

The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1998-99**

**THE
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FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education according to a four-year cycle. It also inspects other further education provision funded by the FEFC. In fulfilling its work programme, the inspectorate assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum, disseminates good practice and advises the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

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

The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham

South East Region

Inspected March 1999

The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham, West Sussex, is a sixth form college. Most of its students are aged 16 to 19, attend full time and study three or more subjects at general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) or a general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) advanced programme. Inspectors agreed with the judgements made by the college in its self-assessment report about the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. In some areas it underestimated the standards of teaching and learning and students' achievements in examinations. Inspectors awarded three grades which were higher than those given by the college, and agreed with the rest. Action plans arising from the report were appropriate and progress had been made in addressing some weaknesses by the time of the inspection.

Standards of teaching and learning are good and, in many cases, outstanding. Students achieve high levels of success in examinations. There is an enrichment programme that could contribute much to students' personal development but not all students are, as yet, persuaded of its importance. The standards of work in mathematics, business studies and modern foreign languages were outstanding. The quality of teaching and learning in art and design was also good. Student retention is poor

in some subjects. Students' guidance and support are well organised and tutorial arrangements are good. The college promotes a strong ethos of taking responsibility for oneself and of caring for others. Good links exist with partner schools and the other colleges in the area. The college is committed to the continuous improvement of the achievements of its students. Targets for retention and achievement have been set for many years and these have led to significant improvements in both. The achievements of students are good. The college benefits from strong academic leadership. There is an effective management structure and efficient deployment of teachers. There is good formal communication in the college. Governors have a strong commitment to the college. They effectively monitor the college's finances and regularly review the progress and retention of its students. The college is located on an attractive site in Horsham. Most of the teaching accommodation is good and it is used flexibly. The extensive playing fields are well used. If the college is to improve further it should: continue to develop the formal quality assurance procedures it has recently introduced; address poor retention in a minority of subjects; provide further opportunities for teachers and support staff to contribute to strategic planning and to debate important issues; improve the utilisation of its accommodation; improve the effectiveness of its enrichment programme; and make progress in monitoring its equal opportunities policy.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Mathematics	1	Support for students	2
Business	1	General resources	2
Art and design	2	Quality assurance	2
Modern foreign languages	1	Governance	2
		Management	2

The College and its Mission

1 The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham was founded under the terms of the will of Richard Collyer, a member of the Mercers' Company of the City of London who died in 1532. He provided for 'a Free School in Horsham in the County of Sussex'. For about four centuries the governance of the school was shared between the Mercers' Company and the parish of Horsham. In 1944 the school became a voluntary-aided grammar school, in 1976 a voluntary-aided sixth form college and in 1993 a designated sixth form college. The long-established associations with the Mercers' Company and the parish continue. The college buildings and grounds are still owned by the Trustees of the Collyer Endowment.

2 The college is located on an attractive site in Horsham, an old market town in West Sussex with a population of about 50,000. Horsham is midway between London and the south coast and within easy commuting distance of London. The town has its own economic base of pharmaceutical, insurance and service industries, particularly those associated with Gatwick airport. Unemployment in the town and surrounding area is low.

3 The college recruits approximately two-thirds of its students from the three 11 to 16 schools in Horsham. The number of 16 to 19 year-old students increased from about 500 to over 1,000 over the last decade, an average increase of 7% a year. Last year, for the first time, the number of 16 to 19 year-old students fell by 8% due to a decline in the number of school-leavers. Most students study for an advanced level programme of three or more subjects. In 1998, the GCE A level points score of the top 50 students was 36.1 and for the top 100 students 32.4. In both cases this was a rise of four points over the previous year. Over the last five years the college has introduced GNVQs at advanced and intermediate level in four vocational areas, as well as the diploma in nursery nursing.

4 In addition to their main course, all full-time students are required to take general studies and an information technology (IT) course, attend tutorials and college lectures, and choose from a wide range of recreational activities. The educational philosophy of the college encourages students to change GCE A level subjects as they become clearer about their future career intentions, or if they are experiencing difficulty with a subject. For this reason student retention in subjects such as some languages and art and design is poor, but few fail to complete a programme of GCE A level and GCE advanced supplementary (AS) studies. The college has developed a partnership with Crawley College and The Forest School to provide adult education in the Horsham area. Since the last inspection the number of adult students has more than doubled. It is the college's mission to 'provide academic and general education of the highest quality to those who live in Horsham and the surrounding area, and who wish to continue their education beyond the years of compulsory schooling'.

The Inspection

5 The college was inspected during the week beginning 22 March 1999. Before the inspection, inspectors reviewed the self-assessment report and considered information from other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The college provided data on students' achievements for 1998 for the curriculum areas inspected. These were checked by inspectors against primary sources of evidence, such as registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies, and were found to be reliable. The college's data for 1998 and the individualised student record (ISR) data for 1996 and 1997 were used to compile the tables in the curriculum area reports. The inspection was carried out by nine inspectors and an auditor for a total of 43 days. They observed lessons, evaluated students' work and scrutinised college documents. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff and students.

Context

6 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the 44 lessons observed, 89% were judged to be good or outstanding and none was less than

satisfactory. This compares with averages of 65% and 6%, respectively, for all lessons observed in the further education sector during 1997-98.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	12	13	3	0	0	28
GCSE	3	0	1	0	0	4
GVNQ	5	4	1	0	0	10
RSA and NVQ	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total (No)	21	18	5	0	0	44
Total (%)	48	41	11	0	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*

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

inspection was 87%; this compares with the average of 84% for sixth form colleges and 77% for all colleges.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham	13.5	87
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

Mathematics

Grade 1

8 Inspectors observed 12 mathematics lessons. They agreed with the judgements in the college's self-assessment report but thought that it had understated some strengths and had not concentrated sufficiently on teaching and learning.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- good curriculum management
- high achievement on GCE A level and GCE AS courses
- high retention on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses
- effective learning support
- flexible modular GCE A level and GCE AS provision

Weaknesses

- no curriculum links with industry
- declining retention on GCE AS mathematics course

9 The college offers mathematics courses at GCSE, GCE A level and GCE AS. At advanced level students are enrolled onto a GCE A level or GCE AS course but they are allowed to change between the two. They are also able to combine various mathematics modules to achieve a GCE A level qualification in mathematics or further mathematics. The GCSE course is attended by both full-time and adult students who work towards either foundation or intermediate level. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that mathematics courses are well planned and effectively managed. Regular formal departmental meetings are held. Teachers assess their performance regularly, seek ways to improve course organisation and teaching and monitor students' opinions about the work of the department.

10 The standards of teaching and learning in three-quarters of the lessons observed were good and, in many cases, outstanding. Lessons were well planned and carefully structured. Teachers used effective questioning to check students' learning and in the best lessons this led to lively mathematical debate. Students demonstrated good mathematical modelling skills but closer links with industry would provide more realistic problem-solving opportunities for use in coursework, a weakness acknowledged in the college's self-assessment. In one outstanding lesson, students worked in pairs carrying out a number of different statistical experiments. They were then asked to identify the assumptions underlying each experiment and to match them to a particular statistical distribution. The challenge to students' assumptions encouraged lively discussion and contributed to their gaining a deeper understanding of the concepts involved. These concepts were then given a practical application. In the few less successful lessons, teacher expectations were low and there was little to challenge the more able student.

11 Most students enjoy their study of mathematics and develop good algebraic and problem-solving skills. Each year students have won prizes in the National Mathematical competition. The standard of students' externally moderated coursework at GCE A level and GCE AS is high. Examination pass rates in GCE A level and GCE AS mathematics courses are outstanding. In each of the last three years all students entering for further mathematics have achieved high grade passes and the retention rate has been consistently above the sector average. The pass rates in GCE A level mathematics are also high and the percentage of students achieving high grades has averaged 69% over the last three years, also above the average for sixth form colleges. Students achieve a GCE AS mathematics qualification in a number of ways. They study for the qualification over one or two years, add a further module to their GCE A level or withdraw

Curriculum Areas

from the GCE A level programme after one year with a GCE AS qualification. Retention on the two-year GCE AS course has fallen in each of the last three years, a weakness not identified in the college's self-assessment.

At GCSE foundation level the highest grade students can achieve is grade D. Of 16 students on this programme last year one student achieved a D, eight an E, and seven an F grade. This is a good result. Retention rates for students studying intermediate GCSE mathematics are good and have been rising over the last three years. Although the proportion of students achieving a grade C or above has fallen, it is still in line with the sector average. Concerned by the fall, the college has initiated a range of measures to improve the results of this year's students.

12 Mathematics teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable. Mathematics teaching rooms have a clear subject identity. Most students provide their own graphical calculator, the main aid used for GCE A level courses. Students buy their own textbooks but spare copies are available. There are fewer GCSE texts available for use in this way. Development of the mathematics resource base is at an early stage. IT facilities have recently been improved and there is a growing range of mathematics resource material on the college intranet. As identified in the self-assessment report, materials for independent study are not yet widely available or used by students.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE intermediate mathematics (all ages)	2	Expected completions	161	154	125
		Retention (%)	83	84	85
		Achievement (%)	61	56	38
GCE A level and GCE AS mathematics	3	Expected completions	115	136	151
		Retention (%)	92	75	75
		Achievement (%)	97	100	96
GCE A level further mathematics	3	Expected completions	5	11	12
		Retention (%)	80	100	92
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100

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

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 1

13 Inspectors observed 11 lessons. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that some weaknesses could not be substantiated.

Key strengths

- excellent teaching
- imaginative assignments
- good use of students' experience
- excellent results at both GNVQ and GCE A level
- high retention
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- the lack of formal minuted meetings
- teachers' lack of recent commercial and industrial experience

14 The college offers GCE A level and GNVQ advanced and intermediate business courses. The department is well managed although there are few formal meetings. Teachers have regular informal team meetings but records of these are not kept. Responsibility for the preparation of assignments, monitoring the integration of key skills, work experience and assessment are shared by teachers and are well organised. Internal verification is well managed and effective. The recently introduced lesson observation programme has extended the sharing of good practice. The use of target-setting is in its infancy but students' previous GCSE points scores on entry are used to predict their GCE A level performance. Teachers use these predictions together with student self-assessment and teacher reports to monitor progress and performance. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that departmental management is a strength.

15 The quality of teaching and learning was good or outstanding in all but one lesson. Teachers used a range of sound teaching and learning methods. Most lessons began with a reference to the work of the previous lesson, and an explanation of the aims and objectives of the current one. Students were often encouraged to work in pairs or small groups and then report on their work to the whole class. In some lessons, students were involved in role-play, and in others took part in critical discussion of video material. Teachers often used students' part-time work experience to illustrate lessons and to develop students' understanding of concepts. In one outstanding lesson, students watched a promotional video from a cement company which planned to develop a plant close to a National Park. They were given glossy materials about the company and the cement industry and photocopies of local newspaper articles expressing concern about the proposed plan. After study of the materials, students took the role of company executives, concerned environmentalists and local residents. They discussed the issues involved and then made presentations about the environmental and business issues involved. Students' enthusiasm, interest and involvement in the lesson was high.

16 All GNVQ students take part in work experience. Key skills are well integrated with GNVQ programmes. GCE A level students benefit from some of the practical materials developed for the GNVQ course. All business students take part in an annual management challenge organised in conjunction with local employers. These events enable students to consider product control, effective participation in meetings, leadership skills and teamwork with the benefit of local employer support. Last year students attended a conference in Paris, gaining first hand experience of European business and the impact of the euro. Inspectors agreed with the college self-assessment that teaching and learning in business courses is a strength.

Curriculum Areas

17 For the last three years the pass rate on the GNVQ advanced course has been 100%. Although the retention rate has fallen in each of these years it is still above the average. GCE A level pass rates have been 97% and over for the last two years, with 80% of students achieving high grades last year. GNVQ intermediate results have been excellent at 90% and over for the last three years, well above the national average. The majority of students on advanced courses progress to higher education. GNVQ intermediate students have a good record in finding employment or progressing to an advanced course. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that students' high levels of achievement are a strength.

18 Teachers are well qualified but some lack commercial and industrial experience. The best possible use is made of teaching rooms, some of which are only just big enough for the classes using them. The rooms are grouped closely together and are well maintained and decorated with good displays of students' work. Students have good access to IT facilities. The college intranet has an excellent business section with resources which are easy to find, as well as 'bookmarked' websites, for ease of access.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ intermediate business	2	Expected completions	15	15	16
		Retention (%)	80	80	81
		Achievement (%)	100	90	92
GNVQ advanced business	3	Expected completions	14	26	20
		Retention (%)	93	88	75
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GCE A level business studies	3	Expected completions	37	39	96
		Retention (%)	100	85	83
		Achievement (%)	81	97	99

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

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 2

19 Inspectors observed 11 lessons in academic and vocational art and design courses. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that some strengths were overstated and some weaknesses were not identified.

Key strengths

- good and often outstanding teaching
- high level of students' achievements for most subjects
- independent learning in the vocational programme
- good management
- high standard of specialist accommodation and resources

Weaknesses

- poor student retention on some courses
- poor attendance in some classes
- insufficient provision for ceramics

20 The college offers a good range of GCE A level and GNVQ advanced courses in art and design. Although each subject is separately managed within the art and design department, management is effective and supportive. Departmental team meetings take place regularly and clear action plans are produced after each of these. Retention and achievement targets are set and these are regularly monitored. If targets are likely to be missed, remedial strategies are devised.

21 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that the standard of teaching is good and often outstanding. Teachers use a variety of methods including group discussion, formal lectures and practical work to develop students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers engage

students in discussion and use question and answer sessions effectively to check students' learning and to ensure that all students, and particularly weaker ones, are involved in the lesson. In media lessons all students are expected to be fully involved. For example, note-taking is insisted upon during video screenings, which are often interrupted by the teacher in order to test students' understanding. Inspectors observed photography classes where the moral issues in shock advertising campaigns and the ethics of publishing disturbing imagery were discussed. The teaching of film studies was particularly good. The genre of 'film noir' and its influence on the directorial work of Martin Scorsese was examined in a highly-structured and analytical way.

22 Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are able to engage and maintain the interest of students with many examples from their own working experience. Imaginative product design initiatives are evident in graphics communication and the standard of teacher-produced material is high. Students on the GNVQ programme are encouraged to develop client-based assignments with authentic deadlines. They are also encouraged to undertake work-shadowing activities. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that the student experience is enhanced through a structured extra-curricular enrichment programme. This includes trips to Paris galleries for art and design students and visits to television studios for media students. Film studies students are taken to the British Film Institute and to the Museum of the Moving Image.

23 Students' achievements were high on all art and design courses in 1998. Students achieved a 100% pass rate in GNVQ art and design, GCE A level art and design and film studies, and better than 90% in media and graphics communication. Retention is poor in photography and on both the vocational and academic art and design courses where between

Curriculum Areas

30% and 47% of the students who started the course failed to complete it. Inspectors did not consider that this weakness was fully recognised in the college's self-assessment. Students' attendance is also poor in some classes. Art and design students are mainly confident, articulate and enjoy their studies. Their submission of wordprocessed assignments is of a high standard. They have exciting opportunities to exhibit their work in both internal and external exhibitions. Teachers are also expected to exhibit their own work in the college.

24 Art and design teachers are well qualified and several have postgraduate qualifications. The balance between full-time and part-time

teachers is appropriate. Staff development needs are identified through appraisal and teachers are encouraged to update their skills by attending appropriate courses. Teachers are ably supported by media and art and design technicians. The practical facilities are good but the absence of ceramics limits the art and design curriculum. The standard of accommodation, art studios, furniture and specialist resources is very good. The facilities for media courses are also good and include a digital editing suite. Slide projectors, overhead transparencies, and television and video facilities are of a high standard and readily available when required to support teaching.

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
GNVQ art and design	3	Expected completions	*	8	11
		Retention (%)	*	80	55
		Achievement (%)	*	100	100
GCE A level art and design	3	Expected completions	31	38	62
		Retention (%)	90	79	68
		Achievement (%)	93	96	100
GCE A level graphic communications	3	Expected completions	10	16	17
		Retention (%)	100	69	88
		Achievement (%)	90	100	93
GCE A level media studies	3	Expected completions	43	56	70
		Retention (%)	95	79	79
		Achievement (%)	98	98	93
GCE A level film studies	3	Expected completions	*	*	19
		Retention (%)	*	*	79
		Achievement (%)	*	*	100
GCE A level photography	3	Expected completions	15	18	17
		Retention (%)	73	39	53
		Achievement (%)	90	57	87

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

*courses did not run

Curriculum Areas

Modern Foreign Languages

Grade 1

25 Inspectors observed 10 lessons covering GCE A level, GCSE and vocational French, German and Spanish. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the department's self-assessment report. However, they considered that the strength of students' achievements in examinations had been underestimated, and problems with retention rates overstated.

Key strengths

- the wide range of courses
- well-planned, imaginative and effective teaching
- learning activities for students of differing abilities
- high students' achievements in GCE A level, GCSE and national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes
- good specialist resources and accommodation

Weaknesses

- low retention rates in GCE A level French and German

26 The department has offered courses at GCE A level and GCSE for many years. It has recently extended the range of courses to include RSA Examinations Board (RSA) French for business, and NVQ at levels 1 and 2 in Spanish for leisure and tourism students. The modern languages provision is well organised and carefully planned. There are good opportunities for students to participate in international exchanges and cultural events. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that it makes good use of each of its three foreign language assistants. They provide valuable additional support to students by

providing opportunities for conversation with a native speaker and by running workshops designed to help other students who are having difficulties or to provide more demanding work for the more able students.

27 Inspectors agreed with the department's assessment that foreign language lessons are carefully planned and that their aims are shared with students. Teaching and learning are of a consistently high standard with lessons taught mainly in the foreign language. Students demonstrate good levels of understanding and respond well to skilful questioning. They are encouraged to develop independent learning skills by using the open access language centre. Inspectors observed a group of students who used the language centre to work on different projects; some viewed topical material recorded from a satellite television programme to prepare a presentation for the next lesson, while others worked on computers with CD-ROM material to improve their listening and speaking skills. Teachers made good use of teaching aids such as flashcards and overhead projector transparencies as a stimulus to oral work. In a GCSE Spanish lesson, essential basic vocabulary and phrases about leisure pursuits were revised with the aid of transparencies specially prepared by the teacher. This developed into students working in pairs before more demanding material was introduced, using a television programme which showed native speakers filmed on location in Spain.

28 Homework was used well to build on work already done and to ensure that students prepared for forthcoming lessons. This work was thoroughly marked and the standard achieved was clearly communicated to students. In the best practice, teachers gave detailed guidance to students about how to improve work in future. Most students' written work is at an appropriate level and it is well presented. An increasing amount is wordprocessed, in line with departmental policy.

Curriculum Areas

29 In its self-assessment report, the department identified students' achievements in GCE A level and GCSE as a strength. Inspectors considered that the examination results in vocational language programmes are very good. GCE A level results over the past three years have been consistently at, and in most cases above, the national average for sixth form colleges. French and Spanish have both achieved 100% pass rates at grades A to E in each of the last two years. GCSE results are also consistently good and are well above the national average for sixth form colleges. French has achieved a 100% pass rate at grades A to C in each of the last three years. Very good results have been achieved in Spanish in NVQs at levels 1 and 2 over a three-year period. Results in RSA examinations in French were good in 1996 and 1998, but considerably poorer in 1997. The self-assessment report failed to mention achievements on vocational courses as either a strength or a weakness.

30 Retention rates have fluctuated over the last three years, a fact acknowledged in the college's self-assessment. The department has taken steps to address this issue, which is partially explained by the college's policy on course changes. In 1998, retention rates on all programmes improved compared with 1997 levels, a point not identified in the self-assessment. Only GCE A level French and GCE A level German now fall short of the national average for retention in sixth form colleges.

31 Teachers have achieved internal verifier and assessor awards in line with the development of vocational qualifications. Well-equipped classrooms contain a good range of paper-based materials as well as an ample supply of frequently-used equipment such as televisions, video recorders and audio players. Most language rooms have attractive displays. The language centre, which allows students to use materials independently of their timetabled programme, contains video, audio and computer equipment with both internet and college

intranet links. This adds greatly to the range of material available to students.

Curriculum Areas

A summary of achievement and retention rates in modern foreign languages, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
Vocational Spanish (NVQ 1)	1	Expected completions	17	24	20
		Retention (%)	100	58	100
		Achievement (%)	100	93	100
GCSE languages (French and Spanish)	2	Expected completions	38	15	24
		Retention (%)	60	67	88
		Achievement (%)	96	100	100
Vocational languages (RSA level 2 French and NVQ level 2 Spanish)	2	Expected completions	10	49	34
		Retention (%)	40	82	91
		Achievement (%)	100	73	84
GCE A level French	3	Expected completions	54	58	57
		Retention (%)	93	57	63
		Achievement (%)	92	100	100
GCE A level German	3	Expected completions	9	22	26
		Retention (%)	89	55	69
		Achievement (%)	100	92	94
GCE A level Spanish	3	Expected completions	26	22	22
		Retention (%)	92	59	68
		Achievement (%)	83	100	100

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

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

32 Inspectors broadly agreed with the college's assessment of key strengths and weaknesses. Issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed.

Key strengths

- effective systems for admission and enrolment
- well-organised and effective tutorial system
- strong links with partner schools
- effective system of student reviews
- well-developed higher education guidance system

Weaknesses

- little guidance and support for part-time students
- poor communication between subject teachers and the learning support team
- the use and impact of enrichment time

33 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that its publicity and recruitment arrangements for full-time students are strengths. There are well-established links with the three main partner schools. An attractively presented application pack is given to applicants. Following presentations to year 11 pupils in schools, the college holds two open evenings in November. These are well attended. Subsequently, prospective students are interviewed in their schools by the college's central recruitment team to ensure that they receive impartial advice and guidance. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that, although the team has access to specialist teachers to provide subject-specific advice, there is a need to involve them more closely.

34 Arrangements for enrolment are clear and are reviewed regularly. Full-time students take part in induction activities, including 'taster' lessons which help them to settle into the college quickly. Induction arrangements are also provided for students who join courses late. Procedures for course and subject changes are well established and students value the flexibility this gives. The college identified in its self-assessment that it has inadequate support arrangements for the small number of part-time evening-class students. Since the last inspection, arrangements for students' comments have been improved through the introduction of subject course reviews and the evaluation of pastoral procedures. Full-time students receive a copy of the charter and are aware of its contents.

35 Learning support is well organised. It includes individual assessment and support for dyslexia, and arrangements for examination concessions for students. Partner schools provide helpful information about the needs of their pupils who are transferring to the college. Because of this, the college has not introduced diagnostic testing of students. Forty-three students sought support through a self-referral system at the beginning of the year. Of these, 20 received additional learning support and four were allowed additional time for examinations. Students are able to refer themselves through the college intranet, which provides some confidentiality. The college recognises the need to strengthen the links between subject teachers and the learning support team. There is an effective system for identifying the needs of students with specific learning difficulties and there is support for students with disabilities. The college has endorsed the principles of inclusive learning. However, it identified in its self-assessment that provision for students with restricted mobility is limited by difficulties of access. The college is currently implementing the first phase of recommendations from a recent audit by the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

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36 Inspectors agreed with the college that its commitment to a pastoral curriculum and an effective personal tutorial system is a strength. Senior and personal tutors give strong individual support to students. The system is well managed through the senior tutor system. Tutor groups meet each day for 10 minutes registration, and each year group has a 45-minute tutorial each week. A recently-revised system of student reviews based on individual target-setting is linked to termly reports. Parents' evenings are held at regular intervals. The college provides three reports for parents during a student's two-year course. A handbook is also provided for parents and employers. Students appreciate the high level of personal support they receive. The college ensures that students continue to maintain their records of achievement and has clear systems to support this.

37 The college, in partnership with the local careers service, provides appropriate careers advice. The service provided is regularly reviewed. Further development is needed for the support of advanced level students wanting to go directly into employment. There is a well-managed system to prepare students for higher education. Although the college counselling service is limited to one day a week, with some opportunity for emergency appointments, there are good links with a local counselling service for young people.

38 Inspectors agreed with the college that it is committed to providing an enrichment programme. This programme offers cultural and physical activities, as well as college lectures on ethical and political issues. Since the last inspection the college has strengthened the elements of health education in its enrichment programme. However, the college recognises that there is a continuing problem with students' lack of attendance and that the timetabling of the enrichment programme needs review. The college ethos stresses taking responsibility for oneself and caring for others

and in support of this there is a rota of tutor groups to keep communal areas tidy and free of litter. The students' council provides a range of social events. The role of the council in consultative processes is underdeveloped.

General Resources

Grade 2

39 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's evaluation of the college's accommodation and learning resources.

Key strengths

- attractive and well-maintained site
- improvements to teaching accommodation
- excellent sports facilities and accommodation
- well-managed and well-used resources centre
- good IT facilities

Weaknesses

- low utilisation of teaching space
- poor access for students with restricted mobility

40 The college occupies an attractive site in a residential area of Horsham. The majority of the college's buildings are arranged in a compact area in one corner of the campus. They are enhanced by attractive quadrangles that provide pleasant outdoor social areas for staff and students. The college has extensive playing fields with rugby, cricket and soccer pitches and a tennis court. There is ample parking for staff, students and visitors.

41 The college's accommodation includes the grammar school built in 1893, a grade II listed building, and the purpose-built sports hall with classrooms and changing facilities completed in 1995. Other buildings have been added in the

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intervening years and these vary in design and construction. Adaptation of some buildings is difficult if not impractical. Access for students with restricted mobility is not good but lifts would provide only a partial solution. There is considerable variation in room sizes and the levels of the site, and some corridors and stairways are narrow. Despite these difficulties, the college has made imaginative use of its accommodation through flexible planning and some adaptation. It has established identifiable curriculum areas with clusters of rooms that accommodate varying group sizes. Daytime space utilisation has improved, although it remains low, a weakness recognised in the self-assessment report.

42 Recent improvements in accommodation include a performing arts centre and foyer and the creation of a new lecture theatre with high-technology equipment. A few teaching areas are still in need of refurbishment. In particular, five out of seven science laboratories, built in the 1960s, are of traditional design with fixed science benches which prevent a more flexible use of the space. In its self-assessment report, the college records that the planned relocation of the reception area has yet to be realised but explains that priority has been given within financial constraints to improving teaching accommodation. The college has a 10-year external and internal maintenance programme. The college's estates team maintains a high standard of cleanliness. Appropriate attention is given to the buildings and grounds to ensure a safe working environment.

43 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that the resources centre is a strength and is central to the academic life of the college. The resources centre includes the college library, an adjoining area for private study and a further area with open-access IT facilities. It is a well-managed resource which has benefited from increasing investment since the last inspection. The budget for the current year of £22,000 is almost double the sum

allocated in 1996. Currently the library has 12,500 books, an increase of 17% since the last inspection. Collections held in curriculum areas, approximately 3,000 books, are gradually being added to the central catalogue. There are 750 videos (with viewing facilities), 350 audio cassettes, 150 music compact discs and 65 CD-ROMs of which several are networked. Programmes recorded from satellite television provide good learning materials, particularly for modern foreign languages. There is a good range of periodicals and newspapers. The resources centre manager maintains close links with curriculum leaders to update stock. Regular reviews of use of the library, IT facilities and the reprographics service ensure that these continue to meet the needs of both staff and students. Reviews have led to a useful debate about the relative priorities in the use of available funds.

44 The learning resources centre is well used by students who express general satisfaction with the service and opening hours. There are 85 study spaces which are adequate except at times of peak demand. In response to this, and to the increasing need for access to IT and the internet in curriculum areas, the college has planned eight independent learning technology centres, four of which are already operational: modern languages, mathematics, business studies and leisure and tourism. These provide additional open-access study spaces and specialist reference materials and IT facilities.

45 The college has a long-term information and learning technology strategy. At the time of the inspection, there were 166 computers of modern specification which provide a good ratio of full-time students to computers of 6:1. Forty-four computers are always available for students' use. The strategic plan includes the purchase of additional computers over the period of the plan. There is good technician support to maintain the system. Eighteen of the computers located in the resources centre provide access to the internet. The college

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intranet is constantly being improved and contains lists of website addresses that provide access to specialist information needed by students for their course.

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

46 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. They thought that some strengths had been understated.

Key strengths

- commitment to high-quality provision
- improved quality assurance procedures
- comprehensive course reviews
- good staff appraisal and staff development
- well-established opportunities for students to express their views

Weaknesses

- little use of quality assurance systems in support areas
- failure to include adult education courses in quality procedures

47 The college is committed to continuous improvement in the quality of its provision. It has a long-established record of improving students' retention and achievements and then maintaining these at a high level. This success is based on the college's high expectations of its students and on its close monitoring of their progress and performance. In the past year, this process has been incorporated into a comprehensive quality assurance policy and framework for full-time courses. A timetable indicates when quality reviews should be conducted and reports produced. The academic board, comprising mainly heads of department, monitors the quality of the curriculum; the

quality of services to students is effectively monitored by the tutorial committee. Part-time adult provision is not yet subject to the new procedures, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. However, it is planned to be included next year.

48 An annual college target of 95% for the retention of full-time students has been set and met for some years. In 1997, the number of advanced level students who did not complete their course increased, but retention was still above the national level for sixth form colleges. Student retention for all other courses improved, or was maintained, during the same period. The college has successfully concentrated on improving retention this year and is on course to achieve its target. Students' achievements overall have continued to improve at all qualification levels since 1996.

49 Targets for retention and achievement at course or subject level have been set for the first time this year and have been used to review last year's performance. The self-assessment report acknowledged that the process needs refining. These targets are to be monitored through course reviews. Lesson observations and a detailed evaluation of students' comments from questionnaires and focus groups also inform the reviews. The college uses information provided by a commercial value-added system. This shows that the college has exceeded its target in each of the last three years in that in more than 50% of cases, students' value-added scores on GCE A level courses exceed expectations. Course reviews form the basis of development plans for the following year. This information is kept in a standard format in each subject or course quality and development file. Course and subject development plans are combined into a detailed curriculum quality assurance report presented to the academic board. The academic board produces action plans to address areas of weakness identified in these plans. These are reviewed by the senior management team before they are approved by the strategic planning and quality assurance group. Although

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this group has monitored and reviewed one self-assessment cycle, its terms of reference have still not been finalised. This is the first cycle of the new system and the effectiveness of some stages in the process has still to be demonstrated.

50 The college produced its first full self-assessment for inspection. It was informed by individual subject and course self-assessments. In most curriculum areas, staff were fully involved in its production, although in some it was written by the head of subject and then discussed with staff. The report was thoroughly reviewed and evaluated through the strategic planning and quality assurance group. As part of the self-assessment process lesson observations have been undertaken for the first time. The college's profile of lesson observation grades was similar to that of the inspection team. The self-assessment on learning resources provision is a model of good practice. It is also the only area to have service standards against which performance can be monitored. With the exception of learning resources, most support staff had little involvement in the production of the self-assessment report, a weakness identified by the college. The report was formally approved by the governors. Inspectors found that progress had been made in addressing some weaknesses since the submission of the self-assessment report.

51 Following the last inspection, the introduction of a new staff development policy has strengthened the link with appraisal. Priorities for staff development are determined through appraisal outcomes, a training needs survey, curriculum development plans, the strategic plan and by the senior management team. Teachers and support staff agreed that staff development opportunities are good. All teachers are appraised annually. The college plans to apply for Investor in People status in the summer term, a revised date from the last inspection. New members of staff are given an effective induction into the college. Support is also provided through a mentoring system.

Governance

Grade 2

52 The self-assessment report on governance was thorough. The inspection team agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses, but identified an additional weakness.

Key strengths

- governors' strong commitment to the college's educational character and mission
- effective monitoring of the college's finances
- thorough consideration of students' retention and achievements
- comprehensive and well-established standing orders
- good clerking arrangements

Weaknesses

- incomplete register of interests
- unsatisfactory procedures for recruiting new governors
- failure to implement procedures for appraising the principal

53 Governors are committed to ensuring the welfare of the college. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that they use their wide range of expertise and experience to good effect. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The governing body substantially conducts its business in accordance with the college's instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

54 The land and buildings of the college are the responsibility of the trustees of the Collyer Endowment. Governors have close links with

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the trustees, but have a separate legal existence. The college has its own instrument and articles of government. The governing body has a membership of 15, and there are no vacancies. The membership includes nine foundation governors, six appointed by the Mercers' Company, two by the trustees, and, ex-officio, the vicar of Horsham. Five of the remaining six are appointed by the foundation governors, and the other is a representative of the local training and enterprise council (TEC). The principal is not a governor.

55 The governing body has not established clear procedures for the recruitment of new governors in line with the best practice recommended by the Nolan committee. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report and partly reflects the unique nature of the appointment arrangements. The finance and general purposes committee has addressed this issue by considering the establishment of a nominations committee. It has also advertised for vacancies to be filled by resolution of the foundation governors.

56 The governing body has an appropriate committee structure that includes committees for finance and general purposes, audit and remuneration. As identified in the self-assessment report, governors undertake effective monitoring of the college's finances. Scrutiny of the comprehensive management accounts at the monthly meeting of the finance and general purposes committee ensures that the college maintains its strong financial position. However, the committee's terms of reference do not identify its responsibilities in detail, including those matters delegated to it by the governing body. The audit committee operates effectively in monitoring audit matters and advising the governing body on the college's system of internal control. The chairman of governors holds regular meetings with the principal to discuss college developments and to provide support. Although clear procedures for the appraisal of senior postholders are in place,

the principal has not been appraised since designation.

57 Governors have a clear view of the educational character and mission of the college. They have recently reviewed their involvement in strategic planning. They regularly discuss corporate objectives and are beginning to set a range of college targets. This will complement their consideration of the detailed reports from the principal. There is a comprehensive schedule of matters on which he must report at each meeting. Governors pay considerable attention to students' retention and achievements in their discussions. To improve their understanding of the curriculum, governors are linked to subject areas. It is intended that this strategy will also foster better communication between governors and staff, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. The joint staff and governors' committee provides the formal route for consultation with staff.

58 The clerk to the governing body is also the college's registrar and a member of the senior management team. The clerk has a separate job description for the role and receives appropriate support to fulfil it effectively. Agenda papers for meetings of the governing body and its committees provide a good basis for discussion and decision-making. Decisions made are clearly identified in the minutes. There is a good level of attendance at governing body and committee meetings by most governors.

59 The governing body has a well-established and comprehensive set of standing orders to guide the conduct of its business and of its committees, known as the 'rules and bye-laws' of the governing body. The governing body has a code of conduct which reflects the Nolan committee's recommendations on openness and accountability. It has established a register of interests which includes declarations by all governors, and extends to senior managers. However, the value of the register of interests in demonstrating openness is impaired because the

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declarations by many governors do not adequately reflect their links with other bodies, such as the Mercers' Company.

Management

Grade 2

60 Inspectors agreed with the college's overall assessment of the quality of management.

Key strengths

- clear corporate objectives
- strong academic leadership
- effective management structure
- good formal communication with staff
- efficient deployment of teachers
- good financial management

Weaknesses

- lack of involvement of staff in strategic planning
- lack of progress in implementing the equal opportunities policy

61 The college benefits from strong academic leadership, and a well-established reputation for the high achievement of its students. Strategic planning is supported by clear corporate objectives which support the college's mission to provide academic and general education of the highest quality. The planning process is well defined but is predominantly a senior management activity. There is little involvement of staff, a weakness identified in the college's self-assessment report. The college has reconvened the strategic planning and quality assurance group to encourage greater involvement of staff in the planning process. The annual college planning day now involves both teaching and support staff, although activities need to be structured to ensure the full participation of all staff. Operational plans are

produced for cross-college areas but not for departments. As a result, the college misses the opportunity to make strategic objectives meaningful to teachers.

62 Management arrangements are effective. They are based upon departments and houses to which all teachers belong in their academic and pastoral roles. The director of studies oversees the work of the eight heads of department and chairs the academic board which monitors the quality of provision. The work of the heads of department and of the academic board is growing as they are given more responsibilities. The academic board spends an increasing amount of time on issues required by senior management, leaving little time to discuss developmental and operational issues identified by others. The college does not identify this weakness in its self-assessment and needs to take steps to address the issue if the positive influence of heads of department and the academic board is to be maintained. The principal tutor leads the team of five senior tutors and chairs the tutorial committee which monitors the welfare and support of students. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that the work of college committees is generally effective. Meetings are well minuted, although responsibilities for action are not always indicated.

63 There are good formal communications. Staff are informed about college activities in many ways. All committee minutes are published. The principal holds regular staff briefings and issues a weekly bulletin. However, some teachers and support staff do not feel that they have sufficient opportunity to engage in debate about important issues. The college recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report. The increased number of part-time teachers also poses problems of communication. Some support staff feel that the emphasis of debate on curriculum matters excludes them from consultation.

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64 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The budget planning process is clear and appropriate. The bursar, a qualified accountant, produces comprehensive monthly management accounts that report on the college's current and future financial position. These enable effective monitoring of the college's financial performance by managers. The college has paid considerable attention to the efficient deployment of teachers and uses external benchmarks to monitor its success. The college maintains a comprehensive set of financial regulations and procedures. The internal and external auditors have not identified any significant weaknesses in the college's systems of financial control.

65 The college has close links with its three Horsham partner schools and with other Sussex sixth form colleges. It is a member of the Sussex Strategy Group of colleges and the Sussex Enterprise. The college has maintained good links with the local education authority (LEA) since designation. Its partnership with Crawley College and The Forest School is responsible for the well-developed adult education in the area. In the past, the college has conducted little formal market research but recognises the need to do so. To facilitate this, management responsibilities for market research and publicity have been separated.

66 At the time of the inspection, the college was changing its management information system. Inspectors did not agree with the college's self-assessment that the system is of high quality. Current arrangements are no more than satisfactory. The system produces accurate financial and academic reports, but slowly. Heads of department have limited access to computers and make little use of management information system data. The new system is expected to provide better and more frequent reports as senior managers make increasing use of management information system data to inform their decisions. The college's returns to

the FEFC are up to date and substantially accurate.

67 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that it has made little progress in the monitoring of its equal opportunities policy since the last inspection. However, students reported that they had no equal opportunities concerns. Health and safety matters are effectively managed. The health and safety committee, which normally meets twice a term, is chaired by a member of the senior management team and provides regular reports to the corporation.

Conclusions

68 Although this was the college's first self-assessment report, the inspection team found that it provided an effective document for planning the inspection. The majority of the findings in the report were supported by the inspection team although inspectors judged that the college had underestimated some strengths and overstated some weaknesses, particularly in teaching and learning and students' achievements. In two curriculum areas and for quality assurance, inspectors awarded a better grade than the college.

69 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 (November 1998)

Age	%
Under 16	0
16-18 years	56
19-24 years	4
25+ years	40
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1998)

Level of study	%
Foundation	28
Intermediate	15
Advanced	57
Higher education	0
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (November 1998)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	198	103	17
Agriculture	10	0	1
Engineering	14	50	4
Business	116	79	11
Hotel and catering	61	2	4
Health and community care	31	16	3
Art and design	79	185	15
Humanities	442	361	45
Total	951	796	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 0% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (January 1999)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	51	4	0	55
Supporting direct learning contact	11	0	0	11
Other support	23	0	0	23
Total	85	4	0	89

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£2,938,000	£3,120,000	£3,112,000
Average level of funding (ALF) Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£19.28	£17.45	£16.98
Payroll as a proportion of income	76%	72%	70%
Achievement of funding target	103%	117%	103%
Diversity of income	6%	7%	8%
Operating surplus	£34,000	£175,000	£150,000

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	44	348	483	0	71	125
	Retention (%)	82	84	84	n/a	75	78
	Achievement (%)	86	93	98	n/a	79	98
2	Expected completions	57	580	504	0	148	201
	Retention (%)	30	80	83	n/a	51	64
	Achievement (%)	100	94	93	n/a	91	96
3	Expected completions	–	1,256	1,659	–	31	98
	Retention (%)	–	92	79	–	84	32
	Achievement (%)	89	89	92	0	77	88
4 or 5	Expected completions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Short courses	Expected completions	2	25	80	0	130	309
	Retention (%)	0	68	91	n/a	51	95
	Achievement (%)	n/a	41	98	n/a	81	100
Unknown/ unclassified	Expected completions	3	299	177	0	19	1
	Retention (%)	0	62	75	n/a	74	100
	Achievement (%)	n/a	78	77	n/a	92	0

Source: ISR

–ISR data not collected

n/a not applicable

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