

# **Greenhead College**

**REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
1997-98**

**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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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.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision, curriculum areas and lesson observations, for colleges inspected during 1996-97, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	9	59	30	2	–
Cross-college provision	18	51	27	4	–
Lesson observations	19	42	31	7	1

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report.* Grades were awarded using the guidelines in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*.  
Sample size: 122 college inspections

## Retention and Pass Rates

Where data on students' achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in two ways:

- as a retention rate, which is the proportion of students who completed a course in relation to the number enrolled on 1 November in the first year of the course
- as a pass rate, which is the proportion of students which passed examinations in relation to the number entered. Pass rates for GCE A level are quoted for grades A to E unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for GCSE courses are quoted for grade C or above unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for vocational and professional awards are for successful completion of the full award.

# Summary

## Greenhead College

### *Yorkshire and Humberside Region*

#### **Inspected October 1997**

Greenhead is a thriving sixth form college in Huddersfield which provides mainly advanced level programmes for 16 to 19 year olds. The judgements made by the college in its self-assessment report about the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum areas were accurate as were most of those made about the aspects of cross-college provision. Inspectors agreed with the grades awarded by the college in all but two of the areas inspected.

Standards of teaching and learning are outstanding. Students achieve high levels of success in their external examinations and benefit from the opportunity to participate in a range of enhancement activities which contribute significantly to their personal development. Demand exceeds the number of places available in the college. The ethos of the college is based on the philosophy that each student is an individual, who is to be valued. The college is a good example of a truly inclusive learning environment. Support for students is outstanding. Students speak highly of the commitment of staff and of their willingness to give their time freely to help them with their studies. Effective links have been developed with local schools, colleges and external agencies. The college makes effective and efficient use of its accommodation. Staff

and students have easy access to learning resources which are of good quality. A highly-effective system based on value-added criteria is used to support students' progress. Rigorous monitoring of academic performance by senior management has led to continuous improvements in students' achievements. Managers give clear direction about the values which the college should promote. It encourages co-operative working and has established structures which enable academic staff to focus on their teaching. Governors have an appropriate range of skills and expertise. They demonstrate a clear commitment to the college and the achievements of students, and monitor finances closely. The college should address: shortcomings in accommodation and facilities; the lack of action plans to address some of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report; the failure of the audit committee to fulfil some of the responsibilities defined in its terms of reference; and the over reliance on informal approaches to planning and other aspects of management.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Business studies	1	Support for students	1
Art, music and theatre studies	1	General resources	2
Humanities	1	Quality assurance	1
Physical education	1	Governance	2
Social studies	1	Management	1

## The College and its Mission

1 Greenhead College was established as a sixth form college in 1974 on the site of a former grammar school. Since then the buildings have been significantly extended and refurbished. It is one of two sixth form colleges in Huddersfield which, together with Huddersfield Technical College, serve the post-16 educational needs of the locality.

2 The college receives applications from 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 schools and independent schools in the surrounding area. It has increased its enrolments by 43 per cent since incorporation in 1993. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,336 students, of whom 1,290 were taking general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses and 46 general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) programmes at advanced level. The college currently offers 28 subjects at GCE A level and two GNVQ advanced level programmes in business, and health and social care. Students can also take general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) resits in mathematics and English language, a wide range of keyboarding and information technology qualifications and 'foreign languages at work' courses in French.

3 Because the college is oversubscribed, governors have agreed an admissions policy which gives priority to applicants from designated 11 to 16 partner schools. Any unfilled GCE A level places are then offered to other applicants on a competitive basis. A minimum entry requirement of six GCSEs at grade C, or one B and three C grades, has been set for all applicants to the college. Thirty-nine per cent of pupils aged 16 in Kirklees achieved five or more GCSE subjects at grade C or above in 1997. This is below the national average of 44.5 per cent. Minority ethnic groups form 11.7 per cent of the general population of Huddersfield and approximately 16 per cent of the college's student population.

4 The philosophy of the college is based on the principle that everyone is an individual, an exception, and to be valued. The college's mission is:

- to provide a supportive environment in which individuals feel valued, grow in confidence and fulfil their potential for academic, moral, social and physical development
- to continue to be a centre of excellence, providing education and training of the highest quality for each student
- to be a major force in enabling its community to reach the nationally set foundation learning targets.

## The Inspection

5 The inspection took place during a single week in October 1997. Prior to this, a Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) auditor and inspectors had analysed the college's self-assessment report and considered the information on the college provided by other divisions of the FEFC. The college submitted data relating to students' achievements for the three years 1995 to 1997. A sample of these data was checked against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. The data proved to be reliable when checked against these sources.

6 Nine inspectors spent a total of 25 days in the college. An auditor also contributed to the inspection and its findings, working for five days. Inspectors observed lessons; assessed students' work; examined college documentation; and met managers, governors, staff, students, parents and representatives of external agencies.

7 Of the 55 lessons observed, 54 per cent were judged to be outstanding, 44 per cent were good and 2 per cent were satisfactory. No lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory. This profile is significantly better than the average for colleges inspected in 1996-97

# Context

according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report*. Lessons judged to be outstanding were evenly distributed across the programme areas inspected. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was 91 per cent. This is significantly better than the average of 84 per cent for sixth form colleges in 1996-97. The average class size was 18 compared with an average of 14.4 for sixth form colleges as recorded in the chief inspector's annual report. The following table shows the grades awarded to the lessons observed.

## Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
Advanced level provision	30	24	1	0	0	55

# Curriculum Areas

## Business Studies

### Grade 1

**8 The inspection covered GCE A level business studies, economics and accounts, together with advanced level GNVQ business studies. Eight lessons were observed. Inspectors concluded that the college's self-assessment report is largely accurate in its identification of strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- outstanding students' achievements in external examinations
- the high quality of students' written work, particularly in research projects
- effective teaching methods that use an appropriate variety of materials
- good levels of information technology skills including the use of specialist software
- particularly effective management in business and economics

#### Weaknesses

- poor retention, in previous years, on GCE A level business studies and, more recently, on accounts courses
- some less effective teaching which does not take full account of students' different abilities

9 The business studies department has successfully adopted a modular economics scheme to complement the modular business studies courses which are now well established in the college. Over 200 students are currently studying GCE A level business studies.

10 The self-assessment report identifies 'a richness of variety' in teaching styles and approaches. Inspectors agreed with this assessment. Teachers employ a range of sound teaching methods on all courses, including the use of business case studies and simulations,

video stimulus material and visits to companies both locally and abroad. There is extensive use of information technology on all business courses. Teachers frequently encourage students to use spreadsheets and graphs to analyse and present primary research data. They provide handouts of good quality to help students learn. Schemes of work, including classroom activities and assignments, are particularly comprehensive for the GNVQ advanced programme; they specify intended learning outcomes and the teaching resources required. The teaching was less effective when teachers set tasks which did not take account of students' different abilities, failed to explain fully some technical concepts, or mistimed activities so that there was insufficient time at the end of the lesson to explore fully the learning outcomes.

11 The business studies curriculum is well managed. In the GNVQ programme, for example, the internal verification mechanisms are extensive, well documented, and commended by external verifiers. Regular, minuted departmental meetings are held to review curriculum delivery and development. A departmental handbook sets out guidance on teaching and learning styles and includes policies for homework, marking and industrial liaison.

12 Students' achievements in GCE A level subjects are of a consistently high standard, significantly exceeding the national average for the higher grades. For example, in business studies, pass rates at grades A to E have been better than 95 per cent in each of the last three years, and the number of students gaining grades A to C has been above 80 per cent in the last two years. Last year, there was a pass rate of 100 per cent for all the department's GCE A level subjects, and the proportion of A to C grades achieved (over 80 per cent) significantly exceeded previous college averages. GNVQ pass rates have been 100 per cent for the last two years and over 80 per cent of candidates



# Curriculum Areas

achieved a merit or distinction in 1997. There is rigorous analysis of students' achievements in relation to their GCSE results. In business studies, students who at the start of their course were below the college average for the numbers of entry points (as measured by their achievements at GCSE) achieved results in their final examinations which were above the college average. As noted in the college's self-assessment report, retention rates in all three GCE A level subjects have been of some concern, particularly in business studies where only 63 per cent of those who started the course in 1994 completed it in 1996, and in principles of accounts where only 50 per cent of those who started the course in 1995 completed it in 1997.

13 Students' written work is often of high quality. For example, the research assignments for GCE A level business studies demonstrate careful analysis of a real business problem and present well-considered conclusions. GNVQ portfolios are well organised and assignment work is often based on investigative work in local companies. Occasionally, teachers' comments on students' written work were too general to help the students to understand how they might make improvements.

## Examples of students' achievements in business studies, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level business studies	Retention (%)	72	66	81
	Pass rate (%)	97	97	100
GNVQ advanced level business	Retention (%)	100	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	93	100	100
GCE A level economics	Retention (%)	85	74	70
	Pass rate (%)	80	93	100
GCE A level principles of accounts	Retention (%)	67	67	50
	Pass rate (%)	100	92	100

Source: college data

# Curriculum Areas

## Art, Music and Theatre Studies

### Grade 1

**14 Fifteen lessons were observed covering the range of subjects offered within the art, theatre studies and music departments. Inspectors were also in the audience for a theatrical production, and attended rehearsals for a future musical event. Inspection findings confirmed that the college's self-assessment correctly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, the action plans did not identify clear targets and timescales for future developments.**

#### Key strengths

- the high standard of students' performance skills
- teaching which is good and often outstanding
- a thorough and disciplined approach to the teaching of basic skills, particularly observational drawing
- extensive opportunities for students to be involved in choirs, orchestras and productions
- high standards of achievement in external examinations
- effective departmental management

#### Weaknesses

- below the national average number of students gaining grade C or above in GCE A level art
- overcrowded accommodation in the music and theatre studies departments

15 The standard of teaching in all the lessons observed was good and, in many cases, outstanding. This supports the college's claim in its self-assessment report. Teachers have developed a supportive rapport with their students. In planning their lessons they take

into account the differing abilities of students. For example, in one of the lessons observed, the teacher had carefully organised activities in order to give individual attention to students who were new to the technique being taught. Students' learning in the college is enhanced by the contacts staff have developed with external agencies such as Opera North and the local theatre's education group.

16 In theatre studies, teachers set difficult tasks which students had to work hard to complete. The choice of play for the current production was very imaginative and the play was performed with confidence and skill. In music, a wide range of styles are studied and performed, including minimalist modern scores and jazz. Teachers prepare their students well for examinations. Students have every opportunity to practise and refine their practical skills whilst their theoretical knowledge is developed by clear and instructive worksheets and the informative comments teachers make on their assignments. A key aspect of the work of the music and theatre studies departments is the opportunity provided for staff and students throughout the college to participate in choirs, orchestras and productions. Inspectors confirmed the college's view that this is a major strength.

17 In art, the curriculum includes visits to galleries and museums and opportunities to discuss the work of an artist in residence. Teachers place a particular emphasis on research, drawing and an understanding of the more formal aspects of art. It is a strength of the department that these skills are taught effectively, enabling students to progress creatively from firm foundations. However, a few of the assignment briefs designed by the teachers do not give students enough information. Students' practical work is of good quality and their written work is outstanding. Students respond well to the opportunities they are given to assess their own work. The high quality of the teaching and learning is reflected

# Curriculum Areas

in the 100 per cent pass rate for GCE A level art over the past four years. The proportion of students gaining grades A to C in 1997 has risen significantly.

18 Accommodation for music and theatre studies is overcrowded. This weakness is correctly identified in the college's self-assessment report. However, teachers overcome many of the problems by skilful use of adjacent spaces and careful scheduling of productions. The art department is accommodated in rooms which are of appropriate size and quality, and students have access to the facilities outside lessons. Specialist equipment enables students to work across a range of disciplines. Teachers within the music and theatre studies departments give willingly of their time to support students and to stage rehearsals and productions.

## Examples of students' achievements in art, music and theatre studies, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level art and design	Retention (%)	80	79	80
	Pass rate (%)	100	100	100
GCE A level music	Retention (%)	78	74	86
	Pass rate (%)	100	100	96
GCE A level theatre studies	Retention (%)	65	70	82
	Pass rate (%)	94	95	92
GCE A level music technology	Retention (%)	*	*	100
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	100

Source: college data

\*course not offered

# Curriculum Areas

## Humanities

### Grade 1

**19 The inspection covered the geography, geology and history departments, each of which provides a two-year course for full-time students. Thirteen lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- much good classroom practice
- the rapid increase in the use and range of information technology
- the effective development of students' study skills and key skills
- outstanding examination results
- high retention rates
- good subject-related progression to higher education
- effective departmental management
- continuous reviews and revision of courses
- outstanding support for students
- good resources for teaching and learning

#### Weaknesses

- There are no significant weaknesses

20 The quality of teaching and learning in all three departments is high. All lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or outstanding. Teachers are well prepared, make full use of the time available for teaching and challenge students to think for themselves. In most lessons there is a good range of activity. Teachers use specialist language effectively and check students' understanding carefully. Students work hard and co-operate effectively to support each other in their learning.

21 Most programmes of study are carefully structured and include opportunities for students to develop study skills and the key skills of communication, numeracy and working with others. On occasions teachers do not give students enough opportunity to work on their own. Wherever possible staff try to enhance students' learning through the use of information technology applications, including the Internet. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report which accurately identifies as strengths the high quality of teaching and learning and the effective support for students. Teachers give willingly of their time to help students with additional lessons and individual tuition.

22 Each department is managed effectively and there is a growing emphasis on teamwork. In all departments there is a readiness to revise schemes of work, particularly in response to students' views. Levels of resourcing are good for all three departments, and a suite of well-equipped rooms has been created for humanities. However, as stated in the self-assessment report, some teaching rooms are too small for larger groups of students.

23 Examination results are extremely good and generally well above the average for sixth form colleges. A high percentage of students successfully complete their studies. In all three subjects, many students progress to a higher education course related to their GCE A level studies.

# Curriculum Areas

## Examples of students' achievements in humanities, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level geography	Retention (%)	88	71	84
	Pass rate (%)	90	100	95
GCE A level history	Retention (%)	85	84	84
	Pass rate (%)	88	93	96
GCE A level geology	Retention (%)	89	81	86
	Pass rate (%)	81	100	95

*Source: college data*

# Curriculum Areas

## Physical Education

### *Grade 1*

**24 The inspection covered GCE A level physical education, and the college's enrichment activities. Ten lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements on strengths and weaknesses in this area of provision, as set out in the self-assessment report.**

#### **Key strengths**

- teaching that is good and often outstanding
- students' work which is appropriately set and assessed
- high level of achievement in GCE A level examinations
- the substantial number of students who progress to sports-related courses in higher education
- the high level of students' involvement and achievements in college and county sports teams
- the wide variety of extra-curricular sporting activities offered by the college

#### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate practical facilities

25 The college offers a highly successful GCE A level physical education course. It was introduced in 1993 with 37 students and now has 136 students. Students speak positively of the course and the staff. Pass rates in external examinations are high, especially at grades A and B. These results reflect the effective teaching and management in the department. As accurately noted in the self-assessment report, retention rates are below the college average, but have risen steadily from 73 per cent in 1995 to 80 per cent in 1997. Teachers set work which is specific to the examination. It is marked and returned quickly. Students'

progress is carefully monitored: they receive termly progress reports and are expected to develop action plans to help them improve their performance. They are also encouraged to monitor their own progress.

26 Individual students and teams from the college are very successful in regional and national championships. Some students represent their county and country at sporting events. The college's enrichment programme offers many recreational and competitive sports. For example, for the Wednesday afternoon fixture programme the college frequently fields four football teams, one rugby league team, two hockey teams, two netball teams, a basketball and a badminton team. Further sporting opportunities are available through the thriving Duke of Edinburgh award scheme which currently has 103 students following their gold award and the community sports leader award. Many students demonstrate their commitment by keeping in contact with the college and completing their awards after leaving.

27 The self-assessment report highlighted the inadequacy of the college's sporting and changing facilities for the numbers taking GCE A level physical education. This view was supported by the inspection. Currently, the accommodation difficulties within the college are offset by hiring outside facilities.

# Curriculum Areas

## Examples of students' achievements in physical education, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level	Retention (%)	73	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	96	97	100

*Source: college data*

# Curriculum Areas

## Social Studies

### Grade 1

**28 The social studies department offers GCE A level courses in psychology, sociology, religious studies and government and politics. Religious studies was introduced in September 1997. Nine lessons were observed, covering all these subjects. Inspectors agreed with the college's identification of strengths and weaknesses in this curriculum area.**

#### Key strengths

- excellent examination results and completion rates
- consistently high standards of teaching
- effective departmental management
- excellent academic support for students
- exceptionally thorough feedback on students' written assignments
- extensive enhancement activities in most subjects
- high expectations of staff and students
- good specialist accommodation with excellent displays of students' work

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient access to information technology and some deficiencies in the library bookstock
- few links with outside agencies in sociology

29 As the college's self-assessment accurately notes, teaching in the social studies subjects is of a consistently high standard. Lessons are well structured, and teachers provide an appropriate variety of whole-class, group and individual activities which elicit an interested and informed response from students. Teachers have developed excellent learning materials such as study guides which promote effective study skills. Group work is well managed. In a

politics lesson, students examined the causes of the Labour Party's successive electoral defeats between 1979 and 1992. After watching a short video extract, students worked in groups to create informative flowcharts, which they then presented to the class. The debate was lively and productive. The importance of the key skills of communication and working with others are made explicit to the class, and these skills are successfully developed.

30 Enhancement activities, for example, parliamentary visits and the use of outside speakers, complement the work done in class and contribute to students' knowledge and understanding. These links are less well developed in sociology than in other subjects. Students receive academic support of high quality in the form of extra revision sessions, regular reviews of their progress, help with action planning and the setting of individual targets for improvement.

31 Students attain high standards in their coursework. Note-taking skills are generally well developed, and students' written essays show effective use of the skills of interpretation, analysis and evaluation. Teachers periodically examine students' files to ensure that they are well ordered. Students use specially-designed forms to keep thorough records of key studies, and of their reading outside the syllabus. Sociology students are required to take part in group research activities in the library, using information technology such as CD-ROMs and the Internet. Teachers provide exceptionally thorough feedback on students' written assignments.

32 Inspection findings confirmed the college's claim that achievements in external examinations are outstanding. GCE A level pass rates are consistently well above the national average for sixth form colleges. In 1997, students of GCE A level government and politics gained a pass rate of 100 per cent at grades A to E and 96 per cent at grades A to C. In



# Curriculum Areas

psychology the corresponding figures were 96 per cent at A to E and 76 per cent at A to C. In sociology 81 per cent of students gained grades A to E and 56 per cent grades A to C. Retention rates are also good: 85 per cent of the 248 students on roll in November 1995 completed their courses in summer 1997.

33 The social studies department is effectively managed. Staff share a common resource base and this promotes good day-to-day communications. Departmental procedures and policies have been developed, and teaching methods reviewed. Students' performance is monitored scrupulously, using a computerised database: their attendance, punctuality, progress, achievements, retention rates and destinations are rigorously analysed and used to inform teaching and planning.

34 Many teachers have made good use of opportunities for professional development. Half of them have appropriate and recent examination board experience. Teaching takes place in a specialist suite of classrooms near to the departmental resource base. The rooms are well equipped and furnished, and contain

displays of students' work. Paper-based learning materials are of good quality, and students have access in the library to a wide range of resources, including information technology and specialist journals, as highlighted in the college's self-assessment report. They do not have access to information technology in or near the teaching areas. Some of the library resources in sociology are out of date and are under review.

## Examples of students' achievements in social studies, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level psychology	Retention (%)	81	76	85
	Pass rate (%)	94	88	96
GCE A level sociology	Retention (%)	65	77	90
	Pass rate (%)	73	87	81
GCE A level government and politics	Retention (%)	86	76	87
	Pass rate (%)	100	100	100

Source: college data

# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 1

**35 The analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the college's self-assessment report was supported by the findings of inspection.**

#### Key strengths

- well-organised systems for pre-course guidance
- a co-ordinated programme of support and guidance offered by a team of personal tutors
- a demanding but supportive system for reviewing students' progress
- an effective counselling service and good links with external specialist agencies
- strong academic support provided by teachers
- an extensive enrichment programme providing opportunities for students' personal development
- the integrated programme of careers and higher education guidance

#### Weaknesses

- poor attendance at tutorials in year two

36 Pre-course guidance is thorough and effective. The college has strong links with its nine partner schools, and the provision of information and guidance, at school and at college, is well organised and of high quality. Induction to the college is effective. It is organised through the tutorial programme, and includes group activities as well as individual discussions.

37 A team of 14 personal tutors, which includes two of the college's senior managers, is responsible for designing and implementing a programme of weekly tutorials and offering

individual support to students. The involvement of senior staff in this team reflects the high priority accorded to support for students. Personal tutors have undertaken a substantial amount of professional development, including courses in counselling, bereavement and careers guidance. The 'guidance curriculum' which personal tutors have devised for the weekly group tutorial sessions includes careers education, interview techniques, time management, study skills, stress management, assertiveness, gender issues and health education. As the college acknowledges in its self-assessment report, attendance at tutorials is poor in the second year of the course. The programme for this year has been amended as a result, although it is too early to assess how successful this has been. Each tutor group elects a representative to the student council, which is highly successful in arranging social activities and representing students' views to college managers. The council receives effective help from a senior member of staff.

38 Students have extensive opportunities to review their progress with their subject teachers and their personal tutor. Once a term, students have individual interviews with their subject teachers and receive a grade on a progress report sheet. This enables them to compare their current performance with the potential indicated by their previous GCSE achievements. The subsequent discussions between students and their personal tutor motivate those who are performing well and identify those who need extra support. In some cases, individual contracts are drawn up between students and tutors, or extra help sessions are provided. Subject teachers and personal tutors keep each other well informed about individual students. Parents are also kept well informed of progress.

39 Students speak highly of the individual support they receive from their subject teachers and personal tutors. This strength is not specifically identified in the self-assessment report. Curriculum areas offer students useful

# Cross-college Provision

extra academic support sessions, often at lunchtimes, staffed by a rota of teachers. Students also have access to a full-time counsellor, whose services are well advertised around the college and valued by students. The counsellor, who is also a personal tutor, has extensive links with external agencies, including those for students from minority ethnic backgrounds.

40 Currently, the college is supporting a small number of students with disabilities, some of whom have visual or hearing impairments. The college provides specialist support for these students and training for their teachers through an arrangement with Huddersfield Technical College. This support enables the students to play a full part in college activities. Teachers spend considerable time and effort helping students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and those with severe emotional problems.

41 The college's enrichment programme provides extensive opportunities for personal development. This was correctly identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. The programme available to students at the time of the inspection comprised over 60 activities including community service. In 1996-97, 120 students were involved in community service, supporting, amongst others, school pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a local hospice, 25 primary schools and an HIV/AIDS advice centre. All students are expected to participate in the enrichment programme for at least one hour each week for the first five terms of their course. Many enrol for more than the minimum number of enrichment activities.

42 Guidance on careers and applications to higher education is a major element of tutorials. Students intending to go straight to employment make use of a comprehensive job application pack which has received good reports from employers. Effective support is provided by the Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Partnership. The careers adviser attends college daily to

conduct individual interviews, and is an integral member of the personal tutor team. The careers library, which is well resourced and includes a range of appropriate computer software, has won an award from the local training and enterprise council (TEC). Participation in the college's extensive work shadowing scheme gives students first-hand experience of a range of mainly managerial and professional occupations which they find valuable when considering their choice of career.

## General Resources

### Grade 2

**43 Inspectors agreed with the college's claim that it has made progress since incorporation in the provision of general resources. However, they identified some weaknesses which were not included in the self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- the college's effective and efficient use of its accommodation
- a pleasant working environment for staff and students
- the good quality of resources, including information technology
- easy access to good library facilities

#### Weaknesses

- important objectives in the current accommodation strategy that have not been achieved
- insufficient space at peak times to meet students' demands for quiet study and social areas
- limited access to the buildings for people who have restricted mobility

44 The college makes effective and efficient use of its accommodation. It has successfully developed its accommodation during the last

# Cross-college Provision

four years to increase the internal space available by more than 40 per cent. Recent improvements have included extensions to the library and resource area, an extension to the main hall to provide extra social space for students, the refurbishment of the kitchens, improvements to enable wheelchair access to all of the ground floor, and imaginative use of roof space to create small classrooms and study areas.

45 Other plans for development have been less effective, but this was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The current accommodation strategy, for 1995 to 1998, describes development priorities which were agreed by governors. The strategy was dependent on the success of a bid for external funding which failed. This meant that some important objectives, including the replacement of five temporary classrooms, which are of poor quality, and improvements to the physical education, drama, music and chemistry teaching areas, have not been undertaken.

46 Overall, the college provides a pleasant working environment for staff and students. Staff work areas are good and provide access to resources. Common areas are well decorated and furnished. There are good visual displays outside classrooms and in corridors. The buildings are clean, cared for and tidy.

47 Security has been improved by new fencing and closed-circuit television surveillance. There is a planned maintenance programme. However, there is a shortage of space for students at peak times which is acknowledged by the college in its self-assessment report. For example, although more than 400 students may require space for self-directed study at any one time, there are less than 250 such spaces available. Social areas for students are restricted to the refectory and the adjacent hall, and these are inadequate at peak times. There is no separate students' common room or students' council office. Some classrooms are too small for the size of groups using them.

Students with restricted mobility have access only to the ground floor of the buildings; there are no plans to improve access for these students over the next three years. Though the college has some recreational facilities, overall they are inadequate.

48 The improvements made to the quality and quantity of resources in recent years were correctly identified as a strength in the college's self-assessment. In addition to the central resource area within the library, each subject department has a resource base accessible to students located within staff work areas. Liaison between the central and subject resource is effective. The library provides good facilities for students. It has more than 13,000 stock items, including audio and video collections, CD-ROMs, topic files and journals, in addition to the bookstock. Qualified library staff are effective in providing information for students.

49 The college has increased the amount and quality of its information technology hardware during the last four years; currently, there is one networked personal computer for every nine students. Computers are located in four main rooms and also in the library and other study and subject resource areas. Students have access to the Internet and the college is developing 'Intranet' to provide an information service and electronic mail facilities for students. Other improvements have included the refurbishment of the language laboratory with new computers and audio equipment. A college information technology group plans an annual upgrading of equipment.

## Quality Assurance

### *Grade 1*

**50 The self-assessment report on quality assurance emphasises as a strength the well-established value-added system devised by the college to predict the performance of students at GCE A level and to measure the**

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**progress they make during their studies. Inspection findings supported this as a strong and effective feature of quality assurance in the college. The report also highlights the rigorous annual monitoring of each department's performance by senior management.**

## **Key strengths**

- a highly effective value-added system for measuring students' progress
- a detailed set of performance indicators for each GCE A level subject
- the stringent monitoring of academic performance
- the remedial measures taken to support underachieving students
- a self-assessment report well supported by comprehensive achievement data

## **Weaknesses**

- the absence of standardised questionnaires for assessing students' views of the provision
- some inadequacies in the college's action plans

51 The college's framework for quality assurance uses each student's performance at GCSE as a basis for predicting their GCE A level grade in each subject and as a means of monitoring their progress through the college as well as their final GCE A level achievement. The progress of each student is monitored termly. Remedial action is taken to support those students performing below their predicted grade; commendations are given to those achieving better than the grade predicted. As noted in the college's self-assessment report, the system has proved to be extremely effective in securing continuous improvement in academic achievement. Its success was recognised by the award of the Queen's anniversary prize for higher and further education in February 1997.

52 Senior management undertakes a stringent annual review of the performance of each student at subject level with each head of department, using graphs to compare each student's actual and predicted grades. Where appropriate, targets for improvement are set and monitored closely, and staff confirmed the rigour of these annual reviews. At the last inspection, students with lower GCSE points scores at entry were achieving, on average, three grade Es in their GCE A level examinations; they are now gaining an average of three grade Ds. Over the same period, the proportion of students obtaining grades A or B at GCE A level has also risen from 40 to 50 per cent.

53 The value-added scheme is now supported by a comprehensive set of performance indicators for each GCE A level subject. Similar information is planned for GNVQ courses. It is, however, difficult to assess whether the generally improving GCSE points scores in each subject are being matched or exceeded by the improvement in GCE A level grades. Despite this limitation, the indicators provide an effective basis for comparing the different success rates of subject cohorts over time.

54 The college's self-assessment report was produced for the first time in 1997 to support the inspection process. It conforms to the headings of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. In order to inform the judgements made in the report, a classroom observation scheme supervised by senior managers and heads of department was introduced in the latter part of the last academic year. For many sections, the strengths outlined in the report were supported by detailed files of documentary evidence. However, in some cases, the evidence was largely restricted to data on students' achievements. In some sections significant strengths were disaggregated into their separate components thus resulting in some repetition. Action plans were provided to address some, but not all, of

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the weaknesses stated in the report. Action plans for some sections of the report, for example quality assurance, were omitted altogether.

55 Although there is no formal staff development plan, both teachers and support staff take part in a wide range of external training. Training specifically designed to support the achievement of objectives within the strategic plan is provided in the college for all staff. For example, a programme on the use of the Internet for educational purposes is being planned. Most requests for staff development are met, but as the last inspection report indicated, training requirements are not identified through departmental development plans. An annual appraisal scheme has been introduced recently for support staff. Staff are appraised by their line managers and the scheme involves the setting of measurable targets together with the identification of training and development needs. Although there is no formal appraisal of teachers, the college considers their accountability is secured through the detailed annual review of students' performance.

56 The college charter conforms to most of the elements in the *Charter for Further Education*, produced by the Department for Education and Employment. The monitoring of charter standards is not given a high priority by the college; it prefers instead to use the student agreement document as a mechanism for securing students' rights and responsibilities. Questionnaires to students are used by many departments to help them evaluate their provision. There is, however, no standardised questionnaire, making it difficult to compare levels of students' satisfaction across the college and between departments. No annual summary of students' views is produced. However, parents are formally requested to comment upon their sons' and daughters' experience at the college once the final examination results are known. The monitoring and evaluation of

cross-college services is not comprehensive. Nevertheless, the library produces an annual summary of performance against agreed indicators; a catering group, which includes a student representative, provides a commentary on refectory standards; there is a mechanism for reviewing the enrichment programme; and the team of personal tutors carries out an annual review of induction and of the tutorial system.

## Governance

### Grade 2

**57 Many of the strengths identified in the college's self-assessment report were substantiated by the inspection. However, the report did not identify any weaknesses. The judgement of inspectors was that there were weaknesses, although they were clearly outweighed by the strengths.**

#### Key strengths

- the balance of skills and expertise within the corporation
- governors' strong commitment to the college and its students
- high levels of attendance at corporation and committee meetings
- close and frequent monitoring of the college's financial performance by all governors
- the corporation's detailed knowledge of the college's curriculum performance
- effective clerking

#### Weaknesses

- the failure of the audit committee to fulfil some of the responsibilities defined in its terms of reference
- weaknesses in the current arrangements for the operation of the finance committee

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- the lack of evidence that governors had reviewed or assessed their own performance or that of senior postholders

58 The corporation has 16 members, including five women and a member from a minority ethnic community. There are currently no vacancies. Governors have a range of appropriate expertise. There are two staff governors, one of them a vice-principal, and two co-opted head teachers from the college's partner schools. As noted in the college's self-assessment report, governors demonstrate strong and long-term commitment to the college. Average attendance at corporation and committee meetings is in excess of 80 per cent. Vacancies are filled with care but there is no formal search committee. The corporation has recently established a formal induction programme for new governors, but there is little additional training.

59 Governors are well informed about the college's performance through their detailed monitoring of achievement data and reviews of progress against the corporate objectives in the strategic plan. They have contributed effectively to the development of college strategies and decision-making. Members have made a number of useful links with the college, for instance in conducting simulated interviews with students, and judging the presentation of student business plans. Eleven governors attended the initial staff meeting at the beginning of the year. There is no formal link with students, for example through a student governor or student council. The governors do not formally review their own performance, nor do they formally assess the performance of senior postholders. They did not contribute significantly to the production of the governance section of the self-assessment report. They consider that their accountability is secured through the stringent monitoring of students' performance.

60 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 meets approximately every six weeks, is effectively clerked, and governors receive a wide selection of detailed papers. It is supported by the finance, audit, remuneration, and health and safety committees. The audit committee has not fully met its responsibilities under the financial memorandum, for example the internal audit work for 1996-97 was inadequate; arrangements for reporting the outcomes of internal and external audit work to governors are inadequate. The finance committee meets during corporation meetings in the presence of other governors, a practice which has implications for the independence of the audit committee, and arguably slows down the business of the corporation. However, governors consider that this supports their close monitoring of the financial health of the college. Governors receive either the minutes of the meetings of subcommittees, or an oral report from the relevant committee chair. The records of subcommittee proceedings do not always contain sufficient detail.

## Management

### Grade 1

**61 The college's self-assessment report identifies a considerable number of strengths in management and only two weaknesses. The inspection largely confirmed the strengths, which had been considerably disaggregated in the college's report, but it identified different weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- a highly-focused vision and set of values that permeate all aspects of the college's life

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- constant and constructive monitoring of performance leading to continuous improvement
- an environment that matches high expectations with high levels of support
- structures which allow academic staff to focus on their teaching
- management that is open and gives a clear direction
- an emphasis on working co-operatively
- good communications throughout the organisation at all levels
- effective use of resources, including finance

## Weaknesses

- an over-reliance on informal approaches to some aspects of planning
- the adverse effects of pressures on managers and staff arising from the college's growth

62 The narrow range of the college's provision enables it to concentrate effectively on ensuring the academic success and personal development of its students. The college uses its value-added system as a management tool at college, departmental and student level to achieve this aim. However, this is not without cost. The rigorous and frequent scrutiny of performance ensures that problems are addressed, but also identifies those who are not performing to the best of their abilities, whether staff or students. Where this occurs, the college's response is a supportive one. It provides additional individual or group support for students. For staff it leads to staff development, including encouragement to adopt good practice from other parts of the college. Not all staff welcome the approach though all recognise the benefits it brings.

63 College structures and processes are designed to reflect the emphasis given to each student's academic success. Applicants to the

college for teaching posts are asked to supply with their application details of their students' examination results for the previous four years. The college timetable has been redesigned to ensure that throughout the day at least one member of each subject team is available in the subject resource base to respond to students' requests for help. The management structure is designed to free the teacher from tutorial responsibilities and most managerial or administrative ones. The senior management team is labelled 'the administrative group' to reinforce their role of 'serving the staff'. Staff report that, as a result, they are able to concentrate their efforts on the students and the quality of teaching.

64 While there is a successful focus on planning and development for individuals, the college places less priority on more formal paper-based management systems. The twice-weekly meetings of the administrative group are not minuted. Departments see the regular meetings between each head of department and the principal to review the department's performance as the vehicle for much of their managerial activity, including target-setting, performance appraisal, and the identification of development and deployment needs. However, the outcomes of these meetings are not recorded, and development plans are not produced in a consistent way or linked explicitly to the college's strategic plan. A number of departments and most functional areas do not produce any annual plan, and some that are produced lack detail and briefly list action points. The college's strategic plan is produced by the principal and includes measurable corporate objectives, mostly related to the FEFC's performance indicators. These are reviewed by the corporation each year and targets are set to secure improvement. There are few references to market research and little needs analysis but the objectives are adequate, given the narrow range of the college's activities. Governors and staff have opportunities to



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contribute to the strategic plan, but they consider that the college's room for manoeuvre is limited.

65 While the college has a number of policies in place, they vary in usefulness and quality. This variation is not acknowledged in the college's self-assessment report. Most policies are supplemented by more detailed procedures and statements at departmental level. The college's policy on equal opportunities is well established. There is much good practice; for example, the introduction of a successful event for students on drug awareness in response to the concerns of an ethnic community group, the establishment of a thriving Islamic society, and the review of enrolments and subject achievements by gender and ethnicity, leading to action where necessary. GCE A level religious studies is available to all students. This fulfils the legal requirement for religious education. The college has chosen not to fulfil its statutory obligations under the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* to provide opportunities for religious worship.

66 Communications are effective and include a daily briefing meeting for all staff and the issue of bulletins and newsletters. Staff say that senior managers are easy to approach. Inspectors agreed with the college's claim that senior managers set high standards for themselves, modelling the commitment and responsiveness to the individual that they expect from others. With the exception of the principal and the chief administrative officer, they all teach or tutor. Staff report that at the end of the 1996-97 summer term, there were indications that senior managers were less accessible than in previous years. Senior managers took steps to address this and staff are satisfied that this has been achieved.

67 The college works effectively with other educational institutions and agencies in the community. The principal attends a number of local groups, such as the local education authority's 14 to 19 strategy group. The college

has a close working relationship with Huddersfield Technical College and Huddersfield New College. The three principals meet termly to consider strategic planning matters. In addition, the college has had for a number of years an agreement with Huddersfield Technical College which sets out to minimise duplication of courses and ensure that appropriate educational opportunities are available for students. For example, the college offers preferential access to students from partner schools who have completed a course at intermediate level at the technical college, though currently few students take up this offer. The college also has agreements with a college in the north west to support the development of quality assurance processes. Productive links have been established with a large number of local schools, businesses and organisations through the enrichment programme and through the extensive work shadowing arrangements. The college is a member of the local chamber of commerce. The TEC particularly values the college's links with local science-based industries.

68 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The reports of the internal and external auditors do not indicate any significant weaknesses in internal control. Budgets for consumables are delegated to the relevant budget holders on a largely historical basis; nearly as much again is held centrally to support developments or for contingencies. At the request of budget holders, the small but effective finance department provides reports on actual and committed expenditure. Detailed accounts are prepared monthly and considered by the finance committee. Financial forecasts and the assumptions behind them are also explained in detail to the committee. The college's senior management team are fully aware of the college's financial position and the financial consequences of their decisions. Formal monitoring of the financial position is

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undertaken by the principal and the chief administrative officer.

69 The college's management of its other resources is effective. It has exceeded its targets for growth since incorporation and, in doing this, has achieved equitable distribution of large groups while respecting the needs of particular subjects. The relatively high number of staff on permanent fractional contracts gives flexibility to meet year-on-year changes. The ratio of full-time equivalent students to staff has increased from 13.9:1 in 1992-93 to 16.6:1 in 1997-98. The college's central management information system fully meets the requirements of the FEFC for data, and the information on achievements supplied for inspection was up to date and accurate. At present, most departments maintain their own records and databases of information, often to deal with the demands of modular provision. The college information technology group is considering ways of integrating them with the college system.

## Conclusions

70 The inspection team found that the college's self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning the inspection. Most of the findings in the report are in agreement with those of the inspection team. Inspectors agreed with all the curriculum grades awarded by the college in the areas inspected and all but two of the grades for cross-college provision. In these two cases, inspectors considered the college to be over-generous.

71 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 (July 1997)

Age	%
Under 16	0
16-18 years	99
19-24 years	1
25+ years	0
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

## Student numbers by level of study (July 1997)

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

Source: college data

## Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (July 1997)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	450	0	35
Business	121	0	9
Health and community care	15	0	1
Art and design	71	0	6
Humanities	641	0	49
Total	1,298	0	100

Source: college data

## Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1997)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	85	0	0	85
Supporting direct learning contact	14	0	0	14
Other support	26	0	0	26
Total	125	0	0	125

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

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£3,550,000	£3,676,000	£3,755,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£19.39	£18.03	£19.82
Payroll as a proportion of income	72%	74%	*
Achievement of funding target	111%	117%	*
Diversity of income	7%	6%	*
Operating surplus	£285,000	£119,000	-£13,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96)

ALF – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), Funding Allocations 1996-97 (1996-97)

Payroll – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96)

Diversity of income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96)

Operating surplus – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

\*data not available

### Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	428	518	642
	Average point score per entry	6.1	6.3	6.6
	Position in tables	top 10%	top 10%	top 10%
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	26	28	20
	Percentage achieving qualification	85%	96%	95%
	Position in tables	top third	top 10%	top 10%

Source: DfEE

### Students' achievements

		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Advanced academic	Pass (%)	93	95	97
	Retention (%)	83	84	89

Source: college data

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