many strengths and few weaknesses
- grade 2 – good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses
- grade 3 – satisfactory provision with strengths but also some weaknesses
- grade 4 – less than satisfactory provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths
- grade 5 – poor provision which has few strengths and many weaknesses.

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1997-98, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	9	60	29	2	-
Cross-college provision	18	54	24	4	-

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report*  
Sample size: 108 college inspections

## Student Achievements

Where data on student achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in three ways:

- as expected completions, which is the number of initial enrolments on qualifications where the student expected to complete the qualification in a given year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1995, would appear in the results for 1996-97 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification
- as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which the students have completed as expected (or are continuing with the prospect of late completion). For programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, that is, from the start to the end of the qualification
- as an achievement rate, which is the number of qualifications students have fully achieved as a percentage of completed qualifications with a known outcome. Partial achievements are not shown.

# Summary

## **Brockenhurst College**

### ***South East Region***

#### **Inspected April 1999**

Brockenhurst College is a tertiary college located in the New Forest. The college produced its third self-assessment report for this inspection. All staff were involved in the process. The final draft was submitted to governors for scrutiny and approval. External agencies were used by the college in the validation process. Inspectors agreed with many of the findings but identified a few additional strengths and weaknesses. The report provided a reliable guide to the quality of cross-college and curriculum provision. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements in all areas.

The college offers courses in nine of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. Provision in five of these programme areas was inspected at the college's main site and the centres at New Milton, Lymington and Ringwood. Collaborative provision on the Isle of Wight, in computing, was inspected over two days before the main inspection. Prospective students are well informed about the range of courses and opportunities available and once enrolled, they are very well supported. Most courses are well managed. There is much good teaching, reflected in the profile of lesson grades awarded

which is better than the national average.

There have been some improvements in students' achievements. The college's quality assurance system is comprehensive and demonstrates a commitment to raising standards. There is much good accommodation, including some additions since the last inspection. Communications within the college are good. Governance of the college is effective and strategic planning is well developed. Strong and purposeful leadership is apparent at all levels of management. The college should address: the less effective teaching in a minority of lessons; the gradual decline in retention; some unsatisfactory accommodation; and restricted access to IT in some teaching areas.

The grades awarded as a result of the inspection are given below.

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Cross-college provision</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science	2	Support for students	1
Mathematics and computing	2	General resources	2
Business	2	Quality assurance	2
Hospitality and catering, leisure and tourism	2	Governance	1
Art and design	2	Management	1
English and communication	2		
Geography, history, law, psychology and sociology	2		

# Context

## The College and its Mission

1 Brockenhurst College is a medium-sized tertiary college situated in the New Forest, Hampshire. The main site, where most full-time courses take place, is in Brockenhurst itself. The village has a population of 4,500 and benefits from the college day nursery, which is a community facility. An education and training centre operates in modern leased accommodation in the nearby town of New Milton. An extensive programme of part-time adult education and training is delivered on these two sites, the centres in Lymington and Ringwood, and at other locations across the New Forest.

2 The mission of the college is to encourage, support and improve learning with a commitment to excellence and with respect for individual needs. Open access and a strong commitment to the local community are central to the ethos and practice of the college. It is widely involved in many activities and enterprises which contribute to the welfare and development of the New Forest area.

3 Communications are well developed. There is easy access to the M27 and M3 motorways and a main line station in Brockenhurst. Local transport is more difficult. The majority of students travel by train, or bus services which the college provides. The area is dominated by small employers, with over 80% of companies employing five people or less. The major employer is the New Forest District Council, with which the college has close and active links. The principal occupational sectors are health and care, retailing and the hotel and leisure industries. Larger enterprises on Southampton waterside include the Esso refinery and Southampton docks. The unemployment rate in the Southampton travel-to-work area in June 1998 was 3.5%. This is less than half that prevailing at the last inspection in 1996. Locally there has been a continuing reduction in unemployment. This is matched by a growth in occupational training,

particularly in information technology (IT) skills. The local adult population includes a high proportion of people over the age of 60.

4 In 1997-98, there were 1,962 full-time students funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and 2,085 part-time students. In addition, there were over 3,000 students on non-schedule 2 courses. Since 1995, full-time enrolments have grown by 16% and part time by 9%. This has been achieved within the context of a highly competitive local market for post-16 education and training which has seen the emergence of eight new sixth forms in local secondary schools. The local post-16 staying on rates are in excess of 75%. The catchment area includes a sixth form college and large further education colleges in the nearby conurbations. Students travel to the college from seven local education authorities.

5 The college offers courses in nine of the 10 FEFC programme areas, from foundation to advanced levels. Qualifications are principally General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A level), General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), but there is also a range of vocational certificate and diploma courses. Special educational needs are met through a variety of full-time and part-time programmes that are often planned and delivered in partnership with voluntary and public sector organisations. Access to higher education courses have been running successfully for 10 years. The range of part-time and full-cost short courses has expanded significantly and an increasing number are made available at the weekend.

6 Whilst the local education environment is highly competitive, the college has maintained and developed collaboration wherever possible. Successful partnerships have enabled the provision of New Deal and the development of a Hampshire-wide virtual college with the University for Industry and collaboration fund monies. Collaborative provision with training

# Context

providers and continued close co-operation with secondary schools, the careers services and the Hampshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) are also significant partnerships. An outward looking and entrepreneurial approach to change and development has facilitated successful applications to the National Lottery and the use of European Social Fund grants.

## The Inspection

7 The college was inspected during the week beginning 26 April 1999. Before the inspection, inspectors considered the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information from other directorates of the FEFC. Data on students' achievements for 1996 and 1997 were derived from the individualised student record (ISR). This was supplemented by data provided by the college on students' achievements in 1998. Inspectors found the data to be reliable and largely accurate. The college had invested a

significant amount of time and effort in developing a system which automatically produces results on students' retention and achievements in the same format as that produced by FEFC. Brockenhurst College was one of the first colleges to produce such a system independently of software houses. The inspection was carried out by 12 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 46 days. They observed 95 lessons and examined students' work and college documents. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff and students.

8 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the lessons inspected, 78% were judged to be good or outstanding, compared with 64% at the last inspection. Only 2% were less than satisfactory. These figures are better than the national profile recorded for colleges inspected in 1997-98.

### Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	6	29	7	2	0	44
GCSE	0	5	4	0	0	9
GNVQ	6	7	2	0	0	15
NVQ	0	3	1	0	0	4
Other vocational	9	5	5	0	0	19
Other	0	4	0	0	0	4
Total (No.)	21	53	19	2	0	95
Total (%)	22	56	20	2	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 (%)	19	46	29	6	0	100

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report*

# Context

9 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1997-98.

## Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Brockenhurst College	12.6	85
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98	10.4	77

*Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report*



# Curriculum Areas

## Science

### Grade 2

**10 The inspection covered GCE A level, GCSE, GNVQ and access courses in biology, human biology, chemistry and physics. Ten lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report. One additional weakness identified by inspectors was not included.**

#### Key strengths

- well-organised lessons and good teaching
- students' written work of a high standard
- students' high achievements in GCE A level sciences
- good results on GNVQ advanced science in its first year
- effective curriculum management
- modern chemistry and physics laboratories

#### Weaknesses

- lack of detailed feedback on students' assessed work
- lack of IT resources for science

11 The quality of most teaching is good. In eight of the 10 lessons observed, strengths clearly outweighed weaknesses. Schemes of work are well prepared. New topics are clearly set in the context of earlier learning and the work in lessons is appropriately paced to achieve the objectives set. Students' learning is systematically checked. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teachers make skilful use of an appropriate variety of classroom activities. In most lessons there are productive and friendly relationships between teachers and students. Teachers generally ensure that all

students are included in discussions and activities. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers failed to involve some students who did not give their full attention. Attendance was high in most lessons observed.

12 Preparation of students for examinations is good. There are regular revision sessions and topic tests. Teachers set students work which is sufficiently demanding and students usually complete it on time. Most students' work is of a high standard and demonstrates their acquisition of good numerical, writing and practical skills. Assessment of students' written work is thorough. Work is returned promptly, but there were insufficient comments on some students' written work to help them improve their performance. This is particularly evident in topic tests where students receive feedback as a group and not on an individual basis.

13 In biology, a comprehensive students' progress review system has operated for two years. This year it has been introduced to the other areas. On entry, students receive a target minimum grade based on GCSE results and progress against this is monitored three times a year. An action plan for the student is produced after each review. Attendance is also monitored at the review stage, as well as through pastoral tutorials. The strong teaching team is well managed and effectively organised. Both formal and informal communication between the curriculum manager and teachers is good.

14 In GCE A levels, achievement rates in biology, human biology, chemistry and physics are high and above the national average. The retention rates in GCE A level sciences are good and above 70% for all three years. One cohort of GNVQ science students has completed the course with high retention and good results. On GCSE courses retention has been the same in the last two years, but achievement has shown a significant improvement in the last year.

15 Teachers are well qualified and effectively deployed. Support is provided by a team of well-qualified technicians. Most of the

# Curriculum Areas

accommodation used for science is good. The laboratories for chemistry and physics are modern and stimulating with good access to preparation areas. This was identified in the college's self-assessment report as a strength and inspectors agreed. Two of the four biology laboratories are in need of refurbishment which was also identified in the self-assessment report. General teaching rooms are good, although some theory lectures which take place in laboratories are less effective because of the structure of the room. There is a suitable range

of science texts in the laboratories. However, staff need further training to build the application of IT into their schemes of work. The college has recently invested in IT through the purchase of a set of data loggers and a dedicated server with a computer networked in each laboratory. The college has a comprehensive health and safety policy and has undergone an external audit. As a result, the science area has undertaken a detailed safety check but has yet to do a full risk assessment.

## A summary of achievement and retention rates in science, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE science	2	Expected completions	101	140	99
		Retention (%)	78	69	70
		Achievement (%)	25	28	48
GNVQ advanced science	3	Expected completions	*	*	11
		Retention (%)	*	*	82
		Achievement (%)	*	*	89
GCE A level human biology	3	Expected completions	54	56	41
		Retention (%)	69	82	71
		Achievement (%)	73	85	96
GCE A level biology	3	Expected completions	61	68	87
		Retention (%)	90	72	75
		Achievement (%)	86	96	92
GCE A level chemistry	3	Expected completions	64	63	76
		Retention (%)	92	84	83
		Achievement (%)	82	86	82
GCE A level physics	3	Expected completions	75	58	77
		Retention (%)	88	72	75
		Achievement (%)	85	87	84

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Mathematics and Computing

### Grade 2

**16 Inspectors observed 15 lessons in mathematics, computing and IT. This included four lessons observed on the Isle of Wight. The college's self-assessment report was detailed and inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified.**

#### Key strengths

- much well-managed, effective teaching
- high quality of students' assignment and project work
- high levels of achievement on short and advanced courses
- effective curriculum management and internal verification
- good access to appropriate computer facilities

#### Weaknesses

- lack of appropriate variety in some mathematics teaching
- little use of IT in mathematics lessons
- poor retention on GCE A level computing course

17 The college offers a good range of courses in IT and computing. These include GCE A level, GCSE, GNVQ and computer literacy and information technology courses. Mathematics is offered at GCSE and GCE A level in a modular form with three options and also as further mathematics. Curriculum management is effective and there are sound arrangements for internal verification of GNVQ work. External verification reports are good. Teachers work well together and there are regular team meetings.

18 Most teaching observed by inspectors was good and nearly half was outstanding. Inspectors agreed that teachers deliver well-planned lessons with aims that are clearly

communicated to students. In one outstanding lesson, GNVQ advanced IT students worked on a team assignment. Working in groups of four, students were in various stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of their projects. The students were enthusiastic and articulate in describing their activities. These included producing a sports magazine and setting up on the internet a world wide web page for a local church. Team working skills and IT proficiency were developing well. Homework and assignment work is regularly set and marked with appropriate comments. Students find the modular mathematics courses provide an approachable way of increasing their skills. In most lessons, mathematics techniques are clearly explained and students are attentive. In some lessons, the pace of work is too slow for the more able students and the level of enthusiasm shown by teachers for their subject is low.

19 In the collaborative provision on the Isle of Wight, a flexible learning environment allows tutors to give individual guidance while other students work from instructional materials at their own pace. The centre is conducive to learning, busy and productive. This centre has assisted the college to widen participation, and includes many mature, often unemployed students. Co-ordination between teachers and managers is good. Accommodation is appropriate although it becomes very crowded at times.

20 Inspectors agreed that GCSE mathematics results have been good in the last three years. They are above the national average. There were retention and pass rates of 100% in GCE A level further mathematics in 1998. GCE A level mathematics results are above the national average. The computer literacy and information technology courses attract a large number of students needing an introduction to IT skills and results are above the national average. There is good retention on GCSE computing courses, but there has been a significant drop in the achievement of grades C or above. Retention

# Curriculum Areas

for GCE A level computing fell sharply in 1998, although the pass rate rose to 91%. The college has had some difficulty in the past in recruiting suitable IT staff, but has recently been successful in addressing this. Students choosing computing are insufficiently aware of its theoretical basis. The introduction of GCSE and GCE A level IT should provide a more suitable practical approach to computing for some students. On the GNVQ advanced IT course retention and results are outstanding.

21 The college recognises that mathematics courses benefit from being largely timetabled in a new purpose-built centre. This provides well-organised resources and assists informal teacher contact. The mathematics rooms have no computers installed, so use of IT in mathematics

is limited. To help overcome this problem, most GCE A level mathematics students have purchased graphic calculators which are also used in class. Rooms for computing and IT courses are appropriately equipped with reliable computer networks and there is good technician support. Suitable software is available and there is access to the internet. CD-ROMs are available in the library for revision of GCSE mathematics. These were only introduced recently and are still little used. Lunchtime mathematics workshops are available to all students. There is an open access IT centre, but students may also use computers in classrooms when otherwise not in use. Students have their own textbooks which they bring to class. These are appropriate for their needs.

## A summary of achievement and retention rates in mathematics and computing, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
Computer literacy and information technology (short and one year)	1	Expected completions	200	310	448
		Retention (%)	83	87	75
		Achievement (%)	84	78	73
GCSE mathematics	2	Expected completions	349	329	269
		Retention (%)	79	73	72
		Achievement (%)	39	46	43
GCSE computing	2	Expected completions	33	32	19
		Retention (%)	85	75	84
		Achievement (%)	50	43	19
GCE A level mathematics	3	Expected completions	151	*	165
		Retention (%)	87	*	64
		Achievement (%)	93	*	79
GCE A level computing	3	Expected completions	50	43	44
		Retention (%)	80	79	55
		Achievement (%)	61	57	91
GNVQ advanced IT	3	Expected completions	**	**	17
		Retention (%)	**	**	88
		Achievement (%)	**	**	93

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

\*data unreliable

\*\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Business

### Grade 2

**22 Inspectors observed 14 lessons covering both full-time and part-time provision on courses in business studies, business technology, administration and public services. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report but identified one additional weakness.**

#### Key strengths

- well-planned and purposeful learning
- thorough assessment processes
- well-managed programmes
- good pass rates
- the range of enrichment activities

#### Weaknesses

- some weak teaching of theoretical concepts
- poor retention rates on some full-time courses
- careless presentation of work by some business students

23 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that course and lesson planning are strengths. Lessons are well organised and purposeful. Teams meet regularly to schedule course activities and teachers work together on students' assignments and projects. Course handbooks are well designed and informative. Teachers give high priority to students' attendance and punctuality. Attendance in lessons observed by inspectors was significantly higher than the national average. Although most courses are full time and meet the needs of students aged 16 to 18, an increasing number of adults attend evening courses, notably in business technology. An enthusiastic team of staff has recently developed an administration

course for adults at the New Milton site which is offered over three days each week. The management of the curriculum area is good.

24 Inspectors observed some high standards of teaching. In the best lessons, teachers made clear their objectives and used a variety of appropriate methods skilfully to develop and test students' understanding. Imaginative use of the internet supports students' learning. Teachers concentrate on ensuring that students are well prepared for examinations and course assessments. In the less effective lessons, teachers did not provide the more able students with sufficiently demanding work. Theoretical concepts were not always carefully explained and teachers did not always check that learning was taking place. Some adults on administration programmes are studying for qualifications which do not offer them sufficient academic challenge. There is no formal accreditation of their prior learning and experience.

25 Assessment activities are well designed. For example, assignment briefs for all GNVQ business and BTEC public services courses are appropriately demanding and encourage teamwork. Projects and practical tasks for administration students include realistic interviews with local employers. A well-organised business centre provides a range of services, mainly for college staff. Students enjoy working in the centre, although it offers few opportunities for them to experience working with a broad range of customers and on a variety of business activities. There are productive links with employers which enable full-time students to experience a wider range of work-related activities. Students' assignments and projects demonstrate good knowledge and understanding. Assessment is rigorous. Teachers give clear evaluations of the quality of the work, and useful guidance on how it might be improved. Internal verification is thorough on national vocational qualification (NVQ) and GNVQ courses, although best practice is not

# Curriculum Areas

sufficiently shared across the curriculum area.

In some business, public services and accounting courses, teachers give insufficient attention to students' course notes and files, which are often untidy, contain uncorrected grammatical and spelling errors and are poorly organised. The college's self-assessment report did not recognise this weakness.

26 Retention rates on most courses are close to the national average, though there are some notable exceptions. Retention has been low in the BTEC national diploma in public services and GCE A level business for several years. Pass rates for completing students are generally good. Pass rates are above the national average in GCE A level accounting and business, GNVQ foundation business, NVQ level 2 administration, NVQ level 2 customer service, public services, and several business technology courses at stages 2 and 3. The GNVQ intermediate business course failed to recruit this year, reducing progression opportunities. Teachers encourage full-time students to tailor their individual programmes to meet their needs. For example, public services students can select from a range of activities with employers to improve their career prospects. Teachers on public services courses are adept at using their previous work backgrounds to enhance the students' experiences. Many GCE A level and administration students take additional business technology courses to enrich their main programmes of study.

27 Teaching accommodation is good. Classrooms are well furnished with displays of business materials. A few rooms are small and restrict group activities. Students have good access to computers, though some of these are not representative of the latest standards of hardware and software. There is a broad range of up-to-date business texts and periodicals in the resource centre. Teachers are well qualified. However some business teachers have not updated their commercial and industrial experience.

# Curriculum Areas

## A summary of achievement and retention rates in business, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
NVQ business administration	2	Expected completions	38	11	37
		Retention (%)	89	91	70
		Achievement (%)	88	100	100*
BTEC first diploma public services	2	Expected completions	25	23	6
		Retention (%)	72	70	83
		Achievement (%)	67	100	80
GCE A level business and accounting	3	Expected completions	119	**	109
		Retention (%)	78	**	69*
		Achievement (%)	90	**	85*
GNVQ advanced business	3	Expected completions	63	70	46
		Retention (%)	67	61	78
		Achievement (%)	79	70	78
BTEC national diploma public services	3	Expected completions	32	22	19
		Retention (%)	66*	73	53
		Achievement (%)	100	100	90
Single subjects in text processing, wordprocessing and business technology	1, 2 and 3	Expected completions	1,248	1,355	1,820
		Retention (%)	91	84	77
		Achievement (%)	72	57	67

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

\*ISR or college data amended or unreliable

\*\*no validated data available

# Curriculum Areas

## Hospitality and Catering, Leisure and Tourism

### Grade 2

**28 The inspection covered all aspects of the provision for hospitality, catering, leisure and tourism. Ten lessons and one tutorial were observed. The self-assessment report was comprehensive. Inspectors agreed with the majority of strengths and weaknesses in the report although they considered that a few strengths were overstated.**

#### Key strengths

- well-managed teaching programmes
- good range of additional qualifications available
- comprehensive and vocationally-relevant assignments
- high achievement rates on the majority of programmes
- extensive and productive links with industry, including work placement

#### Weaknesses

- inadequate resources in food service
- poor retention and achievement on GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism
- inadequate changing facilities in hospitality

29 The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses in hospitality and catering. Provision includes GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering and some NVQs at levels 1 and 2. A number of other programmes to meet community needs are also available. All three levels of GNVQ leisure and tourism are offered. Students' experience and career prospects are improved by the opportunity to gain additional qualifications to their main programme. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that courses are well planned

and responsive to students' needs. Most lessons are well planned with clear objectives and outcomes. Inspectors observed a small number of lessons where the teaching did not adequately meet the individual needs of students.

30 In some practical lessons students successfully supervised others in a confident and professional manner. Practical work is carried out competently and safely and there are regular safety checks of equipment. Students are frequently required to make use of the experience and knowledge they have gained within the industry. They are actively involved in initiating assessments and encouraged to work on their own. Assessments and assignments are well planned and relevant to the industry. Key skills are not yet fully integrated with NVQ programmes. There is little evidence of accreditation of students' prior learning. There are good relationships between students and staff, who are supportive of students' needs. Support for students with learning difficulties, who are integrated with mainstream programmes, is good. Students' attendance is closely monitored throughout all programmes.

31 Students are able to benefit from the extensive and productive links with industry. There is a range of external visits, including overseas visits, and speakers from the industries are invited as guests to the college. The college recognises the value of visits in enhancing students' learning. The involvement of industry representatives on college advisory panels promotes closer links between the curriculum and the external working environment. A well-developed work placement programme extends students' knowledge and skills, although no assessment takes place during this time.

32 The curriculum is well managed. Regular team meetings monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Programme teams regularly review schemes of work. Thorough monitoring of students' progress is evident. Staff ensure that students are fully informed of



# Curriculum Areas

their progress, as are parents or employers. Retention and achievement targets are set and closely monitored. Course handbooks which are used in induction provide useful information for students. They are reviewed each year. There is a well-developed internal verification process across all areas.

33 Achievements of retained students are good in most courses. There were pass rates of 100% on foundation and intermediate leisure and tourism, and NVQ level 2 food service in the last two years. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the majority of students on GNVQ foundation and intermediate leisure and tourism achieve high grades. Achievement on NVQ levels 1 and 2 in catering and hospitality is above the national average. The college recognises that there is poor retention on GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism courses. This dropped to 65% in 1998. Achievement also dropped to 51%. The programme of additional qualifications for students improves progression opportunities and employment prospects. However, this has an impact on retention. Since the area is a popular tourist destination and job opportunities are plentiful, employers offer students full-time work on the basis of their additional qualifications which they take before completing their main courses. Most students who complete courses in this programme area gain employment and many progress into higher education.

34 Teachers are well qualified and experienced. At present, there are no formal mechanisms for ensuring that teachers' vocational skills are maintained and that they are up to date with industrial practice. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that students on leisure courses benefit from purpose-built facilities. A travel advice centre has improved the facilities for travel programmes. Resources for hospitality and catering do not fully reflect current industrial standards, particularly in the restaurant area. Changing facilities within hospitality are

inadequate. Learning materials are appropriate and some of those developed by the college are of a good standard. However, some of the bookstock in the library for catering is outdated. There is a lack of specific IT software related to the industry. Teaching rooms are well maintained, with good displays of relevant course materials.

# Curriculum Areas

**A summary of achievement and retention rates in hospitality and catering, leisure and tourism, 1996 to 1998**

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism	1	Expected completions	+	10	15
		Retention (%)	+	90	87
		Achievement (%)	+	100	100
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cooking	1	Expected completions	16	26	12
		Retention (%)	88	81	100
		Achievement (%)	93	90	100
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cooking	2	Expected completions	14	11	14
		Retention (%)	100	82	86
		Achievement (%)	100	100	92
NVQ catering and hospitality serving food and drink	2	Expected completions	14	21	12
		Retention (%)	86	86	100
		Achievement (%)	92	100	100
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	Expected completions	24	39	37
		Retention (%)	92	72	81
		Achievement (%)	86	100	100
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	Expected completions	77*	63	57
		Retention (%)	75*	67	65
		Achievement (%)	42*	86	51

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

\*ISR data may be inaccurate

+course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Art and Design

### Grade 2

**35 Inspectors observed 19 lessons covering full-time and part-time courses in art and design, photography and ceramics.**

**Inspectors agreed with the majority of findings in the self-assessment report but considered that some weaknesses were understated.**

#### Key strengths

- well-organised and well-managed teaching and learning
- good achievements on most full-time courses
- provision that meets a range of students' needs
- good specialist facilities and accommodation

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient equipment for IT and three-dimensional studies
- lack of work experience and real life projects
- inadequate planning for use of the new accommodation

36 An appropriate range of art and design courses meets the needs of full-time and part-time students. These include GCSE courses and GCE A levels in art, design and photography as well as GNVQ intermediate and advanced art and design. Provision also includes Open College Network courses at levels 1, 2 and 3, RSA Examinations Board (RSA) desktop publishing and City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) photography, basic pottery and creative studies. Courses are well planned and supporting documentation is good. The area has good lines of communication and a schedule of meetings. Full minutes are recorded. Staff work well as a team and demonstrate

commitment to students both within and outside the timetable.

37 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that the standard of teaching in art and design is good. Inspectors judged the teaching to be good or better in 17 of the 19 lessons observed. The use of a variety of teaching methods sustains students' interest in the longer lessons and the use of modern technologies, such as digital cameras, enlivens the teaching. In two weaker lessons the work lacked pace and teachers failed to stimulate students' involvement. Student retention and attendance have improved overall in art and design, but registers indicate that attendance is still erratic on GNVQ and some GCSE courses.

38 Most students enjoy their studies at the college, and produce work of a good standard. Some assignments have been designed to encourage the investigation of a variety of cultures. Students research and apply imagery or influences from other cultural backgrounds to their work. Key skills are integrated with GNVQ courses, but are sometimes taught separately by specialists. Care is taken to ensure that key skills are assessed through projects relevant to the course.

39 There are few links with the industry on vocational courses and no work experience. There are only two examples of real life projects. Inspectors agreed that the assessment process is appropriate, but considered that some grading on vocational courses is overgenerous. Comprehensive handbooks inform students of the assessment process.

40 Overall students' achievements on full-time courses, with the exception of GCSE, are good. On GCE A level courses, achievement is high, although retention has declined. On most part-time courses, there was a decline in achievement in 1998. Students receive advice and instruction at the commencement of their courses and have good support from tutors during their course. Progression into higher education and the workplace is good for

# Curriculum Areas

full-time students. Pathways for adults are more restricted. Students' portfolios and their current work in progress are of an appropriate standard. There are good examples of art work on display throughout the college.

41 Staff, including technical support, are appropriately qualified, although the annual review process has identified a need to develop the IT skills of a few staff. The art and design section enjoys a new, purpose-built block, which provides an open, light workspace. Further planning of the space is needed to realise its full potential. Space for ceramics work is restricted. There are problems with noise both within and

between teaching spaces. At present, there are no blackout facilities for showing slides or videos. The area also lacks a proper construction area for three-dimensional work. However, the new block does provide an external covered area for paint spraying and building activities. The ceramics area is well equipped and organised to comply with safety regulations. Facilities for photography are good, with a well-equipped preparation area and darkroom. There are no computers available in the area. Only two machines, available elsewhere, are of an acceptable design industry standard.

## A summary of achievement and retention rates in art and design, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
C&G pottery, photography and creative studies	1	Expected completions	87	77	67
		Retention (%)	98	90	87
		Achievement (%)	72	100	60
C&G creative studies, RSA desktop publishing	2	Expected completions	75	83	75
		Retention (%)	84	89	73
		Achievement (%)	43	73	46
GCSE art, design and photography	2	Expected completions	79	68	64
		Retention (%)	81	78	78
		Achievement (%)	63	66	52
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	Expected completions	*	19	16
		Retention (%)	*	58	50
		Achievement (%)	*	73	88
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	Expected completions	22	29	19
		Retention (%)	64	59	63
		Achievement (%)	79	94	100
GCE A levels (two year)	3	Expected completions	125	160	200
		Retention (%)	83	69	69
		Achievement (%)	92	93	93

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## English and Communication

### Grade 2

**42 Inspectors observed 15 lessons covering GCE A level courses in English, English language, English literature and communication studies, GCSE English, and English in the access to higher education programme. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the college's self-assessment.**

#### Key strengths

- well-planned and structured courses
- good, demanding teaching
- purposeful group work
- high pass rates in most GCE A level courses for the last three years
- good-quality accommodation

#### Weaknesses

- falling pass rates in GCE A English literature over the last three years
- falling retention rates on most courses

43 Most lessons are well planned and have clear links to the syllabus and schemes of work. Teaching is good. It is enthusiastic, lively and effective. Intended outcomes are clearly specified at the start of most lessons. There is good use of contemporary material in lessons. A variety of effective teaching methods is used. Group work is especially well structured and managed. Teachers have high expectations of students. Students are responsive and hard working. The quality of their verbal and written work is high. Teachers monitor students' learning carefully, offering support and encouragement to individuals and groups.

44 Written assignments are demanding. Students' work is marked promptly, thoroughly and consistently to the standards agreed by course teams. Teachers' comments contain helpful advice to students on how they might

improve their work. Students work confidently with IT and use it effectively to produce high-quality coursework, especially in communication studies. The pass rate for two-year GCE A level courses has been above the national average for the last three years but showed a decline in 1998. Achievements on the one-year GCE A level English language course for adult students have been well above the national average for the last three years. The proportion of students achieving grade C or above is increasing in GCE A level English language, but declining in English literature. The college recognises that more able students on GCE A level English literature courses do not always achieve their full potential. Pass rates at grades A to C for GCSE English were significantly above the national average in 1998, and show an improvement on the previous year. Retention rates are generally lower in 1998 compared with 1996. There is a lack of analysis of retention in the self-assessment report.

45 English and communication studies courses are well managed. There is committed and enthusiastic leadership and teachers' responsibilities are clear. Meetings are well documented. Teachers' experience as examiners has helped to establish effective internal verification procedures. Communication within teams is good and teachers work well together. Resources developed by teachers are shared between course teams. Students are given clear, attractive course booklets as part of their induction. These set out syllabus requirements and expectations of students and staff. Course files are detailed and helpful, although some course reviews do not give enough attention to achievement, retention and action-planning. Targets are set and reviewed, but these are not then followed up in the review process. The views of students about courses are collected and analysed and given thoughtful consideration by teachers. Inspectors considered that the self-assessment report did not provide enough evidence to support the key strengths claimed in communications.

# Curriculum Areas

46 English and communication studies are taught in modern, well-equipped classrooms. There is a good display of students' work and posters in corridors and classrooms. Text book stocks are adequate. There is a wide range of books and other resources in the college library. Much of this is now outdated. There is minimal use of library resources by students on the English and communication studies courses.

## A summary of achievement and retention rates in English and communication, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE English	2	Expected completions	204	177	177
		Retention (%)	75	75	72
		Achievement (%)	59	52	63
GCE A level communication (two years)	3	Expected completions	39	18	21
		Retention (%)	77	61	48
		Achievement (%)	77	90	80
GCE A level English language (one year)	3	Expected completions	27	20	28
		Retention (%)	85	80	82
		Achievement (%)	96	100	87
GCE A level English language (two year)	3	Expected completions	101	147	183
		Retention (%)	81	80	74
		Achievement (%)	84	96	89
GCE A level English literature (two year)	3	Expected completions	109	72	96
		Retention (%)	85	69	70
		Achievement (%)	94	96	89

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

# Curriculum Areas

## Geography, History, Law, Psychology and Sociology

### Grade 2

**47 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering GCSE, GCE A level and GCE advanced supplementary (AS) courses in geography, history, law, psychology and sociology. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report but judged one strength to be understated.**

#### Key strengths

- well-qualified, enthusiastic teachers committed to supporting students
- good teaching
- well-structured and planned courses
- effective management of curriculum areas
- good levels of achievement

#### Weaknesses

- falling retention rates
- inadequate IT facilities

48 All of the provision inspected is managed in the humanities section, except for law, which is in business and professional studies. Both areas are enthusiastically and effectively managed. Information and ideas are regularly exchanged formally and informally between teaching teams and managers. Meetings are well organised and there are comprehensive minutes. Teams work effectively, collectively defining schemes of work, moderating standards, and reviewing performance. All teams clearly respond to students' views and concerns. The psychology team includes student representation in some meetings and consults with evening course students. All teams have a long-established commitment to critical self-analysis in order to achieve high standards.

This was understated in the self-assessment report. Annual staff reviews are well established and professionally supportive. Mid-year reviews also take place.

49 Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic about their teaching and committed to their students. Staff-student relations are excellent. Clear ground rules are shared with students at induction and the behaviour of students is correspondingly responsible. The atmosphere in lessons is productive and well focused on learning objectives. The standard of most teaching is high. Inspectors judged nine of the 12 lessons observed to be good or better. Lesson observations have contributed to the raising of standards. Excellent schemes of work ensure comprehensive, well-phased coverage of syllabuses. In many lessons it was clear that students are being well-challenged intellectually. History students are enabled to achieve depths of understanding, evaluation and knowledge across a wide area of historical inquiry. The pace of work in some lessons, particularly where there is prolonged work in small groups, is sometimes allowed to relax too much. The outcomes of such group work are not properly summarised and, as a result, opportunities to assess the students' response and develop their understanding further, are missed. Assessment of students' work is generally good. There is insufficient emphasis on the use of IT in the completion of assignments. In sociology, psychology and law, detailed feedback sheets specifically address study skills required by the examiners. Students are given guidance on how to organise their work.

50 Examination preparation is given close attention. Several teachers are external examiners and all teams try to attend examination board conferences. External moderators generally confirm the appropriateness of the teaching. Examination calendars, syllabuses and assignment dates are well publicised. Detailed examination revision schemes are prepared in all teams and in law

# Curriculum Areas

and psychology are sent to parents for information. Despite their ambition to attain high examination pass rates, teachers retain inclusive selection policies. Study skills and supported learning are well established. All teams are now setting precise targets for attendance and retention, and are using value-added measures to predict and set targets for achievement at GCE A level based on students' GCSE qualifications. However, some teams are more effective in this than others. The psychology team is conducting a valuable experiment which correlates GCSE profiles with performance and uses individualised value-added data.

51 Students' achievements at GCE A level are high. For the last two years, pass rates and the proportion of students achieving higher grades in all subjects have exceeded the national average. Retention rates on most GCE A level courses have fallen over the last three years. The reasons for withdrawal have been systematically addressed in some teams, and cause for concern notes introduced for problem students. In law, the modular syllabus allows the teaching of first-year GCE A level and GCE AS students as one class. However, this had led to higher rates of early withdrawal. GCSE provision is limited and declining as vocational provision expands. Pass rates in all GCSE subjects improved in 1998, compared with the previous year, and particularly in geography, which had a significant decline in 1997. Retention rates are low across all GCSE subjects, with the exception of geography.

52 Most teaching rooms are of a high standard. Displays are attractive though not always up to date. There are good stocks of appropriate supportive texts and articles in history. All teams manage their own reprographic budgets, which are sufficient to meet their needs for such teaching materials. There is increasing use of IT in the resource centre by students. The section's own IT resources are not adequate to meet the needs of the number of students.



# Curriculum Areas

**A summary of achievement and retention rates in geography, history, law, psychology and sociology, 1996 to 1998**

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE humanities	2	Expected completions	154	121	67
		Retention (%)	62	60	66
		Achievement (%)	42	42	45
GCE A level geography	3	Expected completions	126	122	107
		Retention (%)	82	66	74
		Achievement (%)	77	92	96
GCE A level history	3	Expected completions	98	97	94
		Retention (%)	86	77	65
		Achievement (%)	95	92	86
GCE A level law	3	Expected completions	55	59	78
		Retention (%)	73	63	69
		Achievement (%)	74	82	85
GCE A level psychology	3	Expected completions	137	183	174
		Retention (%)	70	63	63
		Achievement (%)	97	92	87
GCE A level sociology	3	Expected completions	55	59	81
		Retention (%)	75	63	62
		Achievement (%)	90	86	100
GCE AS humanities	3	Expected completions	42	66	47
		Retention (%)	100	79	68
		Achievement (%)	36	50	61

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 1

#### 53 Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the college's self-assessment report.

##### Key strengths

- positive and productive teamwork to support students
- well-managed and effective recruitment, admission and guidance of students
- comprehensive arrangements for induction
- effective and supportive personal tutoring
- good careers and personal counselling services
- excellent preparation for applications to higher education
- thorough provision of learning support to meet individual students' needs
- good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

##### Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

54 The college has comprehensive and effective arrangements for the recruitment, admission and guidance of students. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that these are a strength. Quality standards and procedures are detailed and clear. Procedures and materials are regularly reviewed to inform changes in the service. Publicity materials are attractive and informative. The college has made contacts further afield to compensate for the development of competitive sixth forms in local schools. It now has extensive links with over 40 schools. A senior tutor liaises with each school. Prospective students are well informed, receiving appropriate advice and guidance through visits to the schools, curriculum

briefings, open evenings and 'taster' programmes. The college has invested heavily in arrangements with local bus and rail companies to provide transport for students.

55 Students' responses to questionnaires record high levels of satisfaction with admission and interview arrangements. Senior tutors and course advisers interview applicants, working to detailed guidelines. Prospective full-time students are regularly contacted after interview. In addition, all applications are reconsidered once examination results are known. Students further discuss choices with personal tutors during induction. A senior tutor co-ordinates support for part-time students and works closely with the curriculum manager for adult education. All adult students receive a specially written guide. They are offered personal guidance and advice at enrolment, and during open events for adults.

56 Full-time students receive a comprehensive induction to the college. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that induction is a strength. The active students' union organises a barbecue to help introduce new students to each other. The college's self-assessment identified the lack of suitable induction for late enrolling students. Inspectors agreed, but noted that new arrangements will be introduced for next academic year. Efficient arrangements are in place to manage the transfer of students between courses.

57 Students have ample opportunity to receive careers guidance and advice. The careers area, within the attractive new student services accommodation, contains a wide range of current information, often on computer software. Two careers advisers work closely with college staff to provide a full range of advice and guidance to all students. Students consider the help they receive when applying to higher education to be particularly good. A qualified personal counsellor provides a daily counselling service, complemented through good links with local expert agencies. The college has

# Cross-college Provision

a long-established 40-place day nursery and a baby care unit with seven subsidised places for students. At the time of the inspection, around 20% of the total places were used by students.

58 Personal tutorial arrangements are well managed and effective. Significant weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. High-quality support for students contributes to the largely good levels of attendance. It has been a key measure in countering a gradual decline in retention. All full-time and adult day students belong to a personal tutor group, which is usually subject area based. Meetings are held weekly and, where possible, tutored by teachers of the group. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that the annual tutorial programme is well planned. It includes a detailed programme accredited by the Hampshire Open College Network. A comprehensive tutor handbook and extensive tutor notes are used. Tutors announce college notices and individually review students' progress, producing action plans as appropriate. In some tutorials, inadequate planning by tutors reduced their effectiveness, but weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been ironed out. Inspectors recognised the strength of the support system in tackling difficulties the college had identified in student retention. While retention is an issue for the college, levels of student drop out are not significantly higher than in similar colleges. Tutorial arrangements for part-time evening students, at both the main site and the other centres, are well managed by curriculum areas.

59 As the college's self-assessment report recognised, there are many component strengths contributing to the success of its learning support. Support is provided centrally, but in addition the amount of support provided by students' subject teachers is increasing. This inclusive approach is successfully integrating learning support with the curriculum. The learning support team works closely with the staff who teach on GNVQ foundation courses

and on courses for students with special educational needs. This has increased learning support staff experience and has considerably enhanced the college's expertise. Schools and admissions interviews provide early warning of students needing additional support. On enrolment, all full-time students on level 1 and 2 courses take screening tests in numeracy and communication. The college is piloting screening for level 3 students which is to be introduced in the new academic year. The vast majority of students identified as needing learning support complete their programme and are closely monitored by their personal tutors. As well as long-term support for numeracy, communication, dyslexia and profound deafness, there is short-term support in study skills, IT, numeracy and communication. The college runs a number of successful courses for school-leavers and adult students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, in close liaison with specialist staff from outside agencies.

## General Resources

### Grade 2

**60 Inspectors agreed with the great majority of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report but considered that one weakness had been understated. The self-assessment report recognised the continuing development of the college's resources.**

#### Key strengths

- tidy and well-maintained accommodation
- improvements in accommodation since the last inspection
- much good teaching accommodation, efficiently used
- careful approach to planning accommodation changes
- well-equipped fitness suite

# Cross-college Provision

## Weaknesses

- outdated and inadequate student refectory
- deficiencies in accommodation in a small number of teaching areas
- insufficient access to computers and study spaces

61 Buildings on the college's main site in Brockenhurst date from 1937 to 1998. The newest building provides accommodation for art and design and mathematics. The college has adopted a careful and planned approach to the management of its accommodation. The accommodation strategy is revised annually as part of the strategic planning process and there is a planned maintenance schedule. Efficient use of teaching accommodation is achieved during the day. Since the last inspection there have been some significant improvements in accommodation. The sports hall has been improved by the addition of a well-equipped fitness centre and new changing rooms. Accommodation for careers, counselling and other student services have been brought together and located close to the college reception area. The number of huts used for teaching has been reduced from 30 to two and better accommodation has been provided for the baby unit and the nursery. Teaching areas have been grouped together within subject disciplines and the student social area has been renovated. Access for students with restricted mobility is good in most areas. The college relocates classes if access is difficult. However, the IT centre and the newly-equipped computer rooms on the first floor of the main building are not accessible.

62 The college is in the centre of a pretty village. Its grounds are well maintained and a great majority of the accommodation is tidy and well kept. There are exciting wall displays throughout the college, celebrating students' work. Teaching rooms in English, business

communication, foreign languages, sociology, psychology and mathematics are particularly good. The college recognises that there are a few areas of weakness in accommodation, some of which are significant to students. Inspectors agreed with the college's evaluation in its self-assessment report that there is a lack of accommodation for media and performing arts. The college refectory is outdated and inadequate. It is housed in a temporary building, which was erected in 1947. There are common break and lunchtimes across the college, and at these times there is not enough seating for students, either in the refectory or the students' social area. Students have the benefit of an attractive site with playing fields and tennis courts.

63 The resource centre includes a library with 127 study spaces, 21 of which are located in a quiet study area. The library has over 22,000 books, and in most areas the stock is adequate. Use of the resource centre is monitored termly. It is crowded at peak times. The provision of the quiet study area has helped to alleviate this problem. The study and examinations centre provides an extra 68 study places outside of examination periods. The college recognises that the study places in this area are not well used by students.

64 There are six computers in the library for students' use. The college IT centre has 24 computers on open access for students. While the number of computers on open access is small, students also have access to computers in teaching rooms. Students may use computers in these rooms when classes are being taught, with the agreement of the teacher, or when the rooms are not being used for teaching. While this arrangement increases the number of computers on open access, students may not always receive sufficient help with any problems they have. Except for those dedicated to computing or IT, few teaching rooms have computers. The ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students is 1:7. Staff and students at

# Cross-college Provision

the centres away from the main site do not have sufficient access to computers or to the resources contained in the resource centre. The college understated this weakness in its self-assessment report.

65 Accommodation for staff is adequate. All staff have access to the college's computer network and to information on students. However, work rooms for some biology and technology teachers are overcrowded. The college has a large and well-furnished staff common room. It includes areas for work, some computers and a social area.

## Quality Assurance

### Grade 2

**66 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses recorded in the self-assessment report but identified an additional weakness. By the time of the inspection, the college had made progress in addressing some weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- the commitment to raising standards
- a well-established cycle, integrating quality assurance and planning procedures
- clearly-defined responsibilities for all aspects of quality assurance
- the establishment and monitoring of quality standards for administrative and support areas
- effective work of the academic board and quality assurance committee
- continuous commitment to staff development

#### Weaknesses

- underdeveloped use of targets at team level
- insufficient impact of quality assurance procedures on retention in some areas

67 The college has continued to develop its arrangements for quality assurance since the last inspection and has made significant improvements in the last two years. The scope of quality assurance procedures has been extended to encompass all college activity, which inspectors agreed is a strength. Systematic measures have been introduced to strengthen the process and to ensure rigorous self-assessment based on reliable evidence. A new cycle has brought together the quality and planning functions. It is underpinned by clear guidelines and a detailed calendar of activities for all managers and governors.

68 In curriculum areas, the process begins at subject or course level. Each team reviews all aspects of its work with particular emphasis on recruitment, retention and achievement. This is assisted by on-line access to statistical data. Progress in addressing actions over the previous year is assessed and priorities for future action agreed. While the college has for some time used a range of targets to evaluate its provision, target-setting at course team level is still in the early stages of development. Students' views inform the process, mainly through the analysis of their views obtained through questionnaires. However, students state that they do not always receive a prompt response to their views. The subject or course reports and action plans are collated by the curriculum manager into a section self-assessment report. These are moderated by the director of curriculum and quality in consultation with curriculum managers.

69 In the administrative and support services areas, there is a parallel system of review and evaluation. Quality standards have been established and are regularly monitored. The college publishes three charters, one each for full-time and part-time students and another for employers. They include clear statements about the standards of service and provision to be expected from the college. Charters are available throughout the college and are widely circulated externally. The complaints procedure

# Cross-college Provision

provides clear guidance and includes timescales for response. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the complaints procedure is rigorously applied.

70 The academic board provides the forum for detailed consideration of quality assurance and planning activity. It has a broad, representative membership and meets twice a term. The quality assurance committee, a subcommittee of the academic board, is responsible for monitoring the process and outcomes of self-assessment. One of its key roles is to audit evidence submitted to support self-assessment grades. The self-assessment process has benefited from an external validation body, which has included the principal and vice-principal of another college, a regional representative from an awarding body, and members of the external quality review consortium in Hampshire. Full account is taken of external verification evidence. The final draft of the self-assessment report is scrutinised by the senior management team before its submission to the corporation for approval. This thorough and rigorous process results in a comprehensive self-assessment report for the college to use as its basis for raising standards. Inspectors agreed with the judgements of the self-assessment report on this aspect of provision.

71 The inspection team agreed with the college's judgement that it has demonstrated improvement as a result of its quality assurance and planning activities. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, assisted by the college's lesson observation system. Over three years, overall high achievement has been sustained at level 1 and steady improvement made at levels 2 and 3, for full-time students. Using an added-value system, which measures students' performance at GCE A level against their GCSE grades, the number of subjects performing at, or above, expectations rose from 58% in 1997 to 65% in 1998. Retention on GNVQ programmes has improved. However, measures to address a gradual decline in

retention overall have yet to produce the desired improvement.

72 Until recently the college has operated two methods of appraisal: the annual review, which assesses performance against targets and determines pay; and a two-year cycle of appraisal related to job descriptions and identification of development needs. These arrangements have ensured that almost all staff have been regularly appraised. The best features of these two systems are being combined into one. Training requirements are collated and a programme and budget are produced. Increasingly, training is provided within the college by college staff or by visiting trainers. This strategy makes the most of a limited budget of £42,000. Priority is given to activities which support the college's strategic objectives. A value for money analysis is undertaken. Opportunities for further development are highly regarded by staff. There is an effective induction programme for new staff. The college has recently had its Investor in People accreditation renewed.

## Governance

### Grade 1

**73 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment of the strengths of governance.**

#### Key strengths

- wide range of governors' expertise
- governors' contribution to strategic planning
- rigorous monitoring of all aspects of the college's performance
- consistently effective work of committees
- high standard of clerking
- thorough self-assessment processes

#### Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

# Cross-college Provision

74 Inspectors and auditors agreed with the self-assessment report that the governance of the college is outstanding. Governors have established an effective partnership with the principal and senior managers. They are supportive yet challenging. Governors involve themselves appropriately in strategic planning and hold an annual seminar, when they review the strategic plan and identify future priorities. Staff are invited to make presentations at the seminar. This direct link to governors involves staff in the planning process. The senior management team's termly review of the strategic plan and financial forecasts is reported to governors, and performance against key indicators is regularly checked. A significant strength is governors' scrutiny and interrogation of student recruitment, retention and achievement data, and their knowledge of curriculum areas where agreed targets are not being achieved. Governors understand the reasons for variations in student retention and achievement rates, and now ensure that action is being taken to address areas of concern.

75 The corporation has a determined membership of 19. There is one vacancy. The present membership comprises 11 independent and two co-opted governors, a student and two staff governors, a nominee of the local TEC, and the principal. A search committee assists with the recruitment of external governors. Governors have a range of skills and expertise in finance, personnel management, quality and project management. They have used their expertise to contribute effectively to the work of the college. For example, one governor has advised the corporation on approaches to target-setting. Another secured an external evaluation of the new management structure after one year of its operation.

76 There is an external clerk to the corporation. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that clerking is of a consistently high standard. The timely production of agendas and the quality of

supporting papers for corporation and committee meetings provide a sound basis for decision-making. Minutes achieve an appropriate balance between recording the decisions made and evidence of debate on key issues. There is a good level of attendance at meetings.

77 The corporation has adopted a comprehensive set of standing orders to guide the conduct of its business. It has a register of interests which has been extended to cover senior management as well. The corporation has a code of conduct and has adopted a range of policies and procedures in line with the Nolan committee's recommendations on openness and accountability. There is a useful governors' handbook which contains relevant information on their responsibilities.

78 The work of the corporation's committees is effective. The committees include: finance and general purposes; employment and personnel; and audit and remuneration. They have terms of reference which clearly identify their responsibilities and relationship to the corporation. The work of each committee contributes effectively to corporation debate and decision-making. The latest committee minutes are received at each corporation meeting. In addition, committee chairs each make an oral report to the full corporation on matters that are central to the work of their committee. All governors receive a monthly management information pack that contains a range of performance monitoring data against targets, including: cashflow; budget variances; student applications and retention statistics. Monthly management accounts for governors do not routinely identify actual income and expenditure against approved budget figures. However, governors do receive full reports on progress against the three-year financial forecast and give careful consideration to the college's financial position at each meeting of the finance and general purposes committee and the corporation. The audit committee monitors

# Cross-college Provision

audit matters effectively and advises the corporation on the quality of the college's system of internal control. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

79 The principal is appraised annually, and the remuneration committee is involved in a wider appraisal of the senior management team. Governors extend their high expectations to their own work. They have undertaken self-assessment for the past three years, and have refined the process over this time. Governors assess their own performance against an extensive set of criteria and systematically seek the views of managers who work with them. Moderation of the most recent self-assessment was undertaken by a governor of another further education college. Action has been taken on shortcomings identified through self-assessment. For instance, a programme of briefing events to meet governors' training requirements has now been introduced.

## Management

### Grade 1

**80 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. The minor weaknesses identified in the report are being addressed.**

#### Key strengths

- strong and purposeful leadership
- clear and efficient management structure
- strategic planning involving staff at all levels in the college
- thorough monitoring of college performance and achievement of targets

- honest and open internal communications
- wide range of collaborative partnerships supporting the college's mission
- well-developed student information system

#### Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

81 The college is well managed with positive and effective leadership at all levels. Managers throughout the organisation set high standards and demonstrate commitment to their achievement. Two years ago the college introduced a new management structure. The replacement of four faculties by a single curriculum directorate has significantly improved the consistency of management practice across the curriculum. Curriculum managers' shared use of an office supports speedy access to information and the sharing of good practice. The student services and marketing directorate contains a team of senior tutors who provide pastoral support and manage the work of personal tutors. The separation of curriculum and pastoral responsibilities into different directorates maintains the focus on the development and support of the whole student.

82 An assessment of the management structure by an external consultancy after one year's operation found it to be effective. The college recognises its structure as a strength. The senior management team comprises the principal and three directors. At weekly meetings, policy development, performance monitoring and recommendations from college committees are addressed. Middle managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are well supported by their directors.

83 Communications are good and are supported by principal's briefings, regular meetings, newsletters, use of noticeboards and a staff handbook. Staff are well informed and can



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contribute their views openly and productively. The college recognises that communications with part-time teachers, working off-site, is a weakness. Action has been taken to improve the situation.

84 Partnerships with external bodies are extensive and effective. A systematic programme of schools liaison allows the college to maintain contact with 40 local secondary schools. This provides a sound basis for students' guidance and progression, as well as a source of market information. There are varied contacts with community groups. The adult and community education subcommittee provides a formal channel of communication. Centres at New Milton, Lymington and Ringwood are in close contact with their local communities, which helps to inform planning of new provision. The college recognised in its self-assessment report that this aspect of its market research could be developed further.

Collaborative partnerships with other providers of education and training assist with widening participation, generating income and achieving growth. These vary in scope from a 'healthy village' project with the leisure centre in a nearby hotel, to a county-wide IT project with other further education colleges.

85 The strategic plan is a positive response to the competitive post-16 environment within which the college operates. It provides a challenging but realistic framework for development. Staff at all levels contribute to formulation and review of the plan, which is supported by annual operating statements for each team and for the whole college. Performance targets are clearly established. Staff and managers are able to relate their work to the overall aims of the college, and to recognise priority areas. Inspectors agreed that strategic planning is a strength.

86 Management information is accurate and reliable. Returns to the FEFC meet required deadlines. A college timetabling system enables effective monitoring of students, accommodation

and utilisation of staff. Managers and staff are able to access information on-line. Student data are interrogated for market information and historical trends, which are then used to inform planning and target-setting. The need for investment in IT resources and training for teaching has been recognised in the college's IT strategy.

87 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the financial management of the college is good. The college has comprehensive budget planning arrangements. Managers have developed a unit costing system, enabling them to identify the cost and contribution of each curriculum area to the college's finances. The accounting system does not meet fully the college's financial reporting needs. Financial reports are therefore produced using a combination of manual and computerised systems. This is inefficient. The college has begun to select and implement a new financial accounting system. There is effective monitoring of the college's financial performance by a management finance committee, using detailed monthly management accounts. The college maintains a comprehensive set of financial regulations. It has also recently adopted an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy in line with the FEFC's *Audit Code of Practice*. The internal and external auditors have not identified any significant weaknesses in the college's systems of financial control.

88 Staff resources are deployed efficiently. Curriculum managers plan the work of teachers to secure effective and efficient use of staff. A reporting system which identifies irregularities enables managers to focus on areas of concern and rectify any difficulties. Retraining and redeployment have provided solutions to overstaffing in some areas with minimal recourse to redundancies. Personnel procedures are thorough and up to date. Annual bids for additional staffing are prioritised by the personnel manager and

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considered by the senior management team in the context of both the strategic plan and financial forecast.

89 The equal opportunities monitoring group has recently reviewed its terms of reference. Reports on equal opportunities are required annually from each area of the college, although this was not fully achieved last academic year. An action plan has been devised to address shortcomings and there is evidence that progress is now being made. The monitoring group reports regularly to the academic board.

## Conclusions

90 The college's self-assessment report submitted for the inspection was comprehensive, evaluative and well presented. Evidence to support the identified strengths and weaknesses was clearly referenced. The internal inspection reports on curriculum areas, which informed the self-assessment report, were detailed and reliable. The process of self-assessment was thorough and rigorous. It provided a sound basis for determining the actions necessary to support the college's firm commitment to raising standards. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements made by the college, but identified a few additional strengths and some additional weaknesses. At the time of inspection the college had made progress in addressing some of the weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with all the college's self-assessed grades, for both the cross-college and curriculum areas.

91 Strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection are listed under each section of this report. The main strengths and weaknesses are identified in the summary.

# College Statistics

## Student numbers by age (May 1999)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	26
19-24 years	6
25+ years	63
Not known	4
Total	100

Source: college data

## Student numbers by level of study (May 1999)

Level of study	%
Foundation	19
Intermediate	11
Advanced	27
Higher education	1
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	42
Total	100

Source: college data

## Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (May 1999)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	333	1,020	19
Agriculture	0	1	0
Engineering	90	74	2
Business	299	634	13
Hotel and catering	151	994	16
Health and community care	138	247	5
Art and design	209	1,274	20
Humanities	701	881	22
Basic education	6	244	3
Total	1,927	5,369	100

Source: college data

## Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 3% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

## Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (May 1999)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	101	66	20	187
Supporting direct learning contact	24	1	0	25
Other support	49	3	1	53
Total	174	70	21	265

Source: college data, rounded to nearest full-time equivalent

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£6,421,000	£6,738,000	£6,833,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£16.86	£16.29	£16.17
Payroll as a proportion of income	73%	71%	67%
Achievement of funding target	110%	115%	103%
Diversity of income	17%	18%	19%
Operating surplus	-£167,000	£37,000	£18,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

ALF – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1998)

Payroll – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

Diversity of income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

Operating surplus – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

### Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
1	Expected completions	433	455	631	307	510	622
	Retention (%)	86	87	84	80	82	82
	Achievement (%)	82	87	86	81	68	48
2	Expected completions	1,052	1,345	1,376	354	619	387
	Retention (%)	77	81	77	77	84	71
	Achievement (%)	82	63	87	85	66	83
3	Expected completions	–	2,469	2,644	–	420	284
	Retention (%)	–	84	77	–	85	70
	Achievement (%)	80	83	85	67	92	85
4 or 5	Expected completions	–	0	13	–	27	79
	Retention (%)	–	n/a	92	–	89	81
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	8	50	57	57*
Short courses	Expected completions	26	211	313	635	724	818
	Retention (%)	92	91	83	91	91	88
	Achievement (%)	79	95	50	68	91	68
Unknown/unclassified	Expected completions	334	421	2,130	730	1,093	981
	Retention (%)	88	83	79	72	80	77
	Achievement (%)	93	91	63	96	97	73

Source: ISR

–ISR data not collected

\*ISR data may not be reliable

n/a not applicable

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