

Godalming College

REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
2000-01

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.

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 024 7686 3000
Fax 024 7686 3100
Website www.fefc.ac.uk*

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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 1999-2000, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	6	44	44	7	0
Cross-college provision	9	45	38	8	0

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000: Chief inspector's annual report*

Sample size: 112 college inspections

Note: percentages subject to rounding

Student Achievements

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

- as number of starters, which is the number of enrolments on qualifications where the student was expecting to complete the qualification that college year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1996, would appear in the results for 1997-98 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification
- as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which students have completed as expected or where they are continuing their studies beyond the expected end date of the qualification. 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 included.

Summary

Godalming College

South East Region

Inspected November 2000

Godalming College is a sixth form college located on a single site to the south of Godalming. In preparation for inspection, the college produced a comprehensive self-assessment report. All staff, governors and students were involved in the self-assessment process. The report was clear and the self-assessment process was rigorous. A useful update to the report and action plans for improvement were provided just before the inspection. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college and with all but one of the grades in the self-assessment report. Progress had been made in rectifying many of the weaknesses by the time of the inspection.

The college provides courses in eight of the 10 FEFC programme areas. The inspection covered four of these areas. The management of the college is outstanding. All staff have high expectations of one another and are committed to helping students achieve standards of excellence. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed. Most teaching is good or outstanding and has improved since the last inspection. In childcare and nursery nursing, art and design and

humanities, the provision is outstanding.

Retention and pass rates are high on most courses. In each of the last three years, many students on GCE A level courses have achieved grades higher than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. There are good links with feeder schools. Student induction is thorough. The staff are well qualified. They provide students with help and support and monitor their progress carefully.

Accommodation and IT facilities have been improved significantly since the last inspection. The quality assurance system is effective. Staff use the management information system well. All staff have a strong commitment to upholding equality of opportunity. There is a good staff development programme. Governors are well informed about the college. They maintain oversight of strategic, curricular and financial matters effectively. Governors and senior managers have a good working relationship. The corporation, however, has not yet formally adopted the provisions of the modification orders to the articles of government. The college should improve: teaching in a few areas; aspects of support for individual students; and target-setting procedures. In addition, the college should ensure: key skills are taught as an integral part of courses; and methods for recording lesson observations are standardised.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science	2	Support for students	2
Computing, mathematics and information technology	3	General resources	2
Childcare and nursery nursing	1	Quality assurance	2
Performing arts, theatre and media	2	Governance	2
Art and design	1	Management	1
Humanities	1		

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Godalming College was established as a sixth form college in 1974. It is located on a single site to the south of Godalming town centre in the Borough of Waverley. The population of Waverley was 113,212 at the last census. The proportion of persons in Waverley who come from minority ethnic groups is 1.3%. The employment rate in Surrey is high. Of 16-year-old school-leavers in the country, 80% stay on in full-time education. Half a mile from the college is the ward of Ockford Ridge, which is one of the two most deprived areas in Surrey. Waverley has many small and medium-sized enterprises, some of which employ fewer than 10 people.

2 The college has strong links with its four partner schools. About half of the college's 16-year-old students come from these schools. One-quarter of its students transfer to the college from the independent sector and the remainder come from maintained schools throughout Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex. The college also has an increasing number of adult students who attend evening classes in the local community centres or are assessed in the workplace. At the time of the inspection, the college had 1,329 16 to 19 year old students and 139 enrolments for evening classes.

3 Godalming College provides courses in eight of the 10 Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) programme areas. These include courses leading to the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), national vocational qualification (NVQ), advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE), and a variety of other programmes. Forty-six GCE A level and GCE advanced subsidiary (AS) subjects are offered. They may be studied over two years or on intensive one-year courses. The college offers three vocational GCE A level programmes which are taken by 8% of its second-year advanced level

students. Following the introduction of curriculum 2000, these courses are now taken by 23% of students in the first year of their GCE AS course. In September 2000, GCSE courses were rationalised to provide a coherent programme of study. This has a core with optional subjects and key skills and aims to prepare students effectively for progression to GCE A level study. Adult students follow a variety of college programmes and the college's business development unit offers a wide range of accredited and customised training courses for returners to work and the local business community.

4 The college has a well-established and extensive activity programme for students. All students are encouraged to participate in activities which include sport, drama, music, debates, and fund-raising events for charity. The college has a Christian Union and an equine team. Scientific research has been a strong feature of the college for the last eight years and in 1998 its pioneering work was recognised by the Queen's Anniversary Prize.

5 The mission of the college is to provide quality education and training in a supportive environment. Its priority is to serve the needs of its partner schools and other local schools with the provision of full-time post-16 education and training. It is also an established base for adult and business training in the area and provides courses through three centres in the community. The college has a strong commitment to raising standards and is involved in a wide range of collaborative partnerships in Godalming, Surrey and beyond.

The Inspection

6 The college was inspected in November 2000. Inspectors had previously analysed the college's self-assessment report and information held about the college by other directorates of the FEFC. Inspectors used data on students' achievements taken from the college's

Context

individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1998 and 1999. The college submitted its own data on students' achievements for 2000. The data for 2000 were checked against college registers and awarding body pass lists and were largely accurate. The inspection was carried out by 10 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 43 days. Inspectors observed 74 lessons and some additional tutorials which were not graded. They looked at students' work and a range of college

documents. Meetings were held with students, governors, managers, teachers and support staff.

7 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. Of the lessons inspected, 81% were rated good or outstanding. This proportion is above the national average for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000 and is also above the national average for sixth form colleges.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	16	30	7	1	0	54
GCSE	0	2	3	0	0	5
NVQ	7	4	1	0	0	12
Other	1	0	2	0	0	3
Total (No.)	24	36	13	1	0	74
Total (%)	32	49	18	1	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000 (%)	17	45	31	6	0	100

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000: Chief inspector's annual report*

Note: percentages subject to rounding

8 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000.

Attendance was well above the national average despite travelling problems due to rail disruptions at the time of the inspection.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Godalming College	16.1	88
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000	10.3	76

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000: Chief inspector's annual report*

Curriculum Areas

Science

Grade 2

9 The inspection covered GCE A level, GCE AS and GCSE courses in science. Twelve lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the majority of judgements in the college's self-assessment report but found a weakness the college had not identified.

Key strengths

- students' good results in GCE A level science subjects
- good retention rates on GCE A level science courses
- stimulating practical work and interesting scientific research by students
- well-organised courses with good learning materials for students
- good range of equipment, computers and books for science students

Weaknesses

- falling retention rates on GCSE science courses
- insufficient sharing of good practice

10 The college offers GCE A/AS level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry and physics as well as GCSE science. Following the introduction of curriculum 2000, the number of students taking science subjects has increased. Courses are well organised and well resourced and schemes of work and lesson plans are clearly set out. However, subject departments work in isolation from each other and do not arrange to share good practice and common concerns. This weakness was not identified in the college's self-assessment.

11 Inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment report that teaching is good and

relationships between staff and students are positive. There is a good mix of theory, practical work and demonstrations in lessons. Practical work sessions are stimulating. Students enjoy their practical work and carry it out safely. In a good biology lesson, students measured the effect of temperature on enzyme action in yeast and worked together effectively. In the best lessons, good teaching materials and workbooks are used imaginatively. In both chemistry and biology, carefully prepared workbooks allow students to learn at their own pace. In a good chemistry lesson on the reactivity of various metals, students worked in small groups and on their own on practical tasks and were able to progress at their own rate. In one less satisfactory science lesson, the teacher did not give the more able students sufficiently demanding activities and failed to help other students who were struggling to understand what they had to do. Students have opportunities to develop research skills and have undertaken some valuable extension activities over the past nine years. Chemistry students continue to work in collaboration with an industrial chemist on the separation of fullerenes and physics students collaborate with Surrey University in a project to measure the electric charge of the earth's atmosphere. Key skills are an integral part of chemistry courses and are beginning to be successfully incorporated in biology and physics courses.

12 As identified in the college's self-assessment report, student achievement rates on GCE A level science courses are at or above the national average for sixth form colleges. The proportion of students who gain high grades is also above the national average, as it is in GCSE science. Retention in GCSE has fallen to below average levels. Retention rates are at or above the national average on GCE A level science subjects although the retention rate on the human biology course fell below the national average in the year before inspection. Students on GCE A level science

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courses obtain higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. Students' achievements are celebrated each year through Creativity in Science and Technology awards and in 1998 the college won the Queen's Anniversary Prize for its pioneering scientific research on the molecular structure of fullerenes.

13 Students are punctual and attendance is good. Their work is well presented and students' files are well organised. The standard of most students' written work is high and their progress is effectively monitored. Work is marked carefully and returned promptly. Teachers offer students suggestions on how they may improve their performance. Sometimes staff do not correct spelling and grammatical errors. Personal achievement grades are set for all students and they find these challenging and motivating. Students speak positively of the tutorial support and the extra help they receive from teaching staff. They appreciate their

support with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications and careers choices. Students' destinations are carefully analysed and good numbers of students progress to higher education. However, only six students studying GCSE science in the 1999-2000 academic year progressed to further science courses.

14 Staff are dedicated and well qualified. Departmental intranet materials are being developed. For example, physics students make good use of useful spreadsheet materials during practical lessons. Technical support is effective and highly valued by academic staff. Support staff play an important role in health and safety planning and make a significant contribution to the annual self-assessment process. There is a good range of scientific equipment, computers and reference books for students to use. The learning centre has a wide range of scientific periodicals, CD-ROMs and other resources, but some of the books are old and out of date.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in science, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE science (single and double awards)	2	Number of starters	40	59	66
		Retention (%)	93	85	68
		Achievement (%)	89	62	84
GCE A level biology	3	Number of starters	123	111	95
		Retention (%)	76	77	86
		Achievement (%)	84	95	97
GCE A level human biology	3	Number of starters	21	22	34
		Retention (%)	90	82	64
		Achievement (%)	89	67	86
GCE A level chemistry	3	Number of starters	80	63	64
		Retention (%)	74	78	76
		Achievement (%)	93	98	95
GCE A level physics	3	Number of starters	63	58	66
		Retention (%)	71	83	89
		Achievement (%)	92	93	86

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

Curriculum Areas

Computing, Mathematics and Information Technology

Grade 3

15 Inspectors observed 14 lessons covering courses leading to GCE A level in computing, information technology (IT) and mathematics, GCSE mathematics and key skills application of number and IT. Inspectors agreed with the majority of judgements in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good and innovative teaching methods in IT
- good range of intermediate level learning opportunities in mathematics
- good course planning
- good use of well-prepared learning materials in lessons
- strong commitment of staff to helping students develop key skills

Weaknesses

- students' poor achievement rates on mathematics courses
- failure of teachers to meet individual students' learning needs in some lessons
- little opportunity in some lessons for students to offer ideas through discussion
- students' failure to achieve their predicted GCE A level grades

16 The college offers full-time courses leading to GCE A level in computing, IT, mathematics and further mathematics and GCSE mathematics. Courses leading to alternative level 2 qualifications in mathematics are also provided. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that these are a

valuable extension to the college's range of provision at this level. Key skills courses were introduced for all students enrolling at the college for the 2000-01 academic year. These include application of number and IT at levels 1, 2 and 3. The college has good resources for key skills. Students are assessed in key skills on entering the college. They receive lessons on key skills in order to improve their levels of attainment in these skills. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that staff have a strong commitment to ensuring students develop and improve their key skills. Shortly before inspection, changes were made to the management of mathematics and IT. Following these, there has been significant improvement in staff teamwork and in the design and planning of courses.

17 Most teaching is good. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that course planning and preparation of lessons are strengths. Schemes of work are detailed. They specify teaching methods and the resources to be used. Lesson plans explain why the chosen methods are thought to be effective. Teachers work together to prepare good support materials. Teachers give students assistance and support lessons and make themselves available to provide help at other times. Workshop sessions are provided regularly to enable students to deal with aspects of their work they find particularly difficult. IT teachers provide students with innovative and effective learning activities. In one GCE A level IT lesson for example, students worked in pairs to produce instructions for other students, with each pair working on a different task. Through this activity they went over learning they had already acquired, learned new skills together and shared their learning with the rest of the group. As the self-assessment report acknowledges, in some lessons, teachers fail to ensure that they respond to the needs of all students in the class. In these lessons, some students are given tasks that are insufficiently

Curriculum Areas

demanding and which do not engage their full attention. In the less successful lessons, teachers did not give students sufficient scope to exercise their initiative in learning activities, express their ideas and explore concepts, or engage in discussion and debate. In application of number key skills lessons some students were not enabled to relate their learning to work in their other courses.

18 Retention rates on all courses are at or above the national average for sixth form colleges. Attendance at lessons is well above national average. Students' GCE A level results on computing and IT courses are at or above the national average but on mathematics courses they are consistently below the national average. Many students' grades in GCE A level mathematics are below those for them predicted on the basis of their GCSE grades. Students carry out extensive practical work in computing

and IT and through this they demonstrate acquisition of a wide range of skills.

Mathematics students work on standardised tasks but are also given the opportunity to produce some creative work. Students who are developing key skills are provided with coursework that is differentiated by level. On IT courses, they complete tasks that relate to their particular interests. Many students progress to higher education or employment.

19 Most teaching accommodation is satisfactory. Some mathematics rooms are not big enough for the classes using them. Specialist computer rooms are spacious, well lit and well resourced and there is a specialist room for teaching application of number. Teachers in the area have good academic qualifications and several have had relevant industrial and commercial experience.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in computing, mathematics and information technology, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE mathematics	2	Number of starters	152	167	142
		Retention (%)	78	87	83
		Achievement (%)	31	26	35
GCE A level computing	3	Number of starters	25	24	29
		Retention (%)	80	75	79
		Achievement (%)	89	61	87
GCE A level IT	3	Number of starters	41	50	41
		Retention (%)	73	70	73
		Achievement (%)	57	94	93
GCE A level mathematics	3	Number of starters	157	130	106
		Retention (%)	82	79	86
		Achievement (%)	84	86	80
GCE A level further mathematics	3	Number of starters	12	23	15
		Retention (%)	69	78	87
		Achievement (%)	100	88	82

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

Curriculum Areas

Childcare and Nursery Nursing

Grade 1

20 Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They agreed with all of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- outstanding teaching in childcare
- excellent individual support for all students
- curricular relevance of the well-organised placements
- students' excellent achievement rates
- students' success in progressing to further courses in the college
- well-managed and carefully organised courses
- effective monitoring of workplace assessors

Weaknesses

- decline in student retention rates on the certificate course

21 The college offers full-time and part-time courses at levels 1 to 3 in childcare. The college has recently been approved as an assessment centre for NVQ level 4. Short courses are offered in food hygiene, child protection and first aid. Full-time students have the opportunity to work towards both the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma and NVQ level 3 or the CACHE certificate and NVQ level 2. They can also follow short courses. Childcare workers can follow a course leading to an NVQ. They have classroom sessions with a teacher and they are provided with learning packages they can work through on their own. They are assessed in their workplace. Courses are well planned and effectively managed. There is effective induction

for all students. The support needs of individual students are identified promptly and, in some instances, these relate to social and personal problems the students may have. Students' portfolios are efficiently maintained and well monitored. The internal verification system is robust. Assessments take place at regular intervals when students ask for them. The activities of workplace assessors are co-ordinated well and monitored effectively. Students' views are sought throughout the year and are taken into account in formal course reviews. Action is taken to improve the course and the performance of individual students.

22 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that teaching is good or outstanding. It is often lively and imaginative. Classroom tasks and assignments are made relevant to the students' activities in the workplace and prepare students well for assessment. For example, following an introductory session and video on 'storysacks', students prepared materials for use in placements. Teachers provide students with a wide variety of appropriate and well-planned learning activities that extend their knowledge and skills, challenge them to think and explore concepts, and stimulate them to enquire further into their subject. They often draw upon the methods of the early years curriculum to help students evaluate classroom processes in addition to acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. In a lesson on nutrition, students worked in small groups to develop recipes using different ingredients. They then had to establish the mineral content and cook the ingredients so that the final product would be appetising to children. Finally, they tasted the food and judged it against pre-determined criteria. Teachers share their lesson objectives with students. They make sure that students understand the lesson by engaging the students in discussion and by asking them to identify the key points of what they have learned. The learning tasks enabled students to be creative

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and involved them in good practical work and research.

23 All students receive good tutorials. Part-time students have weekly 'drop-in' tutorial sessions when their progress is monitored and they receive individual support. Students benefit from the good links staff have with employers and professional childcare workers. Work placements are well organised. The range of placements has been broadened and students now have opportunities to work with sick children and children with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties. Teaching of the key skill of communication is integral to courses but teaching of IT as a key skill is not yet well established.

24 Students' achievements on all courses are well above the national average for sixth form colleges and inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that they are a strength. On all courses except the certificate course, retention rates have been above the national average. In its self-assessment report, the college acknowledges the low retention rate

on the certificate course and is taking action to improve it. Students organise their portfolios and files systematically and develop self-evaluation skills. They work co-operatively and sensitively in groups, allocating tasks to one another and working purposefully together. In their contributions to class discussion, they show they are well aware of the ethical and professional issues associated with childcare. Over 50% of full-time students obtain NVQ level 2 or 3 in addition to their main qualification. All students progress to relevant employment or higher education courses.

25 Staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. Staff who lack recent professional experience undertake three-day refresher activities in a vocational setting. The childcare courses take place in a well-appointed specialist suite where students can carry out a variety of theoretical and practical activities. Classrooms contain imaginative displays of students' work. Students have access to good learning materials in the form of books and handouts, and also to computers, including one which is voice activated.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in childcare and nursery nursing, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	Number of starters	28	29	13
		Retention (%)	86	63	62
		Achievement (%)	88	75	100
NVQ childcare and education	2	Number of starters	48	45	29
		Retention (%)	56	62	79
		Achievement (%)	100	75	100
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	Number of starters	15	8	13
		Retention (%)	100	100	85
		Achievement (%)	100	57 *	100
NVQ childcare and education	3	Number of starters	21	26	27
		Retention (%)	100	73	93
		Achievement (%)	76	63	100

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

* slow completion, 100% achieved by December 1999

Curriculum Areas

Performing Arts, Theatre and Media

Grade 2

26 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in dance, drama, music, media and film studies. They agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report but concluded that insufficient emphasis had been given to weaknesses in teaching and learning in one area.

Key strengths

- good standards of students' practical and performance work
- teachers' skilful use of questions to help students learn effectively
- students' good results on GCE A level courses
- effective management of course teams

Weaknesses

- students' poor results on GCE AS dance and GCSE media courses
- some poorly planned lessons

27 The college offers full-time GCE A/AS level courses in drama, dance, music, media and film studies and GCE A level courses in theatre studies. GCSE media is the only course offered at level 2. Courses are well managed. Schemes of work are well planned. Handouts are clear. Part-time staff who are curriculum managers and teachers are fully involved in departmental meetings and contribute to course planning.

28 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that most teaching is good. Many lessons are carefully planned and effectively managed. For example, a good media studies lesson began with a lively discussion of male and female identity. The

teacher then skilfully focused the students' attention on the issue of ideology and the representation of women in film. Teachers ask questions effectively and make sure the students use appropriate technical language. Homework is clearly related to the content of lessons. In lessons, students are given a variety of appropriate tasks suitable for their individual aptitude. Extension activities are provided for more able students. In music for example, staff have developed a range of tasks to enable students across the ability range to fulfil their potential. Students who lack confidence in composition are given simple models to work from whilst the most able are encouraged to extend their skills. Through their assignment work, students gather evidence of their attainment in key skills for their portfolios. Staff draw on their experience of work effectively in lessons. In a lesson for media students on the way clothing is advertised, the teacher made good use of topical advertising material obtained during a work placement in an advertising agency. Some dance lessons, however, lack momentum and excitement. The students show little interest in their learning activities. Other lessons are poorly structured and tasks are not introduced to the students progressively or in a logical sequence.

29 There are clear procedures for identifying students' achievements and for monitoring students' progress. Music students for example, are assessed on entering college and action plans for developing their skills are prepared. Students are seen by their tutors at regular intervals and their progress is recorded. Their progress towards reaching their targets is monitored carefully. There are clear lines of communication between academic and pastoral staff. Problems students may have are identified quickly and appropriate action is taken to resolve them. Students are able to demonstrate their skills at studio evenings, concerts, college productions and through involvement in local festivals. Students' successes are celebrated by

Curriculum Areas

displays of their work around the college. Many students progress to higher education.

30 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that students achieve outstanding examination results in drama and music. The proportion of students who achieve grade C or above in these two GCE A level subjects is also above the national average for sixth form colleges. The pass rate in GCE A level media and theatre studies is in line with the national average, but the proportion of high grades in theatre studies is below average. Students' examination results in GCSE media studies and GCE AS dance are poor. Retention rates are at or well above national averages on all courses except music. Attendance rates are good and at the time of inspection, a newly introduced system for monitoring attendance was proving effective.

31 Staff are well qualified and have relevant experience. The subject departments are

located in different parts of the college but they co-operate well on college productions and the sharing of space. The work of technical support staff is appreciated by the teachers. There is a new suite of rooms for media. Recently an additional music practice room has been made available. The new rooms are light, spacious and well equipped. There is good specialist equipment for music technology, media and film studies. Staff manage the area effectively but there is increasing pressure on space. As the college's self-assessment report states, good studio space and a classroom with a dance floor are available for drama and dance courses. The studio is cluttered with scenery and props, which impede movement work and the classroom for movement work is small. There is a lack of storage space for large items of scenery and costume. A good stock of books, journals and videos is available to the students. Students have good access to the Internet and key websites are identified for them.

Curriculum Areas

A summary of retention and achievement rates in performing arts, theatre and media, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE media	2	Number of starters	29	34	26
		Retention (%)	76	74	84
		Achievement (%)	68	44	47
GCE A level drama	3	Number of starters	31	20	33
		Retention (%)	94	85	90
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GCE A level music	3	Number of starters	17	7	9
		Retention (%)	82	57	77
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GCE A level theatre studies	3	Number of starters	29	39	17
		Retention (%)	76	90	94
		Achievement (%)	95	100	93
GCE A level media studies	3	Number of starters	113	101	102
		Retention (%)	73	78	78
		Achievement (%)	94	99	93
GCE AS dance	3	Number of starters	19	16	13
		Retention (%)	89	81	83
		Achievement (%)	100	23	70

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 1

32 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering GCE A level courses in art, fashion, textiles and clothing. Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the college's self-assessment report but identified an additional strength.

Key strengths

- well-planned courses
- students' exceptionally good examination results
- good teamwork by staff
- outstanding teaching
- good specialist facilities and resources
- outstanding work by students

Weaknesses

- failure to make the teaching of key skills an integral part of courses

33 The college offers full-time GCE A level courses in art, fashion, textiles and clothing and there are some part-time courses for adults. All the courses offered are at level 3 and prepare students for progression to higher education. Courses are carefully planned and well structured and the curriculum area is ably managed.

34 As the college's self-assessment report acknowledges, teaching is good or outstanding and students receive a great deal of one-to-one support whenever they need it. Teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods. In one lesson, for example, students on a GCE A level course were analysing techniques used in twentieth century painting. The class consisted of adult part-time students and younger full-time students. All the students worked well together. They discussed how they themselves might use these techniques and how they might be applied

to one another's work. In a good lesson on textiles, the teacher introduced new approaches to textile manipulation which students could use in project work. The teacher provided examples of these approaches. A video of students' work was then shown and each student was given an opportunity to explain his or her ideas and discuss them with the class. Teachers work well as a team. They share good practice. They aim consistently to teach their students well in order that they may learn successfully. Clear links are made between subjects to strengthen students' learning and develop students' skills and understanding.

35 The working relationship between staff and students is good. Students carry out well-planned activities in which they are assessed. They value the detailed feedback teachers give them on their performance. Students who are experiencing difficulties with aspects of their work receive excellent support from staff who enable them to make small steps and achieve steady progress towards achievement of their individual goals. Extension activities are set for more able students. Staff place great importance on the development of students' visual language in order that the students may communicate their ideas effectively. Staff ensure that students develop good work habits from the outset. Absenteeism and failure to complete set work are promptly followed up. Students are set individual goals between lessons and their work is closely monitored. Students are expected to display their sketchbooks and discuss the work they have completed between lessons. A particular strength of the provision is the way in which students develop outstanding levels of skill which they demonstrate through a wide variety of individual styles. Key skills are not an integral part of courses. They are taught separately in specific sessions.

36 Student retention and achievement rates are well above the national average for sixth form colleges. Students' GCE A level results are

Curriculum Areas

exceptionally good with 97% of students achieving grade A in 2000, and all other students achieving grade B. Of those students achieving grade A in art, 29% were awarded marks of 100%. Students achieve better results than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. In 2000, 17% of students who gained grade A in GCE A level art enrolled with a grade C or a lower grade in GCSE art. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the standard of students' work is exceptionally high. The students' attendance rate during the inspection was significantly higher than the national average. Students demonstrate a high level of commitment to their work. Many students progress to art-related courses in higher education. The majority of students gain places at colleges of their first choice. Students' work is celebrated in displays around the college and through exhibitions.

37 Staff have high levels of expertise and are all practising artists. Technicians provide excellent support. The self-assessment report failed to acknowledge the outstanding expertise of staff. Inspectors agreed that specialised accommodation is good. It is well resourced for the courses offered. Students work in an environment they find stimulating where visual reference material is plentiful. Students go on external visits to, for example, art galleries and exhibitions. These enable them to carry out research for their coursework, including research using primary sources. The central library resource is supplemented by a stock of reference books in the curriculum area. Specialised computers have recently been introduced to enable students to make computer-aided design an integral part of their project work.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in art and design, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE art technique and practise	2	Number of starters	*	13	31
		Retention (%)	*	85	90
		Achievement (%)	*	100	82
GCSE art and design	2	Number of starters	25	13	57
		Retention (%)	84	85	87
		Achievement (%)	95	100	85
GCE A level fine arts	3	Number of starters	93	83	100
		Retention (%)	92	83	85
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GCE A level fashion, textiles and clothing	3	Number of starters	29	12	15
		Retention (%)	72	83	80
		Achievement (%)	100	90	100

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

* course not running

Curriculum Areas

Humanities

Grade 1

38 The inspection covered GCE A level and GCE AS courses in government and politics, history, law and psychology. Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- students' outstanding GCE A level results in law, politics and psychology
- good retention rates on all GCE A level courses
- good teaching
- well-designed learning materials
- good and imaginative subject enrichment activities
- effective course management

Weaknesses

- some teachers' failure to give students detailed feedback on their work

39 The subjects inspected are managed in three separate departments. GCE A levels are offered in all subjects, and new specifications for subjects at GCE AS have been introduced this year. All courses are well managed. There are clear schemes of work and assessment plans. Subject inductions are carefully designed to introduce students to subjects that they may not have studied before. Handbooks for students provide comprehensive information on course content, assessment and advice on support and progression. Staff are committed to improving the quality of courses. Internal and external reviews of provision have been carried out and improvements have been made to courses. Students' learning experiences and the standards of students' work have improved.

40 As recognised in the self-assessment report, teaching is good. Nearly all the lessons the inspectors observed were good or outstanding. Teachers engage students in a wide variety of appropriate activities and help them to explore topics by looking at them from different perspectives. In a history lesson, students watched a dramatic video extract portraying the Huguenot massacres in France in 1572. Two groups of students considered the role of Catherine de Medici in promoting the massacres and developed a case either for or against her. In an ensuing discussion, the students analysed the arguments put forward. In a psychology lesson, students were introduced to different categories of schizophrenia. They then worked in groups to examine five case studies and link each one to a category, justifying their decision. The teacher skilfully managed the class discussion, drawing out key points from students' contributions.

41 All teachers encourage students to develop study skills. For example, psychology students complete an introductory study skills programme. Psychology teachers have compiled comprehensive study packs. The students use these effectively, and they appreciate the structured approach to study that these provide. As the self-assessment report acknowledges, these learning materials are particularly effective. Teachers make good use of the media to provide up-to-date source materials in law and politics. In a law lesson, the teacher used the fuel protestors' convoy from Jarrow to illustrate the use of police powers and the importance of ensuring that the public interest is protected without undue restriction of civil liberties. Law students maintain a diary of current legal developments, and politics students review news items regularly. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that students benefit from a variety of subject enrichment activities. During a 'law week' students were involved in a range of events. History students attend specialist conferences

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regularly, and politics students have visited Parliament and heard presentations from the electoral reform society, a member of the European Parliament and a civil servant.

42 As the self-assessment report recognises, students' GCE A level results in politics, law and psychology are outstanding. For the past three years, pass rates have been well above the national average for sixth form colleges. Many students achieve grade C or above and these grades reflect high standards of students' work across all subjects. For example, the proportion of students on the one-year GCE A level psychology course achieving grade C or above has been 30 percentage points above the national average for the past two years. Students on GCE A level courses in law and politics are achieving higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. Student retention rates are also good. On all GCE A level courses, the retention rate is above the national average and has steadily improved over the past three years.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in humanities, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCE A level government and politics (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	37	21	13
		Retention (%)	70	81	100
		Achievement (%)	100	100	92
GCE A level history (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	85	80	82
		Retention (%)	85	89	89
		Achievement (%)	87	84	86
GCE A level law (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	16	21	16
		Retention (%)	75	86	81
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GCE A level psychology (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	115	101	114
		Retention (%)	83	81	83
		Achievement (%)	89	100	97
GCE A level psychology (one-year course)	3	Number of starters	29	28	13
		Retention (%)	79	93	100
		Achievement (%)	91	96	92

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

43 Students' work is marked promptly. Marking is more rigorous in some subject areas than in others. There are well-designed sheets for recording assessment and providing students with feedback on their work but these are not used in all subject areas. Students are not always clear about the assessment criteria that teachers use. Some teachers fail to give students sufficiently detailed comments on how they can improve their work. Academic tutorials are effective. During these tutorials individual students formulate targets for the improvement of their work and agree these with their subject teacher.

44 Teaching accommodation is mainly good, particularly in the newer buildings where there are spacious, flexibly designed classrooms and modern audio-visual resources. There is a good range of texts, videos and journals. Increasingly, the college intranet is used for storing and accessing learning materials.

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Support for Students

Grade 2

45 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors found an additional weakness. Some weaknesses had been rectified by the time of inspection.

Key strengths

- effective admissions and induction procedures
- well-structured tutorial system
- good liaison with parents of students aged 16 to 19
- effective systems for monitoring student attendance and retention rates
- good careers education
- wide range of extra-curricular activities

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory aspects of learning support
- low take-up of financial support by students

46 The college provides a welcoming environment for students. Student support is well managed by a team of senior tutors. Effective links have been established with four local partner schools between college staff and prospective students. Interviews take place at two of the schools. Pupils from partner schools are given priority when allocating places. They comprise half the student intake. The college holds regular open evenings for prospective students. All prospective students are interviewed before being accepted by the college. When students join the college they are interviewed at the start of the autumn term to ensure that they have selected appropriate programmes of study. Students speak highly of

the guidance provided by staff. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that induction procedures are thorough. Students are soon confident that they understand what is required of them in their studies. Retention rates for 16 to 19 year olds are well above the national average for sixth form colleges.

47 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the college has a good system of personal and academic tutorials for full-time students and those students studying on substantial part-time courses. The academic tutorials are effective and take place each term. When assessing students' coursework, teachers ascertain whether it reaches the requisite standards for the minimum examination grade the student is expected to attain. Students work closely with their tutors and agree targets for improving their academic performance. Students' progress towards reaching these targets is monitored closely. Some students and tutors, however, agree targets that are insufficiently demanding. Tutors and students make good use of carefully designed workbooks on a well-planned personal tutorial programme of personal and social education. All full-time students develop the key skill of 'improving own learning and performance' through the personal tutorial system. Once a term, personal tutors review students' overall performance in the light of reports from students' subject teachers. The tutors help the students to draw up action plans for improving their work. Liaison with parents of students aged 16 to 19 is good. Reports are sent to parents five times a year. There are regular consultation evenings for parents and an active parents' association.

48 Students' attendance is closely monitored through register spot checks followed by telephoning the homes of students who are absent. Following the introduction of this monitoring, there has been some improvement in students' attendance. At the start of the

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2000-01 academic year, the college introduced rigorous procedures for reporting on and monitoring students who are at risk of dropping out of their studies.

49 A central study skills team helps students who are dyslexic or have problems with literacy and numeracy. Regular study skills workshops are also provided. All full-time students on level 3 courses receive an initial test in numeracy and literacy. Students requiring literacy support attend compulsory workshops. At the time of inspection, only nine students out of 29 students identified as requiring numeracy support were receiving it. For some students, this support was provided through a GCSE mathematics course but this did not meet their needs. The college had not acknowledged these weaknesses in its self-assessment report. Students on foundation and intermediate courses receive some learning support during their normal lessons. They are not given initial tests to find out whether they need help with literacy or numeracy. At the time of inspection, the college had enrolled 125 students who were identified as having dyslexia. One hundred and twelve students were allowed extra time in their examinations. Students may also refer themselves for learning support. A support officer is employed for 15 hours a week but at the time of inspection, only 28 students were receiving learning support. Very few adult students refer themselves for learning support. Staff have reviewed the progress of those students who receive support and have found that they achieve examination results higher than those predicted for them. The retention rate of students with dyslexia who are receiving support is 100%.

50 Provision of careers education and counselling at the college is good. The careers area is centrally located and has a comprehensive range of up-to-date information. Qualified college staff work productively with Surrey Careers Service. Careers education takes place through the tutorial programme. The

college offers a wide range of enrichment activities which include sports, music, drama, and science activities. A committee composed of students and staff organises a regular rag week and social events such as a summer ball. Students are also involved in many local community and charity projects. All enrichment activities are voluntary. The college has not audited the extent to which individual students take part in the activities. Some students do not take advantage of the opportunities offered.

51 The college does not ensure that students are fully aware of the financial support available to them. Students who have received financial assistance speak highly of the support they have received. Many students, however, do not know that they may be eligible for financial support and the college has underspent its access funds for the last two years. During lunchtime twice a week, the college's ecumenical chaplain is available to provide pastoral and spiritual support to students. There is no professional counselling service available to students on site but senior tutors refer students identified as requiring counselling to a professional youth counselling service in the town centre.

General Resources

Grade 2

52 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths the college had identified in the self-assessment report in relation to its estate, but considered that some weaknesses in resources had not been fully acknowledged.

Key strengths

- effective implementation of the accommodation strategy
- exceptional quality of many teaching areas
- well-maintained premises and site
- good IT resources

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- good outdoor sports facilities
- improvements in access for people with restricted mobility

Weaknesses

- unsuitability of some small and inadequately equipped rooms for large classes
- lack of indoor sports facilities
- insufficient indoor social and recreational space for students

53 The college occupies a pleasant, landscaped site of 6.5 hectares to the south of Godalming town centre. The main building was constructed in the 1930s to house a co-educational grammar school. Buildings were added from the 1960s until the early 1990s as student numbers increased. These included 21 temporary classroom units.

54 Since the last inspection, the college has made major strides in the implementation of its revised accommodation strategy. Two new teaching blocks provide excellent specialist facilities for media studies, design and technology, and fashion and textiles, as well as an open access IT suite. Large-scale art work by students is prominently displayed in key locations. Most of the college's temporary accommodation has now been removed, and additional car parking facilities for staff and students have been created. The refectory area for students has been extended. It is now less crowded and provides additional space for socialising.

55 The college maintains its facilities particularly well. Most classrooms in the older parts of the college are suitably furnished and well equipped. Interior décor is good, and students' work is displayed to good effect. The college operates a 10-year rolling maintenance programme. Major repairs are carried out under the supervision of an external facilities

management company. Running repairs are carried out in-house. Staff log requests for repairs in a maintenance 'book' on the intranet, and can then check electronically on whether these are being met.

56 The college operates a swipe card system, a closed-circuit television system and employs a security guard. Some rooms in the older parts of the college lack a full range of equipment and are too small for larger groups. Some staff work areas are purpose-built with good facilities; the rest are adequate. The staff room is crowded during peak periods. Although computers have been provided for their use, staff find it difficult to use the staff room for private study. In its self-assessment report, the college did not fully acknowledge that the rooms for reprographics and student services are too small.

57 Since the last inspection, IT resources have been increased significantly. The ratio of computers to students is now 1:4. All the 333 machines available for students' use are networked and 120 give access to the Internet through the college's intranet. It is college policy to replace or update computers every three years. Students have good access to computers outside lessons. Eighty-eight machines are available to them in the new suite and in the learning centre. Students can also use departmental computers when lessons are not taking place. The college's website has links to the UCAS and Encyclopaedia Britannica sites. The content of its intranet includes study and revision notes for students as well as course guides. The ratio of computers to staff is 1:1.5.

58 The learning centre has 140 study spaces. Resources are located on two floors which involves staff in additional administrative duties when students take materials from one floor to another. There is only one access point to the electronic catalogue. All new students receive an induction to the centre. Staff have produced a useful website guide for all curriculum areas. Liaison between learning centre staff and

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teachers is good. The bookstock of 14,000 items is sufficient to meet most students' needs but the centre has few learning packs students can work through on their own. The spending on books and learning materials is equivalent to £15 for each student and this is in line with the average for sixth form colleges. A few CD-ROMs are available to students in the centre and some are networked. The centre has over 2,000 video tapes for educational use.

59 There are good outdoor sports facilities. These include hockey, football and rugby pitches and three hard tennis courts. The grounds are used for athletics during the summer months. There are no indoor sports facilities. Students use facilities owned by Charterhouse School and the local authority. There is no indoor recreational area for students, and despite the extension of the refectory, there is little communal space. The college has made the improvement of its educational facilities a priority.

60 Since the last inspection, the college has made most of its accommodation more accessible to people with restricted mobility. The new buildings have been designed to ensure they can be used by persons in wheelchairs. All multi-storey buildings now have a lift, the last of which was about to become operational at the time of inspection. Heavy internal fire doors and external doors make access to some parts of the college difficult for people with restricted mobility.

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

61 Inspectors agreed broadly with strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- clear and understood policy for quality improvement
- effective and established use of targets and performance indicators
- thorough monitoring of progress in implementing improvements
- rigorous validation of self-assessment reports
- good arrangements for staff development system

Weaknesses

- disparity in the respective lesson grading of senior managers and curriculum managers
- unsatisfactory aspects of the target-setting process

62 The college has a policy for the continuous improvement of quality which is understood and supported by staff. Quality assurance procedures are well integrated with those for strategic and operational planning. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that lines of accountability for achieving objectives are clear and are a strength. The standards of students' work are high. Staff and students understand the content of the college charter. The college carries out annual monitoring of the extent to which it achieves the standards specified in the charter.

63 The process of course evaluation begins with surveys of the opinions of staff and students on the quality of provision. Findings from these surveys are collated centrally. With a few exceptions, students are not directly involved in meetings where courses are evaluated. College benchmarks are established to indicate the optimum level of students' satisfaction with particular aspects of provision. Course teams then determine the extent to

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which they meet these. The college acknowledges in the self-assessment report that further work is needed to widen the use of surveys and to make better use of their findings. Other statistical data on student retention and pass rates, and timely information on students' attendance are readily available through the college's management information system.

64 Targets and performance indicators have been used by the college for several years. Hitherto the college has used a formula for determining student retention and achievement rates and some of the targets set were too high to be achievable. Following the introduction of curriculum 2000, the college has set one target for student retention and achievement rates across all courses. Some teachers acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that the targets are met. Other staff, however, are less aware of the importance of the targets. Standards of service required of support areas have been established but procedures for monitoring the attainment of these standards are not well developed. Managers of curriculum areas and cross-college functions prepare draft self-assessment reports and action plans for rectifying identified weaknesses. These are submitted to course teams for their comments before they are finalised. Part-time teachers are members of course teams.

65 Curriculum directors and curriculum managers regularly monitor progress in implementing action plans. The vice-principal is responsible for quality assurance and holds meetings with staff to check that quality assurance procedures are complied with and that quality assurance measures are appropriate. The vice-principal also works with individual members of staff who encounter problems with quality assurance or who wish to modify or extend quality assurance activity. The curriculum performance and quality committee of the corporation oversees quality assurance arrangements in the college.

66 Teams led by executive directors carry out detailed audits of aspects of cross-college provision, such as governance or the promotion of equal opportunities. These lead to reports which are reviewed by the college executive board and the curriculum performance and quality committee of the corporation. Some of the recommendations in the reports are included in relevant self-assessment action plans. Follow-up checks are conducted to ensure that actions have been carried out. The college has twice commissioned an external audit of the college's quality assurance system.

67 Lesson observations form an integral part of the self-assessment process. Every two years, senior managers observe lessons in each department. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the lesson observation process is thorough. Lessons are graded and a detailed report on the quality of lessons in each department is produced for the curriculum manager and director. Curriculum managers also observe lessons in their own areas. In general, the grades they award for lessons are higher than those given by senior managers. In its self-assessment report, the college acknowledges that curriculum managers are often generous in their grading of lessons. Both senior managers and curriculum managers are now addressing this disparity. The grades awarded by senior managers are comparable to those awarded by inspectors. All staff receive a personal review of their work and performance from their line manager. The findings from lesson observations are not taken into account in this review.

68 An internal validation board and an external panel comprising the principal, vice-principal, one or two governors and an external professional expert, carry out thorough validation of self-assessment reports. The relevant curriculum manager attends the meeting and there is an appeals procedure. The process is thorough, objective and fair and inspectors agreed with the finding in the

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self-assessment report that it is a strength. Inspectors agreed with all but one of the grades given in the self-assessment report.

69 As the self-assessment report recognises, arrangements for staff development are good. The training needs of staff are identified at the annual personal reviews of staff, through the self-assessment process, from the findings of lesson observations and by staff themselves. Staff training is available to all full-time and part-time teaching and support staff. Training activities relate to strategic and operational priorities and their effectiveness is monitored. The college was re-accredited as an Investor in People in May 2000.

Governance

Grade 2

70 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weakness identified in the self-assessment report but identified two additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- governors' knowledge and commitment to making the college successful
- governors' effective oversight of strategic and financial matters
- efficient administration of corporation business
- governors' effective oversight of curriculum matters
- constructive relationship between governors and the executive

Weaknesses

- failure to adopt modification orders to the articles of government
- unsatisfactory aspects of the audit committee's operation

71 Inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment report that governors demonstrate strong commitment to the college. They are involved in determining and reviewing its mission. They know the college well and understand the needs of the local community. There is a constructive working relationship between the chair and the principal and governors support senior managers in their task. Governors are knowledgeable about curricular issues. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the corporation monitors the quality of the educational provision of the college effectively. Governors are linked with different curriculum areas. The chair visits the college each month and is available to discuss issues of interest or concern with staff.

72 Governors possess a broad range of skills and expertise, including law, finance, education, estates, engineering and local community issues. They use their skills well to help the college. The corporation agreed to have a membership of 17 at its first meeting after 1 August 1999, in line with the first modification order to the instrument of government. The corporation, on the advice of the search committee, implemented changes in its composition promptly. The current membership comprises: six business governors, two governors from the local community, three co-opted governors, two staff governors, one governor from the local authority, one parent governor, and the principal.

73 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is adequate. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. However, the corporation has not adopted the provisions of the modification orders to the articles of government, which were issued by the government in 1999.

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74 The corporation has an appropriate committee structure that was established in autumn 1999. The committees cover: search, audit, finance and estates, remuneration, human resources, curriculum, performance and quality. The committees' terms of reference are in the process of being standardised. Some elements of the audit committee's terms of reference are inappropriate and they do not ensure that the committee is independent from management.

75 The annual cycle of corporation and committee meetings is administered efficiently. There is an independent clerk to the corporation and a deputy clerk, who is one of the college's executive directors. They provide good administrative support to the corporation and individual governors. Agendas and supporting papers for corporation and committee meetings normally provide a good basis for decision-making. Corporation minutes clearly record decisions made, as well as evidence of governors' consideration of issues. Governors' attendance record for corporation and committee meetings is good. The corporation has a set of standing orders to guide the conduct of business for the corporation and its committees, but these are not comprehensive. Corporation minutes are available to the public at the college on request.

76 The corporation has a well-established code of conduct, which has been updated to reflect current best practice. The corporation has also approved a 'whistleblowing' code of practice for staff. The register of interests covers both governors and senior management, and is updated at least annually.

77 Governors are involved in the annual strategic planning process and are clear about the strategic aims of the college. All committees of the corporation consider their own priorities before they are submitted to the corporation for consideration. The budget and three-year financial forecast are approved annually by the corporation on the advice of the finance and estates committee. Governors monitor the

college's financial position. Management accounts are received monthly by governors and considered at each meeting of the finance and estates committee and the corporation. Governors have paid close attention to the college's accommodation developments, through the finance and estates committee and the estates development project group. Some aspects of the operation of the audit committee have not been satisfactory. The audit committee made slow progress in changing the college's internal auditors in 1999-2000.

78 The corporation has undertaken self-assessment for several years. As part of the self-assessment process, each governor carries out self-evaluation, takes an ethical test, evaluates the general effectiveness of the corporation, and identifies ways in which governors can develop and improve their work. Governors then produce their self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the corporation has established a sound process for appraising senior postholders and for determining their remuneration, involving assessment of their performance against agreed targets. The chair appraises the principal. The principal and a governor appraise the other members of the executive team.

Management

Grade 1

79 Inspectors agreed with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. Of the two weaknesses, inspectors considered one had been overstated and that progress had been made in addressing the other.

Key strengths

- strong leadership
- effective management structure
- open and consultative management style

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- well-developed computerised management information system
- good financial management
- wide range of educational and community links and partnerships
- well-developed strategic planning process

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

80 The college is well managed and has strong leadership. All staff have high expectations of one another and students and are committed to ensuring their students achieve standards of excellence. In each of the last three years the college's GCE A level students have achieved grades well above those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. In the summer of 2000, the average GCE A level point score per student was 22.2, placing the college in the top 10% of sixth form colleges. Managers succeed in making staff feel valued. Staff have confidence in their managers and feel able to speak frankly to them about matters of concern. Roles and responsibilities are clear.

Communication is good. The curriculum and arrangements for student support are well managed. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that the college has a highly effective management structure.

81 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The college accountant is professionally qualified. The budget planning process is well documented and appropriate to the college. Management accounts are produced monthly and allow effective monitoring of the college's financial performance. These monthly accounts concentrate on the college's income and expenditure for the year to date and are supplemented by termly forecasts of financial performance for the year against budget.

Cashflow reports are made for the current and following financial year, and these identify individual capital projects. The college's financial regulations are substantially complete. There is a good fraud response policy, which reflects Council Circular 98/15, *Audit Code of Practice*. The internal auditors were asked by the management of the college to investigate weaknesses in the business development unit in 1999-2000. College management took prompt action to rectify these weaknesses. Timely and accurate financial and data returns are made to the FEFC.

82 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that there is a clear self-assessment and strategic planning cycle. All staff contribute to the strategic planning process through departmental and cross-college self-assessment reports. In their self-assessment report, subject and cross-college teams identify the developments they wish to pursue for the following year. The executive discusses these to ascertain their resource implications and if accepted, they are included in the college's operational plan. Progress in meeting objectives is monitored three times each year. The college obtains good market intelligence from a variety of sources, including the purchase of information from a commercial organisation.

83 The college has a well-developed computerised management information system. The college has developed its management information system for the timetabling of staff and students and this has been given a seal of approval by the FEFC. As the self-assessment report acknowledges, the system is reliable and easily accessible. Data on students' attendance are entered daily. All managers have easy access to the data. A computer in the entrance hall gives access to the timetables of staff and students at any time. The student database holds a significant amount of data. This has been used recently in carrying out a detailed analysis of equal opportunities issues affecting students.

Cross-college Provision

84 The college has a good relationship with its four consortium schools. Teachers from the college attend careers events at the schools. There are also regular meetings between senior and curriculum managers to discuss curriculum changes and develop collaborative approaches to policies and procedures. Almost half the college's students have come from the consortium schools. The college has established and maintains a wide range of community and business links. In partnership with other educational institutions, the college is included in the Surrey Youth Inclusion Project where it works with pupils with unfulfilled potential who are at its partner schools. The college and one of its partner schools have been awarded £25,000 by a national telecommunications company to provide a local learning resource in a residential area. Part of the role of the college's business development unit is to serve the needs of the community and respond to the needs of local businesses. Courses in business, administration and IT are provided for some large and many small companies.

85 The college's equal opportunities policy has recently been updated. The equal opportunities committee meets regularly and the college produces an annual self-assessment report on its promotion of equal opportunities. The college has recently completed a detailed statistical analysis of management information data and responses from staff and students to questionnaires, which relate to equality of opportunity. This has produced useful information, especially about the comparative performance of male and female students. Teachers are now being alerted to the issues identified through the analysis and are seeking ways of improving the performance of male students. The college has an up-to-date health and safety policy and an effective health and safety committee. Consultants are employed to conduct health and safety audits twice a year. Their report is presented to the corporation.

Conclusions

86 The college's self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning the inspection. The self-assessment report was detailed and rigorous and inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses it identified. Inspectors agreed with all but one of the grades stated in the self-assessment report. The grade they awarded for one cross-college area was lower than that given by the college. Self-assessment action plans were well thought out and a number of weaknesses had been rectified by the time of the inspection.

87 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 2000)

Age	%
Under 16	0
16-18 years	75
19-24 years	6
25+ years	19
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 2000)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation) and entry level	7
Level 2 (intermediate)	13
Level 3 (advanced)	80
Level 4/5 (higher)	0
Level not specified	0
Non-schedule 2	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (November 2000)

Programme area	Full-time	Part-time	Total provision (%)
Science	277	92	22
Engineering	3	0	0
Business	113	134	15
Hotel and catering	56	0	3
Health and community care	29	50	5
Art and design	151	11	10
Humanities	542	129	39
Basic education	105	5	6
Total	1,276	421	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1998-99 ISR data, the college recruited 0% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 2000)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	81	0	4	85
Supporting direct learning contact	15	0	0	15
Other support	26	0	0	26
Total	122	0	4	126

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1998	1999	2000
Income	£4,453,000	£4,330,000	£4,664,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£17.61	£16.91	£16.94
Payroll as a proportion of income	63%	70%	70%
Achievement of funding target	105%	97%	100%
Diversity of income	10%	11%	12%
Operating surplus	£70,000	£23,000	£41,000

Sources: Income – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

ALF – Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1998), Funding Allocations 1998-99 (1999), college (2000)

Payroll – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1997-98 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

Diversity of income – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

Operating surplus – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
1	Number of starters	318	385	446	50	57	82
	Retention (%)	83	89	88	90	75	76
	Achievement (%)	49	68	83	64	47	74
2	Number of starters	756	702	904	94	88	105
	Retention (%)	88	85	86	65	63	65
	Achievement (%)	59	91	87	75	98	89
3	Number of starters	3,788	3,386	2,978	128	144	101
	Retention (%)	85	82	82	65	49	81
	Achievement (%)	86	87	91	65	69	94
4 or 5	Number of starters	1	6	1	23	30	48
	Retention (%)	100	17	100	48	33	42
	Achievement (%)	100	100	100	64	70	100
Short courses	Number of starters	188	62	108	54	55	202
	Retention (%)	88	98	97	85	71	92
	Achievement (%)	66	72	87	39	33	96
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	935	787	84	31	27	25
	Retention (%)	92	93	94	68	67	72
	Achievement (%)	67	99	87	86	89	33

Source: ISR

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Further copies can be obtained by contacting
the communications team at:

The Further Education Funding Council
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

Telephone 024 7686 3265

Fax 024 7686 3025

E-mail fehcpubs@fefc.ac.uk

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