

Henley College Coventry

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1997-98**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council 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 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 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100*

© FEFC 1998

You may photocopy this report. A college may use its report in promotional material provided quotes are accurate, and the findings of the inspection are not misrepresented.

Contents

Paragraph

Summary

Context

The college and its mission 1

The inspection 5

Curriculum areas

Computing and information technology 7

Business studies 12

Hospitality and catering 16

English 21

Cross-college provision

Support for students 26

General resources 32

Quality assurance 37

Governance 45

Management 53

Conclusions 62

College statistics

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

Henley College Coventry

West Midlands Region

Inspected February 1998

Henley College Coventry is a general further education college in the north-east part of Coventry. The college produced a detailed self-assessment report that covered all aspects of its operations, including the work of collaborative providers. Most of the staff and many of the governors were involved in the production of the report. The self-assessment process involved consultation with people and organisations outside the college. The evidence in the self-assessment report was drawn from various sources, including records of lesson observations, and summaries of the views of students, employers and members of the local community about the college. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They identified some strengths and a few weaknesses which the report did not mention.

The college offers a wide range of courses in eight of the FEFC's programme areas. Courses are provided at foundation, intermediate, advanced and higher levels. Four curriculum areas were inspected, including courses offered in the local community and by collaborative providers. The inspection also covered cross-college provision. The college is well governed. Its financial management is good. College managers are effective. Much of the teaching is of a good standard. Most

examination pass rates are at or above the averages for the sector. Students receive good support from experienced and well-qualified staff. The quality of accommodation is high. The college has strong links with the local community. Quality assurance procedures are thorough and are an integral part of the college's activities. The college should address: low pass and retention rates on some courses; the poor level of take-up of additional learning support; low levels of usage of some accommodation; and the lack of co-ordination of the market research.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Computing and information technology	2	Support for students	2
Business studies	2	General resources	2
Hospitality and catering	2	Quality assurance	2
English	3	Governance	1
		Management	2

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Henley College Coventry is a general further education college and it was built in 1964. The main campus is in the north east of the city. The college provides several programmes at other sites in the locality. Coventry is an industrial city with a population of around 300,000. Its traditional industries have been in engineering and manufacturing. The city is now proving attractive as a base for many companies in the services sector. Small and medium-sized enterprises are important providers of employment. Ninety-seven per cent of local companies employ fewer than 200 people. In November 1997, the unemployment rate in Coventry was 5.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 5.1 per cent.

2 The college is one of three further education colleges in Coventry. Increasingly, the three colleges are working with one another and with other education and training providers. There is also a specialist further education college in the city for students with physical and sensory difficulties. There are 19 secondary schools in Coventry and all have sixth forms. In 1997, 69 per cent of 16-year-olds in the city entered full-time education at school or college. A further 19 per cent received vocational training from an employer or through government training schemes.

3 On the 31 July 1997, the college had 9,414 enrolments, of which 8,020 were from part-time students, 1,394 from full-time students and 79 per cent from students aged 19 or over. During the past three years, the number of students at the college has increased by 61 per cent. The proportion of students at the college who are from minority ethnic groups is 20 per cent, and this compares with 12 per cent in the city's population as a whole. Just over 54 per cent of students are from the areas of Coventry where levels of unemployment are significantly above the national average. On 31 July 1997, the college employed 202 full-time equivalent

staff, of whom 74 full-time equivalents were support staff. The college is divided into six schools: adult and community education; business; hospitality, health and beauty studies; humanities, arts and sciences; leisure, tourism and sports studies; and media, design and technology.

4 The college has recently revised its mission statement, which now reads: 'Henley College Coventry is committed to putting the student first in all its activities, by providing high-quality education and training to meet the needs of individuals and of the community into the next millennium'.

Context

The Inspection

5 The college was inspected during the week beginning 23 February 1998. The inspection team studied the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information about the college provided by other divisions of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The college submitted data on students' achievements between 1995 and 1997. Inspectors evaluated the data against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by awarding bodies. Approximately two months before the inspection, inspectors notified the college of the provision to be inspected. The inspection was carried out by nine inspectors over 29 days and an auditor over three days. They observed 53 lessons, looked at students' work and examined a range of the college's documents. Inspectors met representatives of the local community, schools, employers and Coventry University. They also held meetings with students, staff, managers and governors.

6 Of the lessons inspected, 64 per cent were rated good or outstanding and 6 per cent were less than satisfactory. This profile is similar to the average for all colleges inspected during 1996-97, according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief*

inspector's annual report. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was 73 per cent compared with an average for the sector of 77 per cent recorded in the same report. The highest attendance was in computing and information technology (IT) at 79 per cent, and the lowest was in English at 65 per cent. The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	0	5	0	0	0	5
GCSE	0	3	0	0	0	3
GNVQ	3	6	4	0	0	13
NVQ	3	2	4	1	0	10
Other*	2	10	8	2	0	22
Total	8	26	16	3	0	53

**includes professional courses in business and hospitality and catering, foundation and introductory courses in English and computing and IT, and higher education and access to higher education courses*

Curriculum Areas

Computing and Information Technology

Grade 2

7 The inspection covered all aspects of computing and IT, including collaborative provision. Sixteen lessons were inspected. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report were, for the most part, the same as those identified by the inspectors. The college understated one significant strength of this curriculum area.

Key strengths

- well-managed teaching and learning
- the effective and innovative methods for developing students' practical skills
- high-quality learning materials
- students' good achievements on a range of courses
- the wide range of provision and progression routes for students

Weaknesses

- the lack of provision of work experience for students on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses
- low retention rates on BTEC national diploma and GNVQ advanced courses
- the shortage of some specialist staff

8 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that most teachers plan and organise lessons well. Lessons have clear aims and objectives and teachers ensure that they follow on from work already covered. Teachers take account of students' different learning requirements and they make good use of high-quality learning materials. Methods for developing students' practical skills are innovative and effective. For example, on the national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 3 course, teachers use the internet to help

students to acquire the useful skill of creating worldwide web pages. On another NVQ course, students successfully develop the ability to identify problems which will occur in a range of IT systems with the advent of the millennium. No work experience is available for GNVQ students and they do not have the opportunity to undertake industrial projects in the workplace. The college is addressing this weakness in the GNVQ course.

9 In 1997, the pass rates on NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 were high at 83 and 88 per cent, respectively. Retention rates on these courses were good at 83 and 100 per cent, respectively. The pass rates and retention rates on the RSA Examinations Board (RSA) computer literacy and information technology course were at, or above, the averages for the further education sector. The pass rates and retention rates on introductory courses in IT are consistently high at 100 per cent. Retention rates on the BTEC national diploma and GNVQ advanced courses have been low. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course were high in 1995 and 1996, but they were poor in 1997. Many students progress through different levels of computing and IT courses at the college. They also progress from these courses to higher education.

10 The college's programmes in computing and IT make a significant contribution to the strengthening of the college links with the local community and to widening participation in education and training. The college offers a wide range of computing and IT courses, including successful introductory and retraining programmes. Courses are available at several venues, including the main site, centres in the local community and at the premises of collaborative providers. In its self-assessment report, the college understates the strengths of its provision in computing and IT. Through the options available on the GNVQ advanced course, students may specialise in IT or business applications. The college also provides a

Curriculum Areas

one-year GNVQ advanced course for suitably experienced students. Staff carry out regular and effective review and updating of courses and assignments.

11 An appropriate range of modern software is available for most courses. The GNVQ courses are based in suitable rooms which are equipped with computers linked to the college network. A few machines cannot run some large applications packages efficiently. There is a lack of large computer screens for demonstrations. Some courses which take place in community centres do not have sufficient equipment. These weaknesses in resources are acknowledged in the self-assessment report and the college is taking steps to remedy them. A number of specialist computer staff have left the college recently. The college has had difficulty in finding suitable replacements for them and their absence has unsettled some students and it has hindered some aspects of curriculum development.

Examples of students' achievements in computing and information technology, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
BTEC national diploma 1995 and 1996, advanced level GNVQ 1997	Retention (%)	48	51	61
	Pass rate (%)	100	74	60
NVQ level 3 IT	Retention (%)	*	*	100
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	88
NVQ level 2 IT	Retention (%)	*	17	83
	Pass rate (%)	*	44	83
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	89	95	73
	Pass rate (%)	88	100	25
RSA computer literacy and information technology	Retention (%)	75	99	91
	Pass rate (%)	79	53	72

Source: college data

*course not running

Curriculum Areas

Business Studies

Grade 2

12 Inspectors observed 12 lessons on GNVQ programmes, the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) business course, and public services, business and secretarial studies courses. The inspection covered courses at the college, in the local community and those offered by collaborative providers. The inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses which were identified in the college's self-assessment report. They found some additional weaknesses, however, which were not mentioned in the report.

Key strengths

- good teaching on business and secretarial courses
- high pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses
- high pass rates on public services courses
- the students' success in progressing from GNVQ courses to higher education
- the efficiently-managed collaborative provision
- the successful introduction of one-year and part-time GNVQ advanced courses

Weaknesses

- the failure of a significant number of students to progress to the second year of two-year programmes
- poor results on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) programmes
- insufficient provision of work experience for GNVQ students
- some unsatisfactory schemes of work

13 Most teaching is effective and it is particularly good on business and secretarial

courses. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that most teachers employ a variety of appropriate teaching and learning methods and make good use of questions to check that students understand what they are learning. Teachers' written comments which accompany their marking of students' work are constructive and aim to help students improve their performance. Most courses have programmes of well-planned industrial visits. The provision of work experience is a strength of public services and secretarial courses. Work experience is not provided, however, on GNVQ courses. The inspectors did not agree with the judgement in the self-assessment report that schemes of work are good; they found that a number were unsatisfactory. In a few lessons, teachers did not check the poor behaviour of some students.

14 Students' work is of a high standard and their portfolios are well presented. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that pass rates and retention rates are high on GNVQ intermediate and advanced programmes and on public services courses. In 1997, the pass rate on the BTEC national diploma in public services course was 100 per cent and on the GNVQ advanced course, it was 84 per cent. In 1997, pass rates on NVQ programmes were 83 per cent, a significant improvement on the low pass rates in 1995 and 1996. The self-assessment did not record the poor results in GCSE business studies. Many students progress from GNVQ advanced courses to higher education. In its self-assessment report, the college acknowledges it is unsatisfactory that a significant number of students fail to progress to the second year of two-year business courses.

15 There is an appropriate range of courses for full-time and part-time students, and these lead to GNVQs at intermediate and advanced levels, BTEC national diplomas, NVQs, the higher national certificate and professional qualifications. The college has successfully launched one-year full-time and two-year

Curriculum Areas

part-time courses at GNVQ advanced level. Business studies courses are available at the college, at sites locally and through collaborative provision. The organisation and supervision of the collaborative provision are effective. However, the self-assessment report fails to acknowledge that there is insufficient contact regarding the curriculum between college staff and those staff responsible for the teaching of collaborative provision. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that accommodation for business studies is appropriate. Rooms in which courses are based are of high quality and they contain attractive wall displays. Students on business courses are provided with good-quality course handbooks. Some classrooms lack overhead projector screens and suitable window blinds.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GNVQ advanced	Retention (%)	58	44	61
	Pass rate (%)	76	75	84
NVQ levels 2 and 3 administration	Retention (%)	70	80	83
	Pass rate (%)	34	39	83
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	71	86	95
	Pass rate (%)	67	83	70
BTEC national diploma public services	Retention (%)	87	66	74
	Pass rate (%)	96	84	100
GCSE	Retention (%)	87	78	94
	Pass rate (%)	19	30	18
GNVQ foundation public services	Retention (%)	63	82	82
	Pass rate (%)	50	95	86

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Hospitality and Catering

Grade 2

16 Inspectors observed 13 lessons on courses in hospitality, food preparation and service and the licensed trade. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report. They considered, however, that the report understated or omitted a number of strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- high quality of teaching for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- well-developed and vocationally-relevant teaching materials for key skills
- the high pass rates on most courses
- students' achievements in competitions
- the effective management of courses and the curriculum
- the high quality of equipment and accommodation

Weaknesses

- the inappropriateness of first-year students' work in the restaurant kitchen
- the teachers' failure to meet deadlines for marking and returning the work of students on GNVQ courses
- the poor pass rate on the GNVQ advanced course in 1997

17 Much of the teaching of hospitality and catering is good. The teaching of food preparation and cooking for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly effective. Inspectors agreed with the college that materials for teaching key skills are well devised and vocationally relevant. Teachers explain tasks to students clearly and their comments on students' written work are

supportive and constructive. They question students skilfully in order to improve students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers enable students to acquire social skills to the standards expected by industry. Procedures for the monitoring of students' progress are mostly thorough. Teachers of students on GNVQ programmes are not, however, meeting deadlines for the return of marked work. First-year students working in the kitchen of the college restaurant are required to prepare complex dishes but they do not have the necessary skills to make these. This activity hinders the development of their culinary skills and of their understanding of cookery processes.

18 Students do well in competitions. For example, this year they won two gold medals and a bronze medal at the *salon culinaire* at Hotelympia. Most students' work is of an appropriate standard. The self-assessment report did not make reference to the good practical skills which students acquire. In 1997, students' pass rates on the courses leading to the NVQ in food and drink at levels 1 and 2 were high, at 87 and 88 per cent, respectively. Day-release students on the course leading to an NVQ in food preparation and cooking at level 2 in 1997 achieved a good pass rate of 83 per cent. Full-time students studying for the same qualification performed less well and their pass rate was only 50 per cent. The pass rate on the Hotel and Catering International Management Association professional certificate course was 100 per cent. Retention rates on this course were poor, however. The pass rate and the retention rate on the British Institute of Innkeeping licensees certificate course were outstanding at 99 per cent and 100 per cent, respectively. The pass rate in 1997 on the GNVQ advanced course in hospitality and catering was low, at 36 per cent.

19 The self-assessment report understated the effectiveness of the management of hospitality and catering courses. Teachers meet regularly and programme leaders share good practice.

Curriculum Areas

Effective course review and monitoring have led to improvements in the curriculum and in the structure of programmes. Records of lessons and of assessment are carefully maintained.

20 Teachers have had experience in a wide range of different sectors of the hospitality and catering industry. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the accommodation and specialist equipment are of high quality and appropriate for the programmes on offer. The hospitality and catering programme area has particularly

strong links with employers. Two major companies have provided substantial sponsorship for the refurbishment of the kitchen and restaurant facilities.

Examples of students' achievements in hospitality and catering, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GNVQ advanced	Retention (%)	81	40	85
	Pass rate (%)	82	83	36
NVQ level 2 service of food and drink	Retention (%)	84	71	85
	Pass rate (%)	88	13	88
NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking (part time)	Retention (%)	77	46	56
	Pass rate (%)	81	67	83
NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking (full time)	Retention (%)	81	57	76
	Pass rate (%)	81	67	50
Hotel and Catering International Management Association professional certificate	Retention (%)	*	*	36
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	100
British Institute of Innkeeping national licensees certificate	Retention (%)	*	100	100
	Pass rate (%)	*	100	99
NVQ level 1 service of food and drink	Retention (%)	*	63	89
	Pass rate (%)	*	42	87
NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking (full time)	Retention (%)	46	57	57
	Pass rate (%)	67	64	61

Source: college data

*course not running

Curriculum Areas

English

Grade 3

21 The inspection covered English GCE A level, GCSE and introductory courses. Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Weaknesses in students' attendance were understated in the report, however.

Key strengths

- the wide range of teaching techniques
- lively and imaginative lessons
- effective marking of students' work
- the appropriate range of courses

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for GCE A level English language and literature for students aged 19 years and over
- unsatisfactory attendance of some students
- poor retention rates for students aged 16 to 18

22 The inspection team agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the college provides an appropriate range of English courses. GCSE and GCE A level courses are offered and there are programmes of study leading to qualifications at introductory and intermediate level. Courses are available on the main college site during the day and in the evening, and also at centres in the local community. In addition, the college arranges for students who cannot attend college to study for qualifications at home, or through distance learning.

23 Most lessons are well prepared, lively and imaginative. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that teachers use an appropriate variety of methods to engage and

sustain students' interest. Teachers' marking of students' work is thorough and teachers follow clear and established assessment procedures.

Teachers monitor students' performance regularly and effectively and they keep students informed about their progress. Some records of lessons are unsatisfactory. The self-assessment report failed to acknowledge that the lack of detail in these records makes it difficult for teachers who are standing in for absent staff to ensure continuity in the students' learning. In some lessons, students' attendance is poor.

24 Most students take pride in their work and are responsive in lessons. The proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who obtain grade C or above in GCSE English language is in line with the national average for the further education sector. In 1996 and 1997, the pass rates of students aged 16 to 18 in GCE A level English were above the national average. The proportion of these students who obtained grade C and above in GCE A level English was below the national average but it matched the college's own prediction, made on the basis of the students' GCSE results. In its self-assessment report, the college recognises that the pass rates of students aged 19 and over in GCE A level English language and literature are below the national average for further education colleges. The college is now offering alternative courses to GCE A level English and these include courses leading to London Chamber of Commerce and Industry qualifications in English for business. Retention rates are poor on some English courses.

25 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the specialist rooms for English are of high quality. Many of the rooms used for the teaching of English are pleasant and well equipped and they provide a stimulating learning environment for students. Learning materials are good but there are not enough copies of set texts for all students. A few classrooms do not contain appropriate reference or display materials. The programme

Curriculum Areas

team teaching English courses is changing to include more part-time staff. Their integration with the programme team is not always effective.

Examples of students' achievements in English, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level English language and literature (students 19 or over)	Retention (%)	88	92	100
	Pass rate (%)	65	41	48
GCSE A level English literature (students 16 to 18)	Retention (%)	81	55	60
	Pass rate (%)	54	83	94
GCSE English language (students 19 or over)	Retention (%)	74	82	91
	Pass rate (%)	100	63	57
GCSE English language (students 16 to 18)	Retention (%)	89	73	61
	Pass rate (%)	50	47	49

Source: college data

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

26 The inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report about the quality of the support for students. The college has already taken action to remedy some weaknesses which were identified in the report. A key phrase in the college's mission statement is 'student first'. The effectiveness of the support provided for students demonstrates that the college meets its commitment to students.

Key strengths

- the effective arrangements for the admission and induction of students
- well-produced publicity materials
- the highly-experienced staff in student services
- the high-quality careers guidance and advice for students
- the good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Weaknesses

- students' low take-up of additional learning support
- insufficient monitoring of tutorials
- the failure of some students to update and complete records of achievement

27 Potential students receive impartial advice and guidance. There is a wide range of well-designed prospectuses and publicity materials. Course leaflets are informative and clearly written. 'Taster' and open days are offered throughout the year and some are run in collaboration with other local colleges. The college shares some of its advertising costs with these colleges. It uses a variety of publicity methods, such as cinema and newspaper advertisements, direct mailing, posters and

college guides. There are clear and well-documented procedures for admissions. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the induction of students is effective. Staff receive training on the induction of students and they are provided with guidelines on induction procedures. Students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities. Students who had changed their course said that they had received good advice and guidance when doing so.

28 Most students receive tutorial support of high quality. Documentation for personal tutors is comprehensive and well produced. Students are provided with a useful programme of talks and workshops on social and personal issues, such as drugs awareness, and personal safety. Some less successful tutorials were poorly organised and some tutors did not monitor students' academic progress sufficiently. The self-assessment report acknowledges that some students do not update and complete their records of achievement.

29 Staff who conduct assessments to identify students' needs for additional learning support provide course teams and students with the results of these assessments promptly. However, many students do not take up the additional learning support they require and those who do, often do not attend the support sessions regularly. The college is piloting a programme of additional learning support which is provided as a part of students' main courses. Since the introduction of this programme, the number of students receiving support has increased. The support provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The college's disability statement provides clear guidance and procedures for identifying, assessing and supporting students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college helps to arrange programmes across the city to increase learning opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Cross-college Provision

30 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the guidance and advice given to students about progression to higher education and employment represents a strength in this area of cross-college provision. The college provides a wide and appropriate range of services. Students receive help with preparing curricula vitae and letters of application. The learning resource centre is a useful source of information on careers. Some of the college's services are available on the college computer network. Guidance and advice on careers is also included in the tutorial programme. The college careers office and the local careers service adviser provide students with individual interviews and talks on careers. In its self-assessment report, the college has acknowledged that teachers' references for students applying for entry to higher education need to be checked more carefully. It has also identified a need for staff to visit collaborative provision more frequently in order to give careers advice and guidance to students on courses run by collaborative providers.

31 The effective and friendly support and guidance for students which the highly-experienced staff in student services provide, is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. There is a well-organised service to help students to find accommodation. Booklets on the financial implications of being a student, and on counselling services for students are clearly written and informative. The personal counselling service is effectively publicised and well used. Students are referred to outside agencies for help where appropriate. The college provides a useful range of advice on financial matters and on social security. There are clear procedures for providing financial assistance to students from the access and hardship funds. Information on other sources of financial help is also given to students. Subsidised childcare facilities are available to students with young children. In its self-assessment report, the college recognises that there are insufficient childcare facilities for

students on courses at locations away from the main site.

General Resources

Grade 2

32 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report about the college's resources. They also agreed with the college's assessment of the strengths of the resources, particularly in respect to the condition of the buildings.

Key strengths

- good accommodation
- the accessibility of the accommodation to students with restricted mobility
- the high standard of IT resources
- the provision of good learning resources

Weaknesses

- low usage of space
- the unsuitability of the learning resource centre for group work and silent study

33 Buildings are of high quality and they are well cared for. The college has made significant changes and improvements to its accommodation since the last inspection. These include the new and welcoming main reception area, a refurbished media studies unit and the conversion of workshops into classrooms. Substantial sums of money have been spent on a rolling programme of planned maintenance, for example, on reroofing. Internally, the displays, decor and furnishings are of a high standard. The college has installed a comprehensive 24-hour security system. There is an adequate number of staff work rooms, located within curriculum areas. These rooms have networked computers and electronic mail facilities. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the college's utilisation of space is low.

Cross-college Provision

34 The buildings are easily accessible to students with restricted mobility. The college also makes provision for these students to visit a centre for the disabled in the city which includes a swimming pool. There is a wide range of communal facilities for students, including good-quality common rooms, a large refurbished refectory, a travel shop and a well-equipped sports centre.

35 The self-assessment report identifies the high quality of IT facilities as a strength of the college's resources. These facilities are well used. Except at some peak usage times, students have good access to computers and they are available to them on Saturday mornings. Most computers are connected to the college-wide network and to the internet. A wide range of CD-ROMs is available, although there are few for business studies. A range of learning materials prepared by curriculum and cross-college areas, is available on the college's computer network. The college provides training for staff, and for all full-time and some part-time students, on how to use computers and software. There are sufficient technicians to maintain the IT equipment.

36 The learning resource centre, which includes the library, is an attractive well-furnished area. The self-assessment report identifies a weakness in the college's resources in that the centre is too small for group work, and its layout does not facilitate silent study. There is an appropriate range of library books, periodicals and learning materials. Liaison between the learning resource centre staff and curriculum managers is good. The manager of the centre is a member of the college's management forum. Students regard the service provided by the centre as good and they find its opening times appropriate. The budget for learning resources is adequate. However, there are no separate budget allocations for specific curriculum areas.

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

37 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They found, however, strengths and weaknesses in the college's quality assurance system which were not identified in the report.

Key strengths

- the clear policy on quality assurance
- good arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the quality assurance system
- the college's achievement of external awards for quality
- the audit procedures within the quality assurance system
- well-established procedures for the assessment of teaching
- the extensive staff development programme
- the identification of staff development needs through the staff appraisal system

Weaknesses

- minimal use of performance indicators and targets in cross-college areas
- underdeveloped use of service standards across the college
- insufficient specification of standards and targets in the college's charter

38 The college's quality assurance policy is clear and easy to understand. The policy stresses the importance of making continuous improvements in all areas of the college's work. There are helpful guidelines for staff on the quality assurance arrangements. In 1996, the college received a Charter Mark for excellence in public services. The college has achieved Investor in People status.

Cross-college Provision

39 There is a well-developed and standardised system for keeping course records and for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of courses. All course teams discuss common agenda items at course review meetings. The college is seeking to achieve more analytical evaluation of its provision. In addition to end-of-year course reviews there are meetings at which course managers review a group of courses and complete a self-assessment report. This has produced useful summaries of strengths and weaknesses in provision. The evidence to support these strengths and weaknesses is not always sufficiently detailed. The implementation of action plans drawn up to address weaknesses identified at course review meetings, is regularly monitored. Each head of school attends a formal review meeting with senior managers three times a year.

40 There are effective and well-established committees for monitoring the quality of the college's provision. Among these are the quality assurance committee and the quality audit committee which report to the academic board. The quality assurance committee oversees the setting of standards for the college's teaching and learning programmes and the quality audit committee monitors the effectiveness of the college's quality assurance procedures. The college has recently established a system for reviewing activities that take place across all areas of the college. A 'quality support team' has been set up to improve teaching and learning. The team organises and carries out lesson observations. A review of the findings of these observations has led to the identification of strengths and weaknesses in teaching in each curriculum area. Discussion of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of individual members of staff, identified during lesson observations, forms an integral part of staff appraisal interviews. As the self-assessment report notes, quality assurance arrangements have not led to the improvement of students' achievements in all areas of the college.

41 Curriculum areas make good use of performance indicators. For each course, there are targets for enrolments, retention rates and students' achievements. The self-assessment report recognises that there is insufficient use of performance indicators and targets in cross-college areas. The use of service standards across the college is not developed. The charter does not specify enough precise standards or targets against which the college's performance can be easily measured.

42 The college conducts surveys of students' views on the quality of provision by asking students to respond to three questionnaires each year. College managers also interview groups of students and other users of the college to find out how satisfied they are with the college's performance. A transcription of the interviews is made and a useful analysis of the points raised in them is produced.

43 The programme of staff development is extensive. Training and development days ensure that staff are involved in strategic planning, quality assurance, and self-assessment. The staff appraisal system identifies staff development needs and these are clearly reflected in the staff development programme. In 1996, several staff did not receive appraisal interviews. This year, most staff have had their appraisal interviews. The annual review of staff development provides an informative record of staff development in the college. It does not, however, identify the extent to which staff development has contributed to the achievement of the college's strategic plan.

44 The college's procedures for self-assessment are good. Self-assessment is an integral part of the college's strategic and operational planning. The college provided evidence including clear references to documentary evidence to support most of its judgements in the self-assessment report. Evidence was drawn from the findings of lesson observations, the students' responses to questionnaires, and the views of employers and

Cross-college Provision

of the local community. Preparation of the self-assessment report involved much consultation between managers and a wide range of staff, and the corporation. The self-assessment report included detailed action plans for the improvement of provision in cross-college and curriculum areas.

Governance

Grade 1

45 The self-assessment of governance was thorough and inspectors agreed with the great majority of the strengths and weaknesses identified.

Key strengths

- the corporation's effective oversight of the college's financial performance
- governors' keen interest in all aspects of the college's work
- the governors' commitment to the college
- the governors' range of skills and experience
- the corporation's involvement in the development of strategic plans
- the effective self-evaluation of the corporation's performance
- arrangements for the induction and training of governors
- the clerking arrangements
- the efficient conduct of corporation and committee business

Weaknesses

- insufficient detail in the register of interests
- standing orders have not been established

46 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the

governance of the college is good. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

47 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the governance of the college is of a very high standard. Governors devote considerable time to the college. They come from a wide range of professional and business backgrounds. The corporation has identified the skills it requires of future members. The search committee advises on the appointment and reappointment of governors, taking into account the need for corporation members to have, collectively, an appropriate range of expertise and experience. Procedures for documenting the appointment of governors are not sufficiently comprehensive. The arrangements for the induction and training of governors are good. Governors have recently evaluated their effectiveness.

48 Governors understand clearly the distinction between governance and management. They work well with senior managers, who attend corporation meetings by invitation. The chairman and principal meet frequently. There are effective arrangements for governors to be involved in the appointment, appraisal and professional development of senior staff.

49 Arrangements for clerking are good. Meetings are carefully prepared and they are well chaired. The corporation's discussions and actions are purposeful. Minutes of meetings of governors are clear. The corporation adopted an early model code of conduct for members but it contains insufficient detail. The clerk to the corporation maintains a register of the financial and personal interests of governors and of staff with significant financial responsibilities. The self-assessment report did not indicate that the register does not contain enough detailed information and that it is not revised each year.

Cross-college Provision

Standing orders for the conduct of the corporation and its committees have not been established.

50 As indicated in the self-assessment report, governors are fully involved in developing the college's strategic plan. Governors monitor the college's performance closely. They regularly discuss the college's progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives. Governors receive comprehensive and regular management information on enrolments, retention rates and students' achievements and on the utilisation of staff. Governors take a keen interest in quality assurance, students' progress, the work of curriculum areas and the quality and effectiveness of the teaching. For example, the curriculum advisory group of governors has carried out thorough reviews of students' achievements. The corporation has considered the college's self-assessment report. A governor chairs the student liaison group, made up of representatives from senior management and the student body and this considers matters of interest to students.

51 Governors debate the college budget fully. The corporation approves financial forecasts before they are forwarded to the FEFC. Governors provide an annual account of their stewardship of the college's funds. They monitor the college's progress towards meeting a range of financial performance targets, and they receive detailed management accounts at monthly intervals. The finance and policy committee reviews the college's financial performance regularly and thoroughly. However, the terms of reference for the finance and policy committee do not fully define its role and responsibilities.

52 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the corporation has established an appropriate committee structure. Governors have formally agreed how they should be deployed between committees in order that the best use may be made of their expertise. The corporation regularly receives

the formal reports of committees. The audit committee has appropriate terms of reference. It effectively monitors the implementation of audit recommendations and regularly reviews progress in the carrying out of audit plans.

Management

Grade 2

53 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the comprehensive self-assessment report on management. In some cases, weaknesses identified in the report had been fully or partially rectified by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- the strong commitment of staff to strategic planning
- effective use of targets
- effective communications within the college
- the clear management structure
- widespread use of high-quality management information
- the development of unit costing
- good financial monitoring by the senior management team
- the form and content of management reports

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of market research across the college
- unequal workloads of some management staff
- insufficient recording of the termly reviews of progress

54 Staff are widely involved in strategic planning at all levels. The college's strategic plan has been improved since the last inspection by the inclusion of a useful operating

Cross-college Provision

statement. The plan is thorough and comprehensive and, three times a year, the senior management team reviews the extent of progress made in carrying it out. No formal record is kept of the decisions taken by the senior management team on ways of improving the plan's implementation.

55 The self-assessment report identified the careful setting of targets as a strength in the way the college is managed. Senior management measures the extent to which the college meets its targets. The college's performance is judged against national indicators such as national pass rates for examinations.

56 Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that communication within the college is effective. There are regular meetings of senior managers. Agendas are relevant. Minutes of meetings are well written, and they specify who has responsibility for implementing action which has been agreed. Senior managers meet all staff on average twice a term. The college issues a regular and informative newsletter. The management structure is clear. Although some job descriptions have not been revised for some years, staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Inspectors agreed with the statement in the self-assessment report that there is some inequality in managers' workloads. This inequality was noted in the last inspection report and it has not been addressed. Most staff are effectively deployed. There is a comprehensive staff handbook. Induction for new staff is thorough.

57 The college's market research lacks co-ordination. Some sections of the college carry out their own research. These include some curriculum areas and, in particular, the marketing unit and Henley Enterprise, which is concerned with the development of full-cost courses for industry. The college has a marketing strategy which has clear objectives. As the self-assessment report recognises, there

is no strategy for encouraging all areas of the college to develop links with employers.

58 The college works closely with two other general further education colleges in Coventry. The college and the two neighbouring colleges bid jointly for external funds. The colleges also jointly review courses with low numbers so that they do not duplicate provision unnecessarily and inefficiently. Representatives of external groups spoke warmly of the good relations between the college and their organisations. The college enjoys good relations with schools and it has substantial links with local community groups. The college also has good links with local universities and with the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise.

59 Staff pay careful attention to health and safety regulations. The corporation has approved the college's health and safety policy. Health and safety committees monitor the effectiveness of the college's health and safety policy. Regular checks are carried out to ensure that college's accommodation and equipment comply with safety regulations. There are clear procedures for reporting accidents which occur on the college's premises. The college has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. The self-assessment report commented that the policy was too long to permit easy reference to it and a shorter version has now been made available in the college. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report, that more needs to be done to check that the college curriculum supports and promotes equal opportunities.

60 Management information is of a high quality. It is widely used and it helps staff to carry out their management responsibilities effectively. During recent years, the college has made good progress in developing a system of unit costing for courses. Considerable work has also been carried out on determining the costs of course modules.

Cross-college Provision

61 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The finance team has an appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff. The integration of financial forecasts with strategic plans is effective, clear and understood. A comprehensive management report, including relevant financial and non-financial information, is produced monthly. Cashflow forecasting does not extend beyond the end of the financial year. Budget holders receive timely reports on expenditure, and specialist advice when this is required. The senior management team receives management reports monthly, and monitors the college's performance effectively. The college's internal and external auditors have not identified any significant weaknesses in the college's internal control system. The comprehensive financial regulations and procedures have been revised recently.

Conclusions

62 The self-assessment report provided the inspection team with a useful basis for planning the inspection. The report was thorough and comprehensive and inspectors agreed with most of its judgements. Inspectors considered that some of the college's strengths were understated. They also found some strengths and weaknesses which were not identified in the report. With one exception, the grades awarded by the college to its curriculum areas inspected were identical to those given by the inspectors. The grade for one curriculum area, however, was considered by the inspectors to be too high. Inspectors mostly agreed with the grades given for cross-college areas of provision but they considered that the college had underestimated its strengths in one area.

63 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)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	3
16-18 years	18
19-24 years	19
25+ years	60
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1997)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Foundation	17
Intermediate	45
Advanced	36
Higher education	2
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	0
Total	100

Source: college data

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

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	239	1,760	21
Engineering	68	925	11
Business	408	1,668	22
Hotel and catering	246	633	9
Health and community care	103	878	10
Art and design	70	84	2
Humanities	237	1,968	24
Basic education	23	104	1
Total	1,394	8,020	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1997)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	91	2	0	93
Supporting direct learning contact	32	3	0	35
Other support	69	5	0	74
Total	192	10	0	202

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£8,536,000	£8,264,000	£8,159,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£21.64	£20.91	£21.27
Payroll as a proportion of income	60%	65%	59%
Achievement of funding target	107%	104%	112%
Diversity of income	32%	31%	30%
Operating surplus	£351,000	-£278,000	-£67,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

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), college (1996-97)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), college (1996-97)

Diversity of income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

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

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	38	57	107
	Average point score per entry	2.4	2.3	2.6
	Position in tables	bottom 10%	bottom 10%	bottom third
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	230	174	212
	Percentage achieving qualification	82%	72%	82%
	Position in tables	middle third	middle third	top third
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	143	96
	Percentage achieving qualification	*	65%	51%
	Position in tables	*	middle third	bottom third

Source: DfEE

Note: the majority of the college's students are 19 years of age or older

The achievements of these students are not covered in published DfEE performance tables

*1994-95 intermediate vocational results not available

FEFC Inspection Report 62/98

**Published by the
Further Education Funding Council
June 1998**