

Farnham College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1998-99**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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

Farnham College

South East Region

Inspected May 1999

Farnham College is a sixth form college in Surrey. The college produced its first self-assessment report before the inspection. This drew upon existing quality assurance procedures. The report was comprehensive and evaluative, although some sections were more detailed and rigorous in their judgements than others. It contained useful action plans. In some cases, the college had fallen behind its target dates. Self-assessment involved staff at all levels. The principal played a central role in the validation of the report. Some aspects of validation were still taking place at the time of the inspection. There was no external validation. The corporation received the report. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements made by the college for its curriculum areas. In three of the cross-college aspects, they considered the college too generous and awarded lower grades.

The college offers courses in eight of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. The inspection covered provision in four of these. There is a good range of courses for local school-leavers; links with partner schools are productive. The college is gaining importance as a centre for local community activity. The recruitment of part-time adult students is a major strategic aim. There are effective arrangements for advising and recruiting students, and good-quality careers education and guidance. Induction for full-time students is comprehensive and there is a strong and supportive tutorial system. Much of the teaching is good or outstanding.

The profile of grades awarded to lessons observed was much better than national figures. Provision in business, and leisure and tourism is outstanding. Students' achievements in advanced level examinations are mainly good. There are poor achievements in GCSE science and mathematics. Some courses have low retention rates. Students' views are central to the college's quality assurance arrangements. There is a commitment to self-criticism and continuous improvement. Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the accommodation and to IT resources. The ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students is excellent. The college is well managed and benefits from strong staff teamwork. Governors are strongly committed to the college. They give careful consideration to college finances and to students' examination performance. The college needs to address a number of weaknesses. It should: strengthen provision for learning support and improve its assessment and monitoring; improve space utilisation; manage the bookstock more efficiently; make course reviews more comprehensive so as to provide better quality assurance; and set quantitative targets to inform planning and the monitoring of progress at college and course level. The monitoring and implementation of the equal opportunities policy is ineffective. Governors need to improve their arrangements for conducting corporation business, their inefficient committee structure and their inadequate role in strategic planning. They should also review their approach to internal audit.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Chemistry and physics	2	Support for students	2
Mathematics	2	General resources	2
Business	1	Quality assurance	3
Leisure and tourism	1	Governance	3
English and modern foreign languages	2	Management	2

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Farnham College was established as a sixth form college in 1973 on a site formerly occupied by a boys' grammar school. The land and buildings are largely owned by the trustees of a local charitable foundation, dating from 1578. The corporation owns only a small area and has a renewable 50-year lease from the foundation for the use and sole occupation of the rest of the site.

2 The college is situated to the south of Farnham, a small town with a population of about 36,000, and is a major employer in an area where most companies employ 10 people or fewer. Many residents travel each day to work in London or elsewhere. Surrey has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. In the Waverley district, in which Farnham lies, it is only 1.1%. The college has sought to form closer links with local business and is developing business training services, in partnership with other providers.

3 The college is the main provider of education in Farnham for students aged 16 to 18, although there is a local 11 to 18, formerly grant-maintained, Roman Catholic school. There are two 11 to 16 schools serving the town. These, together with two small special schools and a school at nearby Ash, are the college's partner schools. Students come from 80 other schools to the college. The Surrey Institute of Art and Design, a higher education establishment, is based in Farnham and its provision includes courses for 16 to 18 year olds. The Surrey Adult Education Service runs a large local programme and shares some marketing with the college. Just 2 miles to the north-east lies Aldershot and, immediately beyond it, Farnborough where there is a large general further education college and a sixth form college. The college has expanded to reach enrolments of over 600 full-time 16 to 19 year old students, and during the course of the academic year, between 200 and 300 adult part-time students. The curriculum offer

includes courses at foundation and intermediate level, but 70% of students follow full-time advanced programmes. There is also a broad range of complementary courses for full-time students and leisure courses for adults.

4 The mission of the college is to be the leading provider of education and training for post-16 students in the Farnham and Ash area. The college recognises the need to maximise the potential of each individual; to provide opportunities for personal development in order to ensure fulfilment of that potential; and to meet the demand for a flexible and self-reliant workforce.

The Inspection

5 The college was inspected in May 1999. Inspectors had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and information on the college held by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The data on students' achievements used by inspectors for 1996 and 1997 were taken from the FEFC's individualised student record (ISR). Inspectors found them generally reliable. Those for 1998 were produced by the college in an identical format and validated by inspectors after some adjustments were made by the college. The inspection was carried out by nine inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 40 days. They observed 61 lessons, including five tutorials, evaluated students' work and examined college documents. Meetings were held with students, governors, managers, teachers and support staff. Inspectors spoke with representatives of external organisations, such as partner schools and the Surrey Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

6 The college was one of 30 in the current cycle of inspections which agreed to participate in the joint Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and FEFC assessment of careers education and guidance. The joint assessment was guided by the inspection framework, with careers education assessors

Context

contributing to judgements made by inspectors. The emphasis in this report on careers education and guidance will help colleges and careers services to improve the quality of the careers education and guidance they offer and help the DFEE to disseminate good practice.

7 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 85% were rated good or outstanding. None was less than satisfactory. These figures are substantially better than the national averages 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	9	21	3	0	0	33
GCSE	0	5	4	0	0	9
GNVQ/NVQ	6	6	2	0	0	14
Group tutorials	1	4	0	0	0	5
Total (No.)	16	36	9	0	0	61
Total (%)	26	59	15	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*

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

Attendance ranged from 81% in mathematics to 95% in business.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Farnham College	10.6	86
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

Chemistry and Physics

Grade 2

9 Inspectors observed 10 lessons, covering general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) chemistry and physics, and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) science (double award). Inspectors largely agreed with the college's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, but identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good course planning and organisation
- well-planned lessons and effective teaching
- good students' achievements and retention in GCE A level physics and chemistry
- high standards of students' written and practical work

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievements in GCSE science in 1998
- little use of information technology (IT) in teaching

10 The college offers GCE A level chemistry and physics, and GCSE science (double award), for full-time students. Enrolments for all courses have been steady over the last three years. Annual 'taster' days for local year 10 school pupils introduce them to college courses. Teachers meet regularly and courses are well planned. Detailed information about students is used to monitor their progress. Students' achievements and progression are thoroughly analysed annually and inform departmental action plans. The college management information system does not assist teachers. It provides neither easy nor timely access to central student data.

11 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that lessons are well planned. Teachers are confident and experienced and get on well with the students whilst maintaining expectations of hard work. Practical work is carried out safely and risk assessment is regularly completed. In one lesson, students synthesised benzylpenicillin, extracted the antibiotic and then tested its effectiveness against plated bacteria. The students were enthusiastic and carried out the procedures efficiently. Clear flow diagrams and the thorough assessment of risks, including the possibility of human allergy to penicillin, aided students' understanding and contributed to a positive learning experience. In the best lessons, teachers take the learning needs of all students into account, plan appropriately and ensure that all students participate in the work set. In a minority of lessons, however, the activities set by teachers are pedestrian and teachers fail to involve the students in the work. These weaknesses were not identified by the college in its self-assessment. In most lessons students work well together in small groups. Inspectors agreed with the findings of the self-assessment that the use of IT in teaching is underdeveloped. Inspectors observed no use of IT by students in the laboratories and few IT activities appear in schemes of work.

12 Teachers provide well-structured advice on examination techniques and share examiners' mark schemes with students. Whilst students can attend additional timetabled subject-specific study sessions, the structure of their timetable occasionally prevents them from doing so. Students are set appropriate work and assignments. In the main, work is marked well by teachers, who are assisted by clear marking schemes. Helpful and encouraging comments are often provided. On some students' work, however, there are no comments that students could use to assess their progress or improve their performance.

Curriculum Areas

13 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that students' achievements in GCE A level chemistry and physics are good and have been at or above the national average for sixth form colleges for the last three years. In chemistry, pass rates have been above 94% since 1996 and the proportion of students achieving A to C grades has risen to 69% in 1998. Retention has also improved each year, from 56% in 1996 to 81% in 1998. Pass rates in GCE A level physics have been above 90% since 1996, and the proportion achieving A to C grades has remained above the national average for the last three years. In GCSE science, however, where there is a very small number of students, the A to C pass rate has declined. In 1998, it was below the national average for sixth form colleges, at 20%. Retention has also declined in GCSE science over the past three years. Students' attendance and punctuality are generally good. Students achieve good standards in their work. External moderators' reports support this view.

14 The laboratories, preparation rooms and offices are situated together and allow staff to meet informally during the day. The accommodation provides enough space for the work currently undertaken. Indeed one laboratory is underused and its development as a resources area for students is under consideration. In the main, the laboratories are bright and cheerful and provide a pleasant working environment. There is enough circulation space in each laboratory and plenty of storage space. The fume cupboards in chemistry are functional and safe. However, there are only two in the main teaching laboratory and this can result in unhelpful delays during organic practical work. Teachers are well qualified and have considerable teaching experience. Technical support staff are well qualified, efficient and highly valued. This strength was recognised by the college in its self-assessment report. Books and magazines held in the department are up to date and easily accessed by students.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE science (double award)	2	Expected completions	9	14	8
		Retention (%)	100	71	63
		Achievement (%)	44	50	20
GCE A level chemistry	3	Expected completions	25	32	21
		Retention (%)	56	75	81
		Achievement (%)	100	95	94
GCE A level physics	3	Expected completions	32	36	36
		Retention (%)	87	86	94
		Achievement (%)	92	90	92

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

Curriculum Areas

Mathematics

Grade 2

15 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering the full range of provision in mathematics. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that the college gave insufficient attention to some weaknesses and provided little evidence on the quality of teaching and learning.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- good individual support for students
- effective development of key skills on GCE A level courses
- consistently good GCE A level achievements
- the wide range of resources
- good teamwork among teachers

Weaknesses

- students' poor achievements in GCSE mathematics
- inadequate analysis of students' performance data

16 The college offers GCE A level and GCE advanced supplementary (AS) courses in mathematics and further mathematics, and a GCSE resit programme for students needing to improve their grade. There is an evening class in GCSE mathematics, primarily for adult students. All courses are modular. At intermediate level no alternative courses in mathematics are offered for those unready for the GCSE, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Supportive teamwork amongst teachers contributes to the effective organisation and planning of courses. Regular informal discussions complement formal departmental meetings. Staff regularly monitor students' opinions of the courses. Detailed

records of students' performance are maintained on the department's database. Until very recently, these data were not rigorously analysed and evaluated.

17 Teaching is well planned. Schemes of work incorporate the regular review of students' progress. Teachers ensure that students know what to expect when starting their mathematics courses. Induction materials explain assessment methods and indicate important deadlines. Students are well prepared for coursework assignments and for internal and external examinations. Much good teaching leads to successful learning for students. This strength was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Teachers provide clear explanations of mathematical concepts and techniques. They place appropriate emphasis on the correct use of mathematical notation and the logical presentation of solutions to problems. In most lessons, students' individual learning is rigorously checked. Students speak confidently about mathematical concepts, explaining and justifying their solutions to problems to the rest of the group and using visual aids to support their presentations. The failure of some teachers in a minority of lessons to vary appropriately their teaching methods led to students losing interest in the lesson. Students value the individual support of teachers in lessons and in timetabled study support sessions. The latter are used less well by GCSE students. Teachers closely monitor students' progress. They set and mark work regularly and give helpful feedback on how students may improve their performance. GCE A level and GCE AS students have planned opportunities for developing key skills through their subject lessons, especially in communications.

18 The standard of most students' coursework at GCE A level and GCE AS is high. Many students demonstrate good mathematical modelling skills and successfully relate mathematical theory to practical situations. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that students' achievements in GCE

Curriculum Areas

A level courses are consistently good. For the last three years, all further mathematics students have achieved at least a grade C. The pass rates and percentage of students gaining high grades in GCE A level mathematics have been at or above the national average for sixth form colleges for each of the last three years. The retention rate for students taking the two-year course dropped in 1998 to under 60%. The current retention rate for the 1997 to 1999 two-year course, is much better, at 74%. Full-time GCSE mathematics students do not achieve well. The percentage achieving a grade C or higher has been consistently over 10% lower than the national average in similar colleges. These unsatisfactory results were not acknowledged as a weakness in the self-assessment report. In contrast, the small number of evening adult students have done particularly well. Last year, six out of seven achieved a grade C or higher and in 1997 all three students achieved a high

grade. The department does not currently use value-added data to analyse students' performance in examinations.

19 Teachers are well qualified and are confident in their subject knowledge. There are good resources to support the teaching of mathematics at all levels, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Students are provided with up-to-date course books and there are spare copies for use in class. There is a good range of equipment for practical work, including graphical calculators, which are widely used. Access to computers is sufficient. The departmental computers are much valued by teachers, but are out of date and their software is outmoded and incompatible with the college network. Mathematics classrooms are of high quality and present a clear subject identity. Each room has ample storage facilities and good use is made of the ruled whiteboards for graphical work.

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 mathematics	2	Expected completions	118	111	111
		Retention (%)	86	77	77
		Achievement (%)	29	31	28
GCE A level mathematics (two year)	3	Expected completions	56	42	45
		Retention (%)	79	88	56
		Achievement (%)	95	100	86
GCE A level further mathematics	3	Expected completions	6	6	6
		Retention (%)	100	100	67
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GCE AS mathematics and further mathematics	3	Expected completions	5	15	6
		Retention (%)	80	53	50
		Achievement (%)	67	71	33
GCE A level mathematics (one year)	3	Expected completions	1	2	21
		Retention (%)	0	100	71
		Achievement (%)	0	50	87

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

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 1

20 Inspectors observed 12 lessons, covering courses in GCE A level business studies and economics, GCE AS accounting and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) business studies at advanced and intermediate levels. Inspectors broadly agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report, although the report did not make judgements on the quality of teaching and learning.

Key strengths

- effective course planning and management
- much outstanding teaching
- good-quality support for students on their courses
- high standards of students' work
- good examination results
- strong links with industry
- good access to IT

Weaknesses

- poor retention on the GNVQ advanced business in 1998

21 The programme area offers mainly full-time courses for school-leavers. Recruitment for GCE A level business studies and the GNVQ advanced business has been maintained at around the same level over the last three years. Enrolments for the GNVQ intermediate business have steadily declined and the course is to be withdrawn. The college intends to offer an alternative package of GCSE subjects, including business studies. GCE A level economics attracts declining numbers. The move to a modular syllabus in GCE A level business studies has offered a more flexible route for students.

22 Courses are effectively managed with well-developed policies and procedures in place. The closely-knit team share responsibilities. Detailed schemes of work and course documentation are available for all courses. Teachers support their students well. Induction programmes help students to understand the requirements of their courses. Students' assessment plans and deadlines for the return of their work are carefully mapped out. Staff meetings are well documented, action plans produced and resultant action is rigorously monitored. The outcomes of the survey of students' perception are well used to improve teaching and learning. Students' comments are taken into account during staff appraisals and teaching observations. These strengths were all identified in the college's self-assessment report.

23 Many of the lessons observed were outstanding. Teaching was based on thorough lesson planning. Teachers use an appropriate variety and range of teaching methods and activities. Students are highly motivated and the work they produce is of a very high standard. They work well as part of a team or individually, using their own initiative. They have developed excellent communication and IT skills and are confident in making highly professional presentations to their peer groups.

24 Teachers find ingenious ways to sustain the interest of students. In a revision lesson for GCE AS accounts, students took part in the game of 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?'. Questions were based on the accounts syllabus and became more difficult as the game progressed. The students enjoyed the lesson. The programme area has strong links with local industry and commerce. There is an extensive programme of external visits and guest speakers to help improve students' knowledge of practical business. As part of this, two managers from the small business unit of a major clearing bank interviewed students about business plans they had produced as part of their course. They gave the students related legal and financial advice. At a future date they will examine students'

Curriculum Areas

revised business plans. Work experience placements are used to enable students to develop job-related skills. The self-assessment report identified few of these strengths.

25 Students are well prepared for examinations through thorough and regular assessment. Teachers grade assignments accurately and provide students with constructive feedback on how to improve their performance. The self-assessment report identified the high achievement of students in examinations as a strength, and inspectors agreed. Results are outstanding for GNVQ advanced and for GCE A level business studies and economics. Pass rates are all significantly better than those published in the national benchmarking data produced by the FEFC. For both of these GCE A level subjects, the majority of students over the last three years have achieved grades A or B. Achievements for the

small number of GNVQ intermediate students have been poor, but rose to well over the published benchmark in 1998. Retention on the GNVQ advanced business dropped to 61% in 1998. However, the programme area has analysed the reasons for withdrawal and the majority of students left for related employment with training.

26 Teachers are well qualified and have kept their industrial experience up to date through a programme of work placements. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that students have good access to IT with up-to-date hardware and industry-based software. Teachers encourage the students to use the internet to follow money markets, mergers and acquisitions, stock exchange dealings, and to carry out research. They regularly supplement their course textbooks and course notes through use of the internet.

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	21	32	7
		Retention (%)	95	91	70
		Achievement (%)	2	48	83
GNVQ advanced business	3	Expected completions	10	12	11
		Retention (%)	91	100	61
		Achievement (%)	80	100	100
GCE A level business studies (two years)	3	Expected completions	33	31	23
		Retention (%)	77	80	78
		Achievement (%)	94	100	96
GCE A level business (one year)	3	Expected completions	11	14	5
		Retention (%)	92	100	100
		Achievement (%)	82	82	100
GCE A level economics (two years)	3	Expected completions	18	13	11
		Retention (%)	86	72	84
		Achievement (%)	100	100	91
GCE AS accounts	3	Expected completions	9	10	12
		Retention (%)	60	71	75
		Achievement (%)	66	33	75

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

Curriculum Areas

Leisure and Tourism

Grade 1

27 Inspectors observed 10 lessons covering the provision of leisure and tourism. These included classwork, portfolio building, action-planning and group presentation work. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment of strengths and weaknesses in its self-assessment report. Most of the weaknesses identified had been appropriately addressed by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- outstanding or good teaching
- well-planned and well-managed courses
- well-managed internal assessment and verification procedures
- students' pass rates significantly above national averages
- high quality of students' written work
- good links with business to support students' work

Weaknesses

- inadequate and out-of-date leisure and tourism library texts

28 The leisure and tourism section is small. All the teaching for the two full-time GNVQ courses, offered at intermediate and advanced levels, is done by two teachers. The national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 in customer care is also offered but it was not running at the time of the inspection. The college plans to develop the work of this area when staff and accommodation resources allow. The section is well managed and teachers work together in an effective partnership. Regular meetings take place, although minutes of meetings with points for action are not produced. Much of the day-to-day business is tackled informally. Teachers agree their targets for students' enrolments, retention and

achievements and monitor them on a regular basis. Students are well informed, both before their application and during the course, about the high additional costs on the GNVQ courses, primarily related to overseas educational study visits. Arrangements for these are negotiated annually with students and financial assistance is available in cases of hardship.

29 Teaching is usually good or outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to students' success. The college's scheme of internal teaching observations identified some teaching weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that these have been addressed and that the quality of teaching has been improved. Teaching is well planned and well organised. It is supported by comprehensive and systematic documentation for both teachers and students, including detailed programme files, teaching objectives and schemes and course booklets. In all of the lessons a sense of purpose and professionalism was evident. This is reflected in the industrial relevance of students' assignments, a particular feature of which is the use of educational visits and work experience. For example, a recent visit to Holland was planned and evaluated by second-year students for the benefit of first-year students who will undertake a similar exercise next year. Teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of students and lessons are constructed to provide an appropriate mix of activities to meet these needs. Students are able to contribute individually to the whole group, in small group activity or in individual discussion with the teacher, according to their preference. In a few lessons, teachers did not make best use of whiteboards or overhead projectors and students had difficulty in reading the presentations. Assessment of students' work pays appropriate attention to spelling and use of grammar. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teachers provide strong individual support for students. This contributes to the positive relationships which exist between teachers and students.

Curriculum Areas

30 Students' retention and achievements for both levels of the GNVQ leisure and tourism are at or above the national average. Achievements for the GNVQ advanced were outstanding in 1997 and 1998. Students' written work is consistently good. It is well written, well presented, accurate and relevant to industrial practice, often using aspects of IT. This strength is recognised by external verifiers' reports. Guidance to students on entry to higher education and work is impartial and unbiased. There is good progression to the world of work and to higher education courses.

31 Leisure and tourism teachers are well qualified and have regular contact with relevant sectors of industry. They use these contacts to engage in such activities as quality assurance training and a study visit to Japan. The excellent relationships with local industry also

provide good opportunities for students' work experience and the use of specialist facilities. Students gain recognised work-based qualifications which are of considerable value to them in obtaining employment, including travel trade certificates and sporting coaching awards.

32 Resources for leisure and tourism are of high quality and are used efficiently and effectively. Students are particularly encouraged to seek information from the internet and gather other relevant data from work experience placements and classroom-based resources. Given this enthusiasm from students, inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that on occasion there are insufficient computers in specialist classrooms to cope with student demand. Library stock for leisure and tourism is too small and much is out of date. The quality of most accommodation is good.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
NVQ customer service	2	Expected completions	*	14	*
		Retention (%)	*	74	*
		Achievement (%)	*	91	*
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	Expected completions	16	15	17
		Retention (%)	81	73	82
		Achievement (%)	69	90	100
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	Expected completions	16	12	12
		Retention (%)	77	75	71
		Achievement (%)	69	100	100

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

*course not running

Curriculum Areas

English and Modern Foreign Languages

Grade 2

33 Inspectors observed 13 lessons covering GCSE English and Spanish, and GCE A level English, French, German and Spanish. The college's self-assessment report identified the major strengths and weaknesses in modern language courses but too little attention was given to teaching and learning and students' achievements in English courses.

Key strengths

- lively and effective teaching
- successful use of the target language in modern language lessons
- good examination results in English and French
- effective management and teamwork at programme level
- the range of opportunities for students to enrich their studies

Weaknesses

- poor examination results in GCE A level Spanish
- low and declining recruitment to modern language courses

34 Management of the curriculum area and of courses is strong. As the self-assessment report indicated, teachers work well in teams and have developed effective schemes of work and course structures. The introduction of an internal scheme of teaching observation has led to wider discussion of teaching methods. Teachers benefit from sharing good practice. Enrolments to GCE A level English courses have remained steady over the last three years but the number of students taking modern language courses has declined by 50%. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. The introduction

of alternative modern language syllabuses, which might prove more attractive to potential students, has not been adequately considered.

35 Teaching is good. In the majority of lessons teachers create a lively atmosphere which leads to effective learning. They use an appropriate range of teaching methods and their enthusiasm successfully sustains students' interest. Work in pairs and groups is effectively used. Whole class and group discussions are well managed. Students' presentations were the effective centrepiece in three lessons observed and helped the teachers to develop students' key skills. In a GCE A level French lesson, students gave presentations, supported by home produced visual aids, to clarify issues raised in the French literary text. This lesson, like all modern language lessons, was conducted well in the language being learned.

36 Resources are carefully used. The study of Ian McEwan's novel *A Child in Time* began with a thoughtful discussion on how to 'learn' a novel and moved into a close analysis of themes and ideas using work cards lovingly and expertly prepared by the teacher. A GCE A level German class used photographs and contemporary documents to build students' knowledge of the Berlin Blockade. Students take part in college trips to theatres and conferences. The poet, Ian Macmillan, visits the college annually to run workshops and organise poetry readings. The college annually stages a foreign language production by a European theatre company. In a few lessons, the slow pace of work failed to sustain students' interest and in a few others, teachers failed to involve students sufficiently in classroom activities. The self-assessment report did not identify weaknesses in teaching.

37 Examination results in GCE A level English and French are good. The 100% pass rate in English language and literature and 93% pass rate in French are well above national averages for sixth form colleges. The pass rate at grades A to C of 59% in GCSE English is also above the national average. Although with smaller

Curriculum Areas

numbers of students, GCE A level German and Spanish results are well below national averages. Spanish results have been consistently weak over three years, falling to only 43% in 1998. These strengths and weaknesses in modern language results were recognised in the self-assessment report, but neither strengths nor weaknesses in students' achievements in English were identified.

38 The retention rate of 63% on the first cohort of the GCE A level English language course was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Students' attendance and punctuality during the inspection were good. Students write well and in their work display sound critical judgement and lively interest. Students discussing D.H. Lawrence's poem *Bavarian Gentians* indicated a clear understanding of the poem's ideas and a genuine feeling for Lawrence's language and tone. Many modern language students spoke the target language with fluent confidence.

39 Teachers are well qualified. The five English teachers are all full time. The three modern language teachers are part time and two of them are first language speakers in the language they teach. The three foreign language assistants shared with local schools provide valuable additional learning experiences for students. All classrooms are well furnished and equipped. They have displays of recent student work, and appropriate posters and pictures. There is a 16-place language laboratory, but at the time of the inspection it was in need of servicing and refurbishment. Satellite television to support learning is not available.

Curriculum Areas

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE English language	2	Expected completions	50	57	67
		Retention (%)	78	77	72
		Achievement (%)	59	44	59
GCE A level English language	3	Expected completions	*	*	16
		Retention (%)	*	*	63
		Achievement (%)	*	*	100
GCE A level English literature	3	Expected completions	61	77	46
		Retention (%)	75	90	98
		Achievement (%)	98	98	100
GCE A level French	3	Expected completions	33	13	15
		Retention (%)	67	69	93
		Achievement (%)	68	100	92
GCE A level Spanish	3	Expected completions	13	5	7
		Retention (%)	69	60	100
		Achievement (%)	67	67	43
GCE A level German	3	Expected completions	5	6	6
		Retention (%)	80	67	83
		Achievement (%)	67	100	80

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

*course not running

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Support for Students

Grade 2

40 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report but found an additional weakness. The college has begun to address some of the weaknesses.

Key strengths

- sound procedures for recruitment, guidance and admissions
- effective liaison with partner schools
- comprehensive induction for full-time students
- strong and supportive tutorial system
- effective support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good careers education and guidance

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped procedures for assessing, monitoring and delivering learning support
- inadequate support for part-time evening students

41 As the college indicated in its self-assessment report its recruitment, guidance and admissions procedures for full-time students are a strength. Policies and procedures are clear. Open events and good liaison with schools ensure that pupils are well informed. There are strong links with four partner schools. Liaison tutors visit schools regularly, offering advice and attending parent and open evenings. College students visit schools to discuss their experiences directly with pupils. This opportunity is highly regarded by school pupils. A programme of 'taster' activities assists prospective students to make choices. Publicity materials are adequate, but will benefit from the proposed redesign.

42 Staff deal quickly with applications and efficiently arrange interviews with the admissions team. Interviews are detailed, ensuring appropriate guidance. Careers advice or special learning support needs are discussed and recorded. Full-time students receive a comprehensive induction to the college during which course choices are confirmed. Inspectors agreed that this is a strength. Arrangements for transferring to other courses are clear and well documented. A student diary, containing the student handbook and charter, reinforces information provided during induction. Students are aware of the charter and complaints procedure. The college has few late applicants, but does not ensure that they receive an appropriate induction.

43 The college has improved its tutorial arrangements since the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment that these are a strength. Managed by the principal tutor, tutor co-ordinators supervise groups of tutors and monitor the effectiveness and quality of tutorials. All tutors have comprehensive guidance materials. A new tutorial system started in September 1998, and is based on a cycle of meetings of clusters of tutorial groups, group tutorials and regular individual interviews. Students' progress is monitored formally at set dates by subject teachers. Outcomes are discussed by personal tutors in individual meetings with students, and action plans result. Students confirm that these interviews are a strength. Students' overall attendance is rigorously monitored during tutorials.

44 All full-time students are tested for literacy skills during induction. However, the test does not differentiate between the skills needed for different courses and levels, and no immediate use is made of the results of these tests. Students are not told of their results. There is no system to ensure that students assessed as needing support receive it. Students only receive learning support if referred by teachers or tutors, or themselves. Numeracy skills are

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still not assessed. The college has recently introduced timetabled subject-specific study support sessions, establishing a greater understanding of the subject and its assessment. Students value this opportunity but sometimes timetable clashes prevent their attendance. The college has no process to evaluate the effectiveness of support in improving student retention and achievement. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

45 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. A learning support tutor is responsible for the college's foundation course in basic skills. Students are well supported. The needs of students with physical disabilities are assessed before entry to the college and, where possible, appropriate arrangements are made. The student counsellor is only in college one afternoon each week. This limits the scope and effectiveness of counselling. The college recognised that support for part-time evening students is inadequate. Although such enrolments are relatively small, the development of this work figures largely in college plans. There is no formalised cross-college induction programme or identified tutorial time for these students. A number of college services are not available in the evenings. A recently-appointed co-ordinator is to address these weaknesses. The college has a good 14-place crèche. Although students have priority, it is mainly used by the community and some staff as there are few day-time adult students. The college runs a full and varied enrichment programme. The student council is active and effective. Students' views are taken seriously. They are aware that there is an equal opportunities policy and of the college view that it should be practised.

46 There is a strong and dynamic partnership between the college and Surrey Careers Services. Although the time allocated by the careers service has been reduced, it still actively

participates in enrolment and the provision of guidance and advice. Students can request an individual interview or be referred by tutors or teachers. Group sessions include preparation for higher education, which is well developed. The careers service works with the college to identify students at risk of leaving early. Timely support and advice are provided. Careers staff brief tutors on wider aspects of careers guidance. The college careers library is adequate, although it lacks sufficient material on employment opportunities. Liaison between the college careers assistant and the careers service is good and ensures continuous support for students.

General Resources

Grade 2

47 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good accommodation
- impressive new teaching accommodation
- well-maintained premises and 10-year maintenance plan
- comprehensive IT strategy and excellent IT facilities for students
- good health and safety policy and monitoring

Weaknesses

- low space utilisation
- inefficient management of college bookstock
- inadequate access for students with restricted mobility

48 The college is situated in a pleasant residential area in Farnham close to the town

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centre. The site consists of three attractive brick buildings, two built between the early 1900s and 1980s and a new block built in 1996. Three old huts are still in use. A disused rifle range on the site is used to exhibit students' artwork in preparation for examinations. The college has extensive sports fields and three all-weather tennis courts. It has a gymnasium and a fitness centre and makes use of a local leisure centre. The premises are well maintained; there is a costed 10-year maintenance plan, and inspectors agreed that this is a strength. The college has effective security arrangements. External signs are not always clear and there are insufficient internal signs to assist visitors. Students' impressive artwork hangs attractively in many parts of the buildings and teaching rooms are large, bright and well decorated. Some of the furniture is old and needs replacing.

49 Since the last inspection, the college has demolished several huts and relocated some teaching to its new, high-quality teaching block. The ceramics studio has also been relocated to more appropriate accommodation. Space utilisation has improved a little since the last inspection but the rate of room occupancy, particularly in some of the larger areas, such as the hall and the gymnasium, remains low. The college has recognised this and has a well-researched accommodation strategy which includes the major remodelling of one building, a larger reception and student services areas, a new refectory, a resource centre, and the removal of the remaining huts. Inspectors agreed that whilst the college has made some improvements in access for students with restricted mobility, including the new building, access to most facilities remains poor. The remodelling plans take full account of the need for improved access.

50 General facilities to support learning are of appropriate quality. The college has a detailed assets register and monitors carefully equipment depreciation. It has yet to develop a formal programme for equipment replacement.

There is an efficient and highly-valued centralised reprographics service for staff. The volume of work has increased significantly over the last three years and the service is overstretched. Workrooms for most teachers and support staff are good, though a few are crowded and there is inadequate storage space in some. Inspectors agreed that the college refectory is too small for the increasing number of students. At peak times it is overcrowded. The college has created a few additional social areas by placing easy chairs and tables outside some rooms but students remain less than satisfied because the areas are mainly in busy thoroughfares. The first-aid room is inadequate.

51 There has been little development of the library since the last inspection. The bookstock remains small, at 9,767 titles, and a significant amount of it is out of date. There are 139 periodicals, 10 videos and nine CD-ROMs. Departments continue to have their own extensive stocks and their records vary in quality and detail. Departmental books are not catalogued centrally and the college does not have a record of its overall bookstock. Resources in the careers centre are not included in the library's computerised catalogue. The library budget for books remains very modest at £4,400, although spending by the four curriculum divisions amounts to £18,000. Recent changes have been made in the management of the library to seek to address these weaknesses, which were acknowledged in the self-assessment report. There are 44 workspaces in the library and students report these are adequate for their needs.

52 The college has a comprehensive IT policy which is monitored effectively by an IT group. The college makes swift and appropriate specialist IT provision for students with disabilities. Inspectors agreed that the provision of IT for students is a considerable strength. There are 136 modern computers available for students' use; all but a few are on the college network and the majority provide

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access to the internet. The ratio of computer to full-time equivalent students is outstanding at 1:4.8. Sixteen computers are available on open access for students in the IT suite and students may use computers not in use in other teaching rooms.

53 The college has a well-developed health and safety policy supported by comprehensive guidelines and procedures. Risk assessments are being strengthened. Health and safety matters are monitored appropriately by a health and safety committee, which reports termly to governors.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

54 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. However, they identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a commitment to self-criticism and continuous improvement
- a well-established system for teaching observation
- the clearly demonstrated policy and practice of seeking students' views
- effective action in response to students' feedback about teaching
- mature appraisal policy and procedures

Weaknesses

- inadequately developed links between quality assurance, strategic and operational planning
- insufficiently comprehensive course reviews
- poor use of performance indicators and target-setting for improvement

- absence of formal procedures for providing feedback to students and staff
- poor monitoring of performance against charter standards

55 Quality assurance is managed by the principal who, on appointment in September 1997, undertook a major review of quality assurance systems and procedures. A new framework was introduced, with the aim of integrating quality assurance and self-assessment with strategic and operational planning. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is a strong commitment by staff to continuous improvement and an appropriately self-critical approach. The quality assurance framework provides comprehensive guidelines and procedures to determine and monitor quality. These are not yet applied sufficiently rigorously across the college.

56 Students are clearly at the centre of the college's quality assurance policy. The college is used to determining students' perceptions of their experience at college. Surveys gather students' views on pre-enrolment advice and guidance, induction, enrolment, teaching and pastoral support. Information is also collected from students who leave courses early and from parents. However, cross-college services such as the library and the careers centre do not survey students' views. The reasons why some students express dissatisfaction with these services remain unexplored. The college attaches great value to the biannual survey of students' perceptions of teaching. The outcomes lead to constructive discussions between students and teachers, and there are demonstrable gains in the way teachers receive and deal with criticism. Additionally, students are encouraged to express their views about the quality of teaching at any time. This responsiveness to students' needs is a strong feature of the college's quality assurance and demonstrates the commitment to continuous improvement.

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57 Course reviews are held at the end of each academic year. They are not comprehensive, but focus on examination results, retention and progression. They do not consider such aspects as external verification, the outcomes of surveys of students' opinions and marketing. The outcomes of reviews are evaluated by curriculum leaders, curriculum directors and the principal. Results of a survey of student services are jointly evaluated by the principal tutor and principal. The conclusions from these reviews increasingly influence operational planning. The college participates in an external quality review system, in which curriculum areas are assessed for their quality by teachers from other colleges.

58 There are no formal mechanisms for providing students with the results of surveys and annual reviews. Although they feel that their views are valued by the college, they are not always informed about subsequent decisions or plans. The response rate for the questionnaire to students on their perceptions of teaching was only 45% in one curriculum area, suggesting that students doubt its usefulness. Similarly, there is no formal process for providing feedback on surveys to staff. These weaknesses were not identified in the college's self-assessment report.

59 The systematic use of performance indicators is at an early stage of development. The college recognised this weakness. Setting performance targets and service standards were identified as action points in the self-assessment report. There is no college-wide system for setting individual students' targets based on an assessment of students' likely progress beyond their GCSE grades. Next academic year, the college will participate in a national system for measuring this 'value added'. The college charter is included in the students' handbook. Although it contains some service standards, their achievement is not monitored.

60 The staff development policy and procedures are well established. The programme is clearly linked to strategic and

operational priorities and also takes account of intelligence gathered through an annual staff survey and the mature appraisal system for staff. Expenditure on staff development in the last academic year was 0.59% of annual college income, which is low. The target to improve this to 0.89% by 2002 is barely adequate. The internal programme of teaching observation is well developed. All teachers have been observed twice in the last two years. Nearly half have been observed twice this year. All new teachers are observed during their first term. Observations are well recorded. The college's systems have been evaluated through a Further Education Development Agency research project.

61 The college produced its first self-assessment report for the inspection. Its creation involved all staff and used the outcomes of the college's quality assurance framework. Action plans accompany the report, but inspectors found that some of these had missed their target dates. A small representative sample of curriculum reports, and one service area report, were selected for internal validation. However, this was not complete by the time of the inspection. The self-assessment report was received by the corporation, although at that stage a number of constituent reports from service areas had not been included.

Governance

Grade 3

62 Self-assessment of governance was weak. The self-assessment report failed to identify most of the weaknesses in governance identified by the inspection team.

Key strengths

- governors' strong commitment to the college

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- wide range of skills and expertise of governors
- detailed consideration of a range of non-financial issues
- careful monitoring of the college's finances

Weaknesses

- muddled arrangements for conducting corporation business
- inefficient decision-making procedures
- governors' lack of involvement in strategic planning
- insufficient commitment to openness
- inadequate resourcing of internal audit

63 The corporation has a membership of 19, with one recent vacancy. Membership includes seven independent, four foundation, two co-opted governors, a parent, a staff and a student governor, a nominee of the local TEC and the principal. Governors are generous with the time they give. As the self-assessment report noted, governors contribute a wide range of skills, expertise and knowledge of the community. Governors have been appointed in accordance with the provisions of the instrument of government. The corporation has a membership committee to assist with the recruitment of new governors. However, it is not properly constituted. The corporation has not fixed the membership number, or agreed a quorum. Arrangements for the recruitment of new governors do not reflect the Nolan committee's elements of best practice. The self-assessment report identified weaknesses in induction and training. Some improvements have now been made.

64 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is weak. The corporation does not conduct its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also does not fulfil its

responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

65 The corporation has a complicated committee structure. It has the following committees: finance; personnel and employment; premises and resources; development and students; audit; and remuneration. Inspectors did not agree with the self-assessment report that this model of governance, with detailed work being done by these committees, is a particular strength. The terms of reference of many committees are ill-defined. Some appear confused as to their remit. On occasion, reports on the same subject go to several committees, for no obvious reason. Committees have also looked at matters outside their terms of reference. Governors sought to address the perceived problem of poor communication between committees through twice-termly meetings of committee chairs. This arrangement has added to the workload of chairs, clerk to the corporation and senior management, without improving the working of the corporation. Governors have not reviewed the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the committee structure. Committee minutes are not submitted to the full corporation nor circulated to all governors. The corporation is kept informed through written committee reports, supplemented by oral reports. However, because the reports are written between committee meetings they do not give complete account of committee activities to the corporation.

66 The current strategic plan was written by the previous principal and approved by the corporation in 1997. Governors played little part in determining the strategic direction it describes. Corporate objectives are generally unquantified, so weakening the effectiveness of the regular monitoring reports from the principal. The corporation did not consider the current three-year financial forecast, which underpins the strategic plan, even though it indicates a significant deterioration in the

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college's future financial health. The annual budget is approved annually by the corporation on the advice of the finance committee. The finance committee undertakes careful scrutiny of the college's financial position through monthly consideration of management accounts. Financial reports are received termly by the full corporation. However, these do not routinely include information on the college's future financial health, such as a rolling cashflow forecast for 12 months ahead. The corporation gives careful consideration to students' achievements. The development and students' committee discusses detailed reports on achievements, the curriculum, and student numbers.

67 The internal audit arrangements established by governors do not fully comply with FEFC guidance. Through the audit committee, governors have restricted internal auditors' scope and resources for coverage of the college's whole system of internal control. The number of internal audit days has been restricted to nine and the internal auditors have not been invited to review many of the college's business systems.

68 There is good attendance at corporation and committee meetings by most governors. The corporation has an external clerk to the corporation. Inspectors disagreed with the college's assessment of clerking as a strength. There is no an annual calendar of meetings. The production of agendas, supporting papers and minutes is poorly organised. Agendas and supporting papers for committee meetings are routinely circulated to members less than five days in advance. Supporting papers for corporation and committee meetings frequently do not provide a good basis for decision-making. Minutes do not achieve an appropriate balance between recording decisions made and evidence of debate.

69 The corporation has no standing orders to guide the conduct of its business. The corporation has adopted a code of conduct but

this has not been updated to reflect the Nolan committee's recommendations on openness and accountability. It has a register of interests with declarations by all governors, but it has not been extended to senior managers. The value of the register in demonstrating openness is impaired because the declarations by many governors inadequately reflect their financial and personal interests. The principal has been appraised by the chair of governors, but a systematic approach to the assessment of performance and development of designated senior staff has not been determined.

Management

Grade 2

70 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college in its self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- well-managed teamwork
- prudent financial management
- carefully considered, well regarded and effective day-to-day management
- appropriate and developing external links
- responsive curriculum for full-time 16 to 18 year old students

Weaknesses

- lack of quantitative targets to support planning and monitoring
- lack of and inconsistent access to management information
- ineffective monitoring and implementation of the equal opportunities policy

71 Support and teaching staff form a close-knit, mutually supportive team. This enabled the college to continue to work efficiently in the recent past, when key senior managers were

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absent. The strong team ethos has been fostered by well-considered management practice. Communication is generally sound. Although formal meetings vary in their effectiveness, agenda setting and the recording of decisions are often well done. Thoughtful arrangements keep part-time staff informed. The management structure is well understood. The core management team is the principal, college administrator, principal tutor and director of studies. The latter manages the curriculum, through curriculum directors, and the principal tutor is assisted by a team of tutor co-ordinators. Several staff, including senior managers, have multiple roles, but accountability is clear. The potential isolation of many single-person curriculum and support units has been overcome by the organisational structure of grouping, ensuring that individual areas are linked for communication and management purposes. The management of adult and commercial programmes, a developing area, is not yet effectively integrated. Staffing is analysed and carefully planned; decisions are implemented with sensitivity.

72 The day-to-day management of curriculum and support services is effective. Managers are committed to ensuring proper and timely implementation of policies and are well supported by staff. The process of allocation of curriculum budgets is understood and closely linked to operational plans. These strengths were identified by the college in its self-assessment. Operational planning is improving and it is increasingly assisting the college to cope with change. However, quantitative college targets are not in place to support planning and monitoring. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that this is an important weakness. The college is tackling it and progress has been made.

73 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that financial management is prudent. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's

financial management is adequate. Budget planning processes are appropriate to the college. However, the financial accounting system does not meet the college's financial reporting needs. Financial reports to budget holders are inefficiently produced using a combination of manual and computerised systems. Notwithstanding this, management accounts, produced monthly by the finance manager, enable effective monitoring of financial performance. Course costing has not been developed. 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. Timely and accurate financial and data returns are made to the FEFC.

74 The use of management information to support planning and quality assurance is insufficiently developed. Curriculum managers are beginning to realise the need for the analysis of reliable information. However, the college's capacity to provide this is inadequate. There is a wealth of data but access to student databases is difficult. There are insufficient computer terminals for curriculum managers to use readily. The college has plans to address this deficiency, which it identified in the self-assessment report.

75 Despite its small size, the college is making considerable efforts to develop its role in the local community. The Foundation Trust, and other local networks fostered by the college, contribute to community links. The college is involved in a number of collaborative activities with local colleges and other organisations, such as the local authority adult education service, Surrey TEC, the chamber of commerce and lifelong learning partnerships. Other external links are designed to promote the wider active life of the local community, particularly for young people. These include sporting and musical activities and close involvement in Farnham's tourist developments.

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76 The college's curriculum is responsive to the full-time 16 to 18 year olds that make up around 75% of its students. A new foundation programme has been added to the existing provision at intermediate and advanced levels. There is a wide range of courses offered at advanced level. Opportunities are provided for additional studies and recreational activities. New courses are added and others deleted in response to shifting patterns of demand and perceptions of quality. The college has achieved its target growth each year since incorporation. The college identified this strength in its self-assessment report, as well as a weakness in the slow growth of planned provision for adults.

77 The equal opportunities policy is out of date as are some other policy documents. The inspection in 1996 identified a weakness in the ineffectiveness of monitoring equal opportunities. The college's self-assessment report correctly identified weaknesses in monitoring. However, the audit planned to begin to address this deficiency had not been undertaken by its target date. Inspectors agreed that little improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The health and safety policy is updated and implemented conscientiously.

Conclusions

78 The inspection team found that the college's self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. However, some sections were more detailed and rigorous than others. It was helpfully updated before the inspection. In most respects, inspectors agreed with the judgements reached by the college for its curriculum areas. In three of the cross-college aspects, inspectors considered the college to be overgenerous.

79 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	75
19-24 years	7
25+ years	17
Not known	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1998)

Level of study	%
Foundation	4
Intermediate	13
Advanced	71
Higher education	0
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	12
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	150	41	24
Engineering	8	23	4
Business	91	21	14
Hotel and catering	47	14	7
Health and community care	12	10	3
Art and design	94	14	13
Humanities	218	53	34
Basic education	6	0	1
Total	626	176	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 (November 1998)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	38	2	0	40
Supporting direct learning contact	8	0	0	8
Other support	20	0	0	20
Total	66	2	0	68

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£2,179,000	£2,090,000	£2,030,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£19.94	£19.32	£18.89
Payroll as a proportion of income	66%	69%	69%
Achievement of funding target	107%	109%	113%
Diversity of income	10%	11%	12%
Operating surplus	£320,000	£186,000	£133,000

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	63	36	110	7	57	56
	Retention (%)	78	89	82	86	88	95
	Achievement (%)	33	34	72	33	56	66
2	Expected completions	912	761	671	36	167	104
	Retention (%)	84	90	82	89	93	93
	Achievement (%)	39	87	94	25	60	81
3	Expected completions	–	1,122	1,184	–	68	90
	Retention (%)	–	76	84	–	81	82
	Achievement (%)	82	85	84	83	68	77
4 or 5	Expected completions	–	0	0	–	9	4
	Retention (%)	–	n/a	n/a	–	100	100
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	22	22	n/a
Short courses	Expected completions	229	15	55	33	133	67
	Retention (%)	100	93	98	88	98	100
	Achievement (%)	1	93	98	52	94	99
Unknown/unclassified	Expected completions	0	0	0	0	0	0
	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

Source: ISR

-ISR data not collected

n/a not applicable

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