

Hull College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
2000-01**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL***

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

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circulars 97/12, 97/13 and 97/22. Inspections seek to validate the data and judgements provided by colleges in self-assessment reports. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work they inspect. A member of the Council's audit service works with inspectors in assessing aspects of governance and management. All colleges are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

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

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Contents

	Paragraph
<hr/>	
Summary	
<hr/>	
Context	
The college and its mission	1
The inspection	7
<hr/>	
Curriculum areas	
Science	10
Construction	15
Engineering	20
Business administration	25
Childcare	30
Art and design	35
Law, psychology and sociology	40
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	45
Basic skills	50
<hr/>	
Cross-college provision	
Support for students	55
General resources	62
Quality assurance	68
Governance	78
Management	86
Conclusions	93
<hr/>	
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.

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1999-2000, are shown in the following table.

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

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

Sample size: 112 college inspections

Note: percentages subject to rounding

Student Achievements

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

- as number of starters, which is the number of enrolments on qualifications where the student was expecting to complete the qualification that college year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1996, would appear in the results for 1997-98 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification
- as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which students have completed as expected or where they are continuing their studies beyond the expected end date of the qualification. For programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, that is, from the start to the end of the qualification
- as an achievement rate, which is the number of qualifications students have fully achieved as a percentage of completed qualifications with a known outcome. Partial achievements are not included.

Summary

Hull College

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

Inspected October 2000

Hull College, a large general further education college on the north bank of the Humber, draws its students from an area which extends from the east coast to the town of Goole, 30 miles to the west of the college. Of the college's students, 34% are recruited from disadvantaged areas. In preparation for the inspection the college produced a comprehensive self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report. However, they found additional strengths and weaknesses which had not been identified by the college. In some curriculum areas, insufficient attention and analysis was given to students' achievements. Inspectors considered that five of the nine curriculum areas and three of the five cross-college areas in the report had been overgraded by the college.

The college provides a range of courses in all programme areas funded by the FEFC for school-leavers, adults and employers. Provision in eight of these areas was inspected together with basic skills and other aspects of cross-college provision. Most teaching is good. The proportion of good or outstanding lessons was just above the national average for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. Since 1997 there has been an overall

decline in rates of student retention and achievement. Students benefit from effective pre-course guidance, a wide range of personal and welfare services, and good individual support from tutors. Since the previous inspection, the college has continued to improve its accommodation. Classrooms are attractive and well equipped and the college is clean and well maintained. There is good access for people with mobility difficulties. The college has a comprehensive framework for self-assessment and quality assurance activities. There is a well-developed internal inspection process. Staff development is extensive and well planned. Governors make a positive contribution to determining the strategic direction of the college. Management is good. Communications in the college are effective. The college is highly responsive to the needs of its community. It has successfully widened participation amongst people who would not normally attend further education. The college should improve: low rates of student retention and achievement; shortcomings in group tutorials; arrangements for IT support; insufficiently thorough self-assessment reviews; insufficient use of performance indicators in some service areas; some unsatisfactory arrangements for the conduct of some aspects of the corporation's business; and the accessibility and reliability of data on student retention and achievement.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science	3	Support for students	2
Construction	2	General resources	2
Engineering	3	Quality assurance	3
Business administration	3	Governance	3
Childcare	2	Management	2
Art and design	2		
Law, psychology and sociology	2		
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2		
Basic skills	2		

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Hull College is a large general further education college. It provides education and training for the city of Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire. The college operates on four sites. Three are in Hull: Queen's Gardens and Park Street in the city centre and Riley 4 miles away in west Hull. The fourth site, Goole College, is located 30 miles to the west of the city. It operates as a separate centre. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time general and vocational programmes from entry to degree level. Courses are also offered at nearly 300 community-based centres. The college uses employers' premises for its 'worklearn' programme. It has a small number of local franchise partners, mainly in the voluntary sector.

2 Hull has a population of 261,800 of which minority ethnic groups comprise less than 1%. On the 1999 Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions' index of local deprivation, Hull is the 26th most deprived local district in England. At the time of the inspection, the unemployment rate was 7.8% compared with the national average of 4.2%. The population of the largely rural East Riding is 312,000. It includes pockets of economic and social deprivation, for example the town of Goole, where the performance of adults against national education and training targets is low.

3 In 1999, only 58% of school-leavers in Hull continued in full-time education, which is significantly below the national average of 68%. However, a further 16% progressed to training funded by the local training and enterprise council (TEC), which is a significantly higher proportion than the national average of 9%. Only 23% of 16 year olds gained five general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects at grade C or above compared with the national average of 48%. Some schools in Hull have been designated as requiring special measures. One school was recently closed and reopened under the Department for Education and Employment's (DfEE's) fresh start initiative.

Examination results within the area of the local education authority (LEA) place it at or near the bottom of the national league tables on school performance. Participation in full-time education by students aged 16 in Goole is low.

4 In July 2000, the college enrolled 26,166 students, of whom 16% were full time. Of the college's students, 4% had enrolled on higher education courses; most of these courses were part time. Around 79% were aged 19 or over and 60% were female. The college recruits over 75% of its students from Hull postcode areas. Most of the remainder are from the East Riding. The college employs over 1,200 staff, of whom 386 are full-time equivalent teachers and 369 full-time equivalent support staff.

5 The college management team consists of the principal and chief executive, deputy chief executive, director of personnel and facilities, director of customer services, five assistant principals and the head of Goole College. The curriculum is organised into 13 schools, grouped together in five boards of study. Goole College constitutes a sixth board of study. As well as their curriculum cross-college roles, assistant principals line manage heads of school and chair boards of study which bring together curriculum schools for the purposes of planning review and audit.

6 The college's revised mission is: 'to help bring prosperity to the region and its people in partnership with business and local communities through learning at its best and most accessible to all'. The college further defines how its approach to learning can help to realise the mission:

- 'learning is lifelong
- learning should be supported, developed, accredited and progressive
- learning should be inclusive
- learning is successful when it happens in an environment which is well managed, of a high standard and responsive to all needs in the learning process'.

Context

The Inspection

7 The college was inspected during the week beginning 30 October 2000. Before the inspection, inspectors considered the self-assessment report. They also reviewed information about the college which was held by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), including data on students' achievements for 1998 and 1999 derived from the individualised student record (ISR). The college supplied data on students' achievements and retention for 2000. Inspectors checked these against class registers and pass lists issued by awarding bodies. Most of the information on students' achievements was accurate; data on national vocational

qualifications (NVQs) proved less reliable. Sixteen inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 68 days carried out the inspection. They observed 124 lessons, including some tutorials, and examined students' work and college documents. Inspectors held meetings with college governors, managers, staff and students. They also consulted with the local TEC, employers and other outside organisations about their working relationships with the college.

8 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. Of the 124 lessons inspected, 64% were judged to be good or outstanding and 8% less than satisfactory compared with national averages for 1999-2000 of 62% and 6%, respectively.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	3	5	3	0	0	11
GCSE	2	3	0	0	0	5
GNVQ	3	3	1	1	0	8
NVQ	2	8	1	1	1	13
Other vocational	8	24	23	6	0	61
Other*	5	13	7	1	0	26
Total (No.)	23	56	35	9	1	124
Total (%)	19	45	28	7	1	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000 (%)	17	45	31	6	0	100

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

*includes tutorials, basic skills and access courses

Note: percentages subject to rounding

Context

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

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Hull College	11.7	76
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000	10.3	76

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

Curriculum Areas

Science

Grade 3

10 Inspectors observed 14 lessons. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but found that some weaknesses were not given sufficient emphasis.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- a good range of provision
- good achievement rates on access to higher education courses
- well-equipped laboratories, preparation areas and resource room

Weaknesses

- irregular attendance and lateness of some students
- poor retention rates on general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) and sports science courses
- poor achievement rates on some GCSE and most GCE A level courses

11 The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses. These include GCE A level and GCSE science subjects. An access to higher education course is provided with options in biological concepts, concepts in sciences and life sciences. There are also BTEC national courses in science and sports science and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) science courses at intermediate and advanced levels. Enrolments onto intermediate level and access to higher education courses are increasing. There is an effective partnership with a local university for the provision of franchised degree courses; enrolments onto these courses have risen significantly in recent years. The self-assessment report

acknowledged that recruitment to GCE A level and advanced vocational courses is declining.

12 Teaching is good. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that lessons are well planned. Schemes of work and assessment requirements are regularly shared with students. Teachers use an appropriate variety of activities in lessons including review of previous work and homework, and practical demonstrations and ensure that students participate in experimental work. Most learning materials are well designed and shared between staff in the teaching teams. In a GCE A level lesson, the teacher used computer-generated slides on a fresh topic interspersed with overhead projector transparencies. This material maintained students' interest and encouraged them to concentrate on the lesson. There is regular review of individual student's progress. Teachers do not treat instances of late arrival at lessons by students satisfactorily. In a number of lessons, teaching time was lost because teachers had to stop the work to settle individual students, who arrived late into lessons, and then restart. In other lessons, students failed to make sufficient progress because they submitted homework late or returned after prolonged absence. The self-assessment report did not acknowledge that persistent lateness and irregular attendance by some students undermined the effectiveness of teaching.

13 Retention rates are at or above national averages for the sector in most GCSE subjects and for some of the vocational science programme, but below national averages for most GCE A level subjects. Achievement rates are good on the access to higher education course and on the GNVQ intermediate science course. The rates are above national averages for some GCSE subjects and advanced level vocational courses. They are unsatisfactory on all GCE A level subjects, except physics where the achievements of the relatively low percentage of students who complete the course

Curriculum Areas

are consistently good. Retention and achievement rates on national diplomas in science (sports science) are poor. Analysis of the performance of students at GCE A level indicates that their achievements are in line with predictions based on their GCSE results. Many students on access courses progress to higher education. Achievement rates on the first diploma in science (sports science) are poor.

14 Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic and demonstrate a good knowledge of their subjects. Specialist laboratories and preparation areas are located together on one floor.

Technical support is good. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the laboratories are well equipped and well maintained. Practical lessons are adequately resourced. Student groups are sometimes large for the size of the laboratories and occasionally a lesson is held in a laboratory that is designed for the teaching of another science subject. Most laboratories lack wall displays. Books that students can use in lessons are readily available. The science resource room is well equipped with up-to-date computers and other learning materials.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE science and technology	2	Number of starters	38	40	39
		Retention (%)	63	73	67
		Achievement (%)	35	48	12
GCSE chemistry, physics, human physiology and health	2	Number of starters	86	104	96
		Retention (%)	73	72	68
		Achievement (%)	59	49	46
GNVQ intermediate science	2	Number of starters	9	10	13
		Retention (%)	78	70	77
		Achievement (%)	86	71	100
GCE A level biology, human biology, chemistry and physics	3	Number of starters	152	114	111
		Retention (%)	66	58	61
		Achievement (%)	55	52	64
Advanced vocational science (GNVQ and BTEC national certificate)	3	Number of starters	33	22	21
		Retention (%)	90	64	67
		Achievement (%)	77	57	93
Access to higher education (all options including science)	3	Number of starters	177	242	308
		Retention (%)	64	64	64
		Achievement (%)	83	78	84

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

Curriculum Areas

Construction

Grade 2

15 Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified some additional strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- well-managed courses
- the high standard of training and assessment facilities
- excellent retention rates on most courses
- good achievement rates on many courses

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on advanced level craft courses
- ineffective management of some lessons

16 The college offers a wide range of courses in construction. Management of the provision is good and staff work enthusiastically and effectively together in planning and delivering courses. Enrolments have increased consistently over the past three years. Many school pupils and adults returning to their studies benefit from the learning opportunities provided. Course literature and records are of a high standard. Internal verification is well developed and thorough, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Links with employers are good. Many teachers play active roles in national organisations for construction education and training. Key skills are effectively identified and recorded. Some theory lessons are timetabled to last for too long a period.

17 Most teaching is good. In most lessons enthusiastic teachers use an appropriate variety of approaches and resources which maintain the

interest of students and help them to learn. Most teachers cope well with classes which are often large and contain students of widely differing ability, experience and backgrounds. In a lesson for craft technicians on the selection and use of construction materials, the teacher carefully questioned students as to why different mixes of concrete are specified for particular structural elements. The teacher's enthusiasm and the good use of questions and overhead projection slides encouraged the students to concentrate and respond. Teachers give students good individual support and offer detailed and constructive guidance on how they can improve their work. There were unsatisfactory aspects to a few lessons. For example, one teacher delayed the start of a lesson to accommodate students arriving late which was unhelpful to the majority of students who had arrived on time. The lesson was further disrupted on two occasions by a student's mobile phone. Some students had to repeat work which they had already covered satisfactorily. In terms of policy and most practice, safety is given a high priority; however, teachers do not always insist that students wear appropriate safety clothing. Unsatisfactory aspects of teaching and learning were not identified in the self-assessment report.

18 Students are industrious and well behaved. Some who have come to the college with low prior achievement make significant progress. Students enjoy their studies and speak positively about their work. Much practical work is of a very high standard. Craft students regularly clean their work areas at the end of practical lessons. A good proportion of craft students progress to further studies. Most portfolios of students' written work are comprehensive and of high quality, strengths which were given insufficient recognition in the self-assessment report. Most retention and achievement rates over the last three years have improved and have been at or well above the national average for the sector. However, achievement rates for

Curriculum Areas

advanced level craft courses are below national averages.

19 The Charterhouse annex provides excellent facilities for painting and decorating, and signwork. Students can undertake complex work on its high ceilings and ornate structure. However, equipment stored in work areas hinders students. Some floor grilles are a hazard. The workshops at the Queen's Gardens centre are extensive and provide realistic training and assessment facilities for carpentry, joinery and brickwork, but some joinery workshops are overcrowded. Walls in the electrical installation workshops are in need of

maintenance. The self-assessment report did not identify weaknesses in specialist accommodation. The construction resource centre has a wide range of technical reference materials. Students have good access to information technology (IT) facilities which are of a high standard. Surveying equipment is excellent. Hand tools are well maintained. Teachers are well qualified. Technician support is good. In addition, learning advisers provide good support for teachers in practical classes, especially when class sizes are large. The college has found it difficult to recruit and retain teachers for plumbing.

A summary of achievements and retention rates in construction, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
Foundation vocational (construction crafts and general construction operations)	1	Number of starters	46	89	97
		Retention (%)	7	92	84
		Achievement (%)	23	83	77
Foundation vocational (technician studies)	1	Number of starters	54	94	118
		Retention (%)	98	84	84
		Achievement (%)	79	73	70
Intermediate vocational (construction crafts)	2	Number of starters	356	412	445
		Retention (%)	76	61	78
		Achievement (%)	58	68	64
Intermediate vocational (technician studies)	2	Number of starters	58	†	†
		Retention (%)	78	†	†
		Achievement (%)	2	†	†
Advanced vocational (construction crafts)	3	Number of starters	81	122	233
		Retention (%)	90	87	94
		Achievement (%)	58	54	66
Advanced vocational (technician studies)	3	Number of starters	51	59	37
		Retention (%)	76	83	86
		Achievement (%)	78	48	77

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

† course not running

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 3

20 Inspectors observed 21 lessons. The self-assessment report overstated some strengths and failed to identify some weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good teaching in practical lessons
- the extensive range of courses
- effective links with schools and industry
- well-equipped specialist accommodation

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on most courses
- some low achievement rates
- some unsatisfactory theory lessons
- some unsatisfactory monitoring and review of students' progress

21 The college offers a wide range of engineering courses. These include many designed to increase recruitment for entry level students from disadvantaged areas. There are good progression opportunities to higher level qualifications. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the curriculum area has excellent links with schools and employers. Through partnerships with schools, disaffected pupils can study engineering at the college. Training courses designed and run by the college meet the specific needs of individual employers. Some are run on employers' premises. An engineering advisory board is well supported by local industry. Student representatives attend course team meetings and contribute to the review and evaluation of courses. Staff work closely with training managers and assessors in companies delivering provision which is franchised by the college. Students' achievements are not closely scrutinised. The tracking of students' progress is

sometimes poor. Individual student action plans do not identify review dates or the member of staff responsible for monitoring progress.

22 Teaching of practical skills is good. Teachers use their students' work experiences to help to explain engineering topics. In good lessons, teachers ensure students understand the reasons for the application of particular techniques and give appropriate guidance. For example, in a welding lesson students worked on individual tasks using helpful information sheets. The teacher regularly demonstrated the correct technique and checked on individual progress. Few teachers design learning materials to meet the needs of individual students. However, in one computer-aided design class students were able to progress at a pace which suited each of them using a well-structured workbook. Some students when they had completed the entry level qualification progressed to higher level work. Teachers do not always question students effectively to make sure that they understand the topic being studied. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the teaching of theory lacks appropriate variety. There is an over-reliance on the use of the whiteboard and overhead projector and on students copying notes. Links between theory and practice are not always made clear. Most teachers use schemes of work and lesson plans, but they vary in their content and usefulness. Teachers do not always brief students on assessment requirements. They provide insufficient written feedback on students' work.

23 Inspectors agreed with the college that some rates of retention and achievement are poor. Retention rates on most courses are below national averages for the sector. Many have declined over the last three years. Achievement rates are low on some courses, for example City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) foundation level courses. Many students on NVQ courses do not achieve the qualification within the time period recommended for completion. Students

Curriculum Areas

do not always comply with health and safety requirements during practical lessons. Average attendance in the lessons observed was 7% below the national average for engineering lessons.

24 Since the previous inspection the engineering laboratories and workshops at the Queen's Gardens centre have been reorganised,

and new workshops built at Goole. Inspectors agreed that the well-equipped specialist workshops provide excellent facilities for most engineering courses. Students have easy access to computers. The range of books is good at all centres. The stock is regularly reviewed and outdated material is removed. Technical support is good. Few classrooms feature displays that relate to engineering.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
NVQ engineering	1	Number of starters	320	227	51
		Retention (%)	*	75	57
		Achievement (%)	*	60	*
C&G engineering	1	Number of starters	83	114	116
		Retention (%)	*	77	66
		Achievement (%)	*	68	42
NVQ engineering	2	Number of starters	600	616	590
		Retention (%)	*	88	79
		Achievement (%)	*	69	*
C&G engineering	2	Number of starters	430	585	319
		Retention (%)	85	84	81
		Achievement (%)	61	58	*
GNVQ intermediate engineering and precursors	2	Number of starters	45	33	54
		Retention (%)	76	64	85
		Achievement (%)	79	52	*
GNVQ advanced engineering and precursors	3	Number of starters	157	146	209
		Retention (%)	*	71	68
		Achievement (%)	*	88	73
NVQ engineering	3	Number of starters	33	54	34
		Retention (%)	94	*	88
		Achievement (%)	93	*	*

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

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Business Administration

Grade 3

25 Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that some strengths in teaching and learning had been overstated.

Key strengths

- effective strategies to widen participation
- effective systems for recording students' progress
- high rates of retention on most courses
- significant opportunities for additional studies
- well-structured activities in the business training office at the Queen's Gardens centre

Weaknesses

- an underdeveloped programme for accrediting local employees with administration qualifications
- missed opportunities for full-time students to apply business theory to practice
- some poor achievement rates
- insufficient work-based evidence in full-time students' NVQ portfolios

26 A broad range of courses is provided in business administration and IT from entry level to advanced study. Strategies to widen participation have been effective. For example, classes are run on Friday evenings and Saturdays to meet the demand for IT courses. A part-time programme aimed at women who are planning to return to work is well subscribed. An introductory course in office technology caters for students with few formal qualifications on entry. Part-time skills

workshops include Internet skills and legal, medical and foreign language text processing. Some courses have declining enrolments. For example, shorthand classes now combine beginners and advanced students. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that course records are comprehensive. Minutes of regular team meetings are written to a standard format. All full-time students at the Queen's Gardens centre spend a period of time on well-structured activities in the business training office. Students on NVQ programmes undertake work experience, although at the time of the inspection, about a quarter had not been placed. Good opportunities exist for additional study on full-time courses. Options include: integrated business technology; shorthand; call centre techniques; computerised accounts; and business law. A scheme to accredit local employees with administration qualifications is underdeveloped; it currently attracts only 19 students.

27 Teaching in the college's commercial workshops is good. Since the previous inspection more effective systems for recording students' progress have been introduced. They identify the skills that have been acquired and future learning goals. Students have opportunities to learn keyboard skills, which help to develop speed and accuracy in their work. Teachers and learning advisers closely support students in their assignment work. A wide range of structured tasks, which are undertaken by students in the business training office, are mainly linked to the administration of the college company 'Invest'. The self-assessment report did not recognise that administration theory lessons for full-time students are not always effective; there are missed opportunities to apply business theory to practice. For example, teachers do not use case studies to help explain the themes of planning, scheduling of appointments, and work roles. Assignment work is marked promptly, but files of students' work are not always thoroughly

Curriculum Areas

checked by teachers to ensure consistently high standards of note-taking.

28 Student retention rates are good on most courses, for example, wordprocessing and integrated business technology. By contrast, retention on the medical secretaries diploma is poor. Achievement rates are above national averages for the sector on a number of single subject awards, for example integrated business technology. They are often high for additional qualifications. For example, 94% of students completing the call centre techniques course in 2000 were successful. However, as the self-assessment report noted, achievement rates are below national averages for some qualifications, for example, the NVQ level 2 and certificate in administrative and secretarial procedures. Shortages of work placements have

meant full-time students have had insufficient work-based evidence to include in their NVQ portfolios. To partly address this shortcoming, the college is increasing opportunities for students to work in the business training office.

29 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Most possess assessor and verifier awards and all have commercial backgrounds. The self-assessment report identified strengths in specialist information and learning technology. The training office at the Queen's Gardens centre is well equipped. The commercial workshops possess modern IT equipment, all of which has been renewed during the last year. No training office is provided in Goole. There is a shortage of core texts to support students' studies at Goole.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
Wordprocessing stage 1	1	Number of starters	245	294	215
		Retention (%)	90	88	†
		Achievement (%)	50	64	†
Certificate in administrative and secretarial procedures	2	Number of starters	68	48	65
		Retention (%)	72	81	69
		Achievement (%)	15	41	40
NVQ administration	2	Number of starters	55	37	79
		Retention (%)	80	86	61
		Achievement (%)	*	*	40
Integrated business technology	2	Number of starters	339	518	321
		Retention (%)	91	88	90
		Achievement (%)	61	39	64
Medical secretaries diploma (Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists)	3	Number of starters	36	22	25
		Retention (%)	83	55	24
		Achievement (%)	68	36	100
NVQ administration	3	Number of starters	58	23	36
		Retention (%)	91	91	76
		Achievement (%)	67	*	53

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

* data unreliable

† data incomplete

Curriculum Areas

Childcare

Grade 2

30 Inspectors observed 10 lessons. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but noted that self-assessment of the childcare provision delivered at Goole was not included in the college's overall report.

Key strengths

- good, often outstanding, teaching
- effective tutorial support
- most achievement rates well above national averages
- well-integrated work experience
- strong links with local childcare services

Weaknesses

- insufficient application of IT by students
- inappropriate accommodation for some lessons
- the lack of reliable data for NVQ courses

31 The college offers a wide range of full-time courses from foundation to higher national level which provide good opportunities for student progression. The range of part-time courses is less extensive. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that there are very effective links with employers and care providers and with the local education and care services. The college is an active member of both the City of Hull and the Goole Early Years Development partnerships. As a consequence, there are good work experience opportunities for students arising from these links. The higher national certificate in early years education has recently been introduced to replace the part-time advanced diploma in childcare and education. Most courses are well managed. Student records and course portfolios are efficiently maintained. However, the date by

which students are expected to complete their studies is not accurately entered on the college's information system. This omission has resulted in a lack of reliable data on students' achievements for NVQ courses.

32 Teaching is of a high standard. In good lessons, teachers use their up-to-date knowledge of the subject effectively to integrate theory and practice. In one lesson, students prepared posters illustrating the physical, emotional and social development of children. These were then used as part of a group discussion. Learning activities are often directly linked to work placement tasks. Resources for use in childcare settings are made by students in college and used on placement. After completing their work placements, students discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of these resources. Teachers give students constructive and appropriately detailed written feedback on their assignments. They take care to prepare students for external assessments. Tutorial support is effective. Satisfactory records are kept. There is regular and effective review of the action taken to remedy weaknesses in a student's performance. Teachers know their students well. They monitor attendance rates and students' progress closely. These strengths were identified in the self-assessment report.

33 Students' work is of a good standard. They demonstrate sound oral and written communication skills and respond well to the wide range of classroom activities. Students at all levels use appropriate technical terms in their oral and written work. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that achievement rates are consistently good and in some cases outstanding. In 1999, 90% of students who enrolled on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) foundation award in caring for children progressed to the intermediate level CACHE certificate in childcare and education. There is good progression from all full-time courses into relevant work and to higher levels of study. Few

Curriculum Areas

students use IT either to support their learning or to present their work. For example, second-year advanced level students working on individual research projects were not using IT to access relevant secondary data. Few assignments were wordprocessed.

34 Most classrooms are well decorated. Some, however, are not suitable for practical lessons. For example, students are taught craft and

display skills in rooms without running water and baby care classes are held in rooms without washing facilities. The resources room for childcare has a good range of books, journals and leaflets. However, it contains few up-to-date computers, is too small for the current class sizes and is poorly located. Students rarely make use of it. The self-assessment report did not fully recognise weaknesses in specialist resources.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
CACHE foundation award caring for children	1	Number of starters	†	†	12
		Retention (%)	†	†	92
		Achievement (%)	†	†	90
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	Number of starters	79	69	36
		Retention (%)	75	78	75
		Achievement (%)	93	83	85
CACHE diploma in nursery nursing	3	Number of starters	82	43	55
		Retention (%)	73	81	74
		Achievement (%)	94	100	93
National diploma in childhood studies (nursery nursing)	3	Number of starters	47	39	44
		Retention (%)	81	90	77
		Achievement (%)	84	85	96
CACHE advanced diploma in childcare and education	4	Number of starters	22	22	13
		Retention (%)	86	64	62
		Achievement (%)	71	54	*

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

†course not running

*data incomplete

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 2

35 Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report but identified further weaknesses.

Key strengths

- the high standard of students' practical work
- good teaching
- imaginative and well-devised assignments and projects
- high achievement rates
- good progression to higher education
- thorough assessment and review of students' work

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some full-time courses
- low achievement rates on part-time courses

36 The college offers an extensive range of full-time and part-time courses in art and design, including a foundation diploma and higher national diplomas and certificates. Part-time courses are offered both at the college and in the community. During the summer, short courses are offered to prospective students to help them confirm their choice of study. There is a Saturday art club for students from 11 to 16 years old. Teachers attend regular and productive course team meetings. Their schemes of work effectively integrate a range of approaches to learning and their course records are very well kept. However, data on retention and achievement of full-time students who take GCE A levels as additional qualifications are not recorded clearly. Students from all courses

celebrate their achievements with a summer exhibition of work and a fashion show.

37 Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. In a GNVQ intermediate lesson, students made clay coil and slab structures applying their research on the culture of different countries. The teacher skilfully demonstrated how to make various forms and then checked the practical skills of individual students. Sketch books used by students for researching the project were of a high standard, and helped students to increase their awareness of form, space and surface decoration. Project briefs are well planned. They allow students to combine their knowledge of theory and their studio practice in a relevant and challenging manner. Assessment is thorough and there is regular critical review of students' work to evaluate progress. Students receive constructive feedback from both individual teachers and the course team. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that industrial and community links are used very effectively to ensure students learn and develop in ways that can be of benefit to themselves and a wider society. For example, students were designing a figurehead for a sail training ship with a local artist. In another lesson, students were finalising their prototypes for a birdhouse. Inventive and attractive ideas were developed from post-modern architecture and from sculptors such as Anthony Caro. Where students following different qualifications are taught together, teachers do not give sufficient direction to each member of the class to ensure that they all make good progress and know what is expected of them. The self-assessment report did not identify this weakness.

38 Students talk about their work with confidence. In life drawing lessons, the standard of drawing from observation is very high. Students who complete their courses achieve good results. A high proportion of students progress to higher education. Achievement rates on GNVQ intermediate art

Curriculum Areas

and design have exceeded national averages in the sector for the last three years and the retention rate has improved significantly. In 2000, achievement rates on GCE A level design were excellent and 64% of students received high grades. The self-assessment report did not identify that achievement rates are very low on many part-time courses. For example, on the C&G creative studies course, few students choose to take the qualification within the required timescale. There are poor retention rates on some full-time courses, for example the national diploma in design, and in 2000, the national diploma in photography.

39 As identified in the self-assessment report, the college has a wide range of specialist resources. Studios are enhanced with displays of work that is in progress. The standard of studios and workshops is good, although they are occasionally cluttered with obsolete equipment. Computers are up to date and are equipped with industry standard design software. Students have good access to them. The library has an adequate range of art and design books and periodicals. Teachers bring professional and specialist expertise to their teaching.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
C&G 7900 creative studies	1	Number of starters	78	42	+
		Retention (%)	78	71	+
		Achievement (%)	*	*	+
GNVQ intermediate in art and design	2	Number of starters	73	27	30
		Retention (%)	73	74	90
		Achievement (%)	87	100	85
GNVQ advanced in art and design	3	Number of starters	15	10	20
		Retention (%)	*	90	70
		Achievement (%)	*	100	79
National diploma in design (design, spatial design and photography)	3	Number of starters	101	87	84
		Retention (%)	*	64	61
		Achievement (%)	*	96	84
Diploma in foundation studies	3	Number of starters	78	49	57
		Retention (%)	91	80	91
		Achievement (%)	96	95	94
GCE A level design (non-industrial, one-year course)	3	Number of starters	69	14	55
		Retention (%)	93	86	87
		Achievement (%)	88	92	91

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

+less than 10 starters

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Law, Psychology and Sociology

Grade 2

40 Inspectors observed 11 lessons. They agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report, but identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- mostly good, often outstanding, teaching
- good achievement rates on GCSE courses
- good performance by students on most GCE A level courses
- good progression to higher education from the access course

Weaknesses

- a poor retention rate on some GCE A level courses
- insufficient copies of core texts for students on access courses

41 Full-time and part-time courses in law, psychology and sociology are offered at GCSE, GCE A level and GCE advanced subsidiary (AS). An access to higher education course with options in humanities subjects is offered. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college has responded positively to widening participation and access. Many subjects can be studied over one or two years and at different times of the week; most GCE A level courses are of one-year duration. Teachers recognise the need to improve students' attendance and retention rates, punctuality and the supervision of student progress. To improve the retention rate on two-year GCE A level courses a new tutorial programme has been introduced. It is too early to evaluate the success of this and other changes.

42 Of the 11 lessons observed, eight were good or outstanding, which is significantly above average for the programme area. The best teaching was lively, demanding and supportive. Although many lessons last for three hours, most teachers are skilful enough to ensure that students maintain their concentration. Teachers explain complex topics clearly, and make good use of teaching aids such as video recordings, overhead projector slides and handouts. Very occasionally students are expected to join in a discussion before they have had time to absorb what they have heard or read. Teachers present controversial topics in a balanced and sensitive manner, but do not always make sure that students understand the work. One teacher asked a class whether anyone did not understand a difficult topic and when no one replied, assumed that all was well and did not probe further. Students are regularly set homework. Deadlines are enforced. The quality of marking and written feedback is good, but students who have produced good work are not always encouraged to do even better. In a few lessons, a minority of students dominated discussions in a way that prevented other students making their own contributions. Occasionally teachers talked for too long and students had insufficient opportunity to develop their skills and show what they could contribute. The self-assessment report did not acknowledge these weaknesses in teaching.

43 Most GCSE courses have achievement rates above the national average and retention rates at the national average for the sector. Rates of retention and achievement of one-year GCE A level courses are generally close to national averages. Achievement rates on the one-year course in law are good. As the self-assessment report acknowledged, retention and achievement rates on some two-year GCE A level courses are poor. However, the college subscribes to a national agency that measures the GCE A level performance of students on two-year courses against their previous

Curriculum Areas

performance at GCSE. The results indicate that for the last three years students have entered the college with GCSE scores significantly below national averages, and in law and psychology they have performed better than predicted. Students of sociology have performed in line with expectations. Almost two-thirds of students who enrol on the one-year access to higher education course complete their studies and most progress to degree and diploma courses. In 2000, about half of all students who successfully completed their GCE A level courses went to higher education.

44 Teachers are well qualified. Specialist classrooms at the Park Street centre have

interesting wall displays and are well equipped, well decorated and furnished suitably. In a few lessons, the large size of classes makes it difficult for students to see the whiteboard or the overhead projector screen. Students at the Park Street centre have good access to computerised sources of information. Advice and assistance in the use of the equipment is readily available, together with guidance on study skills. The library has a good range of relevant and up-to-date books in all three subjects. However, there are insufficient copies of core texts to meet the needs of students on access courses, a weakness not recognised in the self-assessment report.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in law, psychology and sociology, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE psychology	2	Number of starters	118	119	130
		Retention (%)	58	52	61
		Achievement (%)	67	66	62
GCSE sociology	2	Number of starters	44	33	54
		Retention (%)	61	61	56
		Achievement (%)	70	75	73
GCE A level law (one-year course)	3	Number of starters	52	56	56
		Retention (%)	69	66	66
		Achievement (%)	63	62	81
GCE A level psychology (one-year course)	3	Number of starters	85	58	52
		Retention (%)	51	64	71
		Achievement (%)	65	62	58
GCE A level sociology (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	36	24	27
		Retention (%)	71	41	30
		Achievement (%)	65	44	86
Access to higher education (all options including humanities)	3	Number of starters	177	242	308
		Retention (%)	64	64	64
		Achievement (%)	83	78	84

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

Curriculum Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Grade 2

45 Inspectors observed 13 lessons across the full-time and part-time provision. They agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They also identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good provision
- well-managed support for students with visual and hearing impairment
- effective teaching in practical sessions
- good monitoring of students' progress

Weaknesses

- some students remaining too long on discrete provision
- failure of some teaching to meet the needs of individual students
- some unsatisfactory arrangements for accreditation

46 The college offers a wide range of courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A course for those aged over 18 develops students' vocational skills and potential for employment. Entry level courses with a vocational focus give students additional support before they attempt to study on mainstream courses. Provision and support for the visually and hearing impaired is well developed and well organised. Courses offered in the community are increasingly popular. The needs of people with mental health problems are being met in the community-based venues, although few as yet come to college. Course management is good. Teachers meet support staff weekly to

assess students' progress and to update targets for behavioural aspects and general progress. The self-assessment report did not acknowledge that to allow students to stay on discrete courses inevitably delays their inclusion into mainstream courses. Different courses have a similar vocational content which creates unnecessary duplication. Selection criteria for courses at entry level vary for no apparent reason. There are few clear statements on the aims of courses. Links with curriculum schools are insufficiently developed.

47 Some teaching is effective. Good lessons had clear aims and objectives that focused on the acquisition of appropriate skills and took into account the individual needs of students. In a catering lesson, students practised the skills that had been demonstrated and introduced the previous week, using them in a different context. Each student explained the process and demonstrated the skills. In many lessons, students took part in lively discussions. Skilful questioning helped students to reach their own conclusions. Although initial assessment is used to identify the ability level of individual students, teachers do not use the information when planning their lessons. For example, they often give the same task to all students. In a computer lesson, students had to create a table, work out a word square unrelated to the rest of their work and then fill in the table. Several students had already used similar tables and became bored. In an entry level lesson, the teacher recognised that the students had ability above entry level and so encouraged the students to develop higher level skills. However, the opportunity to accredit the students at the higher level was not taken. In lessons for part-time students, individual needs in literacy and numeracy were addressed at the beginning or end of each lesson but were unconnected with the rest of the lesson. In many lessons the teacher talked too much, thus reducing opportunities for students to respond and develop their learning. Opportunities were

Curriculum Areas

missed to encourage independent learning and problem-solving. The self-assessment report did not acknowledge weaknesses in teaching.

48 Students' attendance is good. The retention rate fluctuates but is low at entry level. Destination data indicate that most students remain in further education. For example, of the 27 students who completed their 'keystones' course in 2000, 14 continued into a second year, three moved to other college courses and three gained employment. Most students enjoy their courses, but inspectors found it difficult to report accurately on achievement because the college has introduced new courses and new qualifications. Individual student records show achievement of learning goals. However, the goals are too often stated as activities rather than measurable outcomes. Some students appear to underachieve, as their course does not enable them to acquire appropriate qualifications. The self-assessment report did not note weaknesses in students' achievements.

49 Most base rooms are suitable for the purpose and contain attractive displays of students' work. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are good resources for those with visual and hearing impairments. Vocational lessons take place in appropriate specialist rooms. The access centre used for part-time provision is well equipped with computers and craft materials. However, it is located in separate accommodation which reduces opportunities for the mixing of full-time and part-time students.

Curriculum Areas

Basic Skills

Grade 2

50 Inspectors observed 10 lessons. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They also identified additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a good range of provision
- effective management of basic skills provision
- good teaching
- high achievement rates
- well-qualified teachers of basic skills
- effective training in awareness of basic skills work among vocational teachers

Weaknesses

- insufficiently detailed recording of learning
- ineffective individual learning plans

51 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the college's basic skills provision is responsive to local needs. The college offers a good range of provision for literacy and numeracy at its own centres, at community-based venues and, increasingly, on employers' premises. There is effective liaison with other local providers. The college has widened participation through its work with disaffected young people. A range of accreditation is offered and students are directed to work at an appropriate level. At entry level, courses have been developed where the focus is on basic as well as vocational skills. Students on vocational courses above entry level have no difficulty in obtaining learning support for basic skills. Basic skills provision is well managed. Teachers of basic skills have good communications with other teachers and with key cross-college co-ordinators. Team meetings,

which specifically cover Wordpower and Numberpower, help teachers to share good practice. The review and evaluation of courses is thorough. Staff in the basic skills teaching team audit the provision against the basic skills policy. Internal verification is effective.

52 Overall teaching is good. Of the lessons observed, seven were judged to be good or outstanding. Teachers use IT effectively. They maintain students' motivation by producing very effective learning materials which relate directly to their students' interests and to the vocational courses that they are taking. In one motor vehicle lesson, many of the students did not want to acknowledge that they had very low literacy and numeracy skills. By adapting an assignment on food supermarkets to car supermarkets the teacher was able to win over the students and motivate them. The more effective teachers design learning materials skilfully to meet the needs of individual students. For example, in a theory lesson on catering, the basic skills support teacher worked alongside the class teacher and produced simplified revision sheets and exercises linked to catering. By completing the exercises the students gained evidence for a basic skills qualification; the level awarded depended upon the particular exercise undertaken. The recording of learning for many students in basic skills lessons is not sufficiently detailed. Initial screening of students gives some indication of their levels of literacy and numeracy but subsequent more specific diagnostic assessment is not always complemented by effective individual learning plans. Some learning plans merely list the skills required for accreditation. The attention that is given to accreditation sometimes means that the basic skills needs of individuals are not adequately met. In a few lessons all the students were given the same learning task, despite the wide range of abilities in the class. The self-assessment report did not identify these weaknesses.

Curriculum Areas

53 Achievement rates are consistently above national averages on many courses. On one course for disaffected young people, 85% of students gained a basic skills qualification. For many of them, it was the first qualification they had achieved. Some students gain qualifications in IT while developing their basic skills. Significant numbers of students progress from community-based provision onto college-based courses.

54 All teachers of basic skills have or are working towards specialist qualifications in basic skills, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Teachers of vocational subjects are encouraged to develop their awareness of basic skills and acquire

appropriate qualifications through short accredited courses and one-day sessions. A successful mathematics 'help day' encouraged vocational teachers to look at their attitudes to mathematics, and to have some fun with numeracy whilst developing new ways of teaching numeracy skills to their students. There have been requests to repeat the 'help day' course. Other sessions have looked at 'readability'. Increased awareness of the concept of appropriate reading levels has led to requests by other teachers for teachers of basic skills to review the suitability of their teaching materials. Not all students have direct access to computers, a weakness recognised in the self-assessment report.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
C&G 3793 communication (Wordpower – foundation)	1	Number of starters	28	*	189
		Retention (%)	64	*	83
		Achievement (%)	88	*	96
C&G 3793 communication (Wordpower – stage 1)	1	Number of starters	192	199	158
		Retention (%)	72	79	73
		Achievement (%)	63	60	98
C&G 3794 numeracy (Numberpower – foundation)	1	Number of starters	24	*	183
		Retention (%)	58	*	83
		Achievement (%)	86	*	80
C&G 3794 numeracy (Numberpower – stage 1)	1	Number of starters	141	159	143
		Retention (%)	76	75	74
		Achievement (%)	77	72	98
OCR numeracy	1	Number of starters	22	19	*
		Retention (%)	86	53	*
		Achievement (%)	47	0	53
AEB achievement tests in literacy	Mixed	Number of starters	†	†	133
		Retention (%)	†	†	98
		Achievement (%)	†	†	99

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

†course was not offered

*data unreliable

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

55 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but identified an additional strength and additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- effective pre-course guidance, admissions and induction
- a good range of personal and welfare services
- good individual support for students from tutors
- excellent liaison with schools and the community
- well-managed customer services
- good additional support for students with sensory impairments

Weaknesses

- shortcomings in group tutorials
- some unsatisfactory aspects of learning support
- some ineffective action-planning

56 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is excellent liaison with secondary schools and the community. In 1999, the college provided 'taster' sessions for over 1,500 pupils from 13 secondary schools and each week ran work-related activities for 560 pupils. The college also offers provision for 55 pupils under 16 years of age who have been excluded from school. The college's team of community representatives visits a wide range of venues to encourage people who have not previously taken up further education opportunities to consider enrolling on appropriate courses. The college is actively

committed to inclusive learning and has planned a programme of staff development for all staff, including college managers and co-ordinators.

57 As the self-assessment report noted, the college has good arrangements for pre-entry guidance and admissions. Prospective students are well informed about the college and its services. Course publications are well designed and informative. The college prospectus is available in Braille, in large print and on audiotape. Students are invited to a range of college events and receive a pre-entry magazine. Open days attract over 2,500 visitors to the college. The admissions process is effective. Admissions interviews take place at both school and college with subject specialist staff and the college's interviewing team. The customer services functions are well managed for: student information and support; marketing and publicity; student administration; and initial advice and guidance. Customer services staff work with enthusiasm across all sites. They regularly monitor, audit and report on all aspects of their work. Support and guidance is provided in well-resourced areas at each of the college's centres.

58 Students receive a good induction to the college. Most find the experience useful and informative. The student diary and handbook and course booklets distributed at induction provide helpful information on the college and its courses and inform students of their rights and responsibilities. As part of their induction, full-time students are entitled to an assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs. In 1999-2000 over 2,700 students were assessed and subsequently, 50% of them were provided with support for numeracy and literacy. Some students who are identified as needing support refuse the offer. The college has found it difficult to evaluate the impact of learning support effectively. The weaknesses in the provision of literacy and numeracy support were not identified in the self-assessment report.

Cross-college Provision

59 Students receive good support from their tutors. Tutorials include both group and individual sessions. Senior tutors act as mentors for new tutors, providing them with advice and guidance. Full-time students have regular progress reviews with their tutors. Tutors use action-planning techniques effectively to improve students' performance. There are examples of helpful recording of students' progress and planning ahead but some action plans lack clarity and target dates. Inspectors did not agree with the self-assessment report that group tutorials were well developed. The standard is very uneven. Schemes of work are not always drawn up. When they are, the detail is often insufficient. Some tutorials for part-time students are not documented. The 'tutorial voice', a publication distributed at tutorials, keeps students informed on general college issues.

60 A comprehensive range of services is available to students. Customer services staff provide advice on: finance and benefits; counselling services; careers guidance; and the availability of transport subsidies and childcare facilities. There is good liaison between the staff in customer services and teachers. The college has its own childcare facilities in Hull and Goole and offers places for 97 children. In 1999, the children of 177 students were accommodated. The college also helped 1,300 students through its access and hardship fund. A family planning clinic at the Queen's Gardens centre is run in partnership with the local health trust. The counselling team which consists of a full-time counsellor, chaplain and behavioural counsellor supports staff and students. Links between the college and the Humberside partnership for careers are good. The service provides careers guidance interviews and 'drop-in' facilities for advice. Five careers staff visit and provide guidance at all the college's centres. The services are well publicised and well used by students. In 1999-2000, welfare officers helped over 400 students who had problems in attending college regularly. Many students

subsequently returned to complete their courses. Inspectors agreed with the college that the additional support for students with sensory impairments is effective. At the time of the inspection, the college was providing support for 40 students with visual impairments and 12 students with hearing impairments.

61 Students are offered a wide variety of enrichment activities as part of their course. Full-time students are entitled to work experience and on nearly 90% of courses students take up placements which lead to accreditation. A well-organised students' association is based in an attractive common room. Two members of the customer services team help with the running of the association.

General Resources

Grade 2

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

Key strengths

- clean, well-maintained buildings
- attractive, well-equipped teaching areas
- well-managed cafes and refectories
- good access for people with restricted mobility
- effective major investment in facilities at Goole
- good IT equipment

Weaknesses

- inadequate technical support for IT resources
- insufficient bookstocks for some curriculum areas
- poor entrances and reception areas at most centres

Cross-college Provision

63 Many improvements have been made to the college's accommodation since the previous inspection. The centre at Goole, in particular, has undergone extensive refurbishment which includes the provision of: specialist teaching, catering and support areas and childcare facilities; improved access for people with disabilities; and improvements to the central heating and telephone systems. Work has also begun to remodel the college's library. The accommodation strategy aims to reduce the high maintenance costs by relocating much of the Hull-based provision at the Queen's Gardens centre over the next 10 years. Student surveys indicate high levels of satisfaction with buildings and premises. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that all centres are clean, attractive and well maintained. The planned maintenance programme is well managed and the maintenance team responds speedily and effectively to requests. Security arrangements are good. Reception areas and entrances are unwelcoming and unattractive at most centres. External lighting to the rear of the Queen's Gardens centre is poor. Though the college has upgraded parts of its heating systems, temperatures at the Queen's Gardens centre fluctuate.

64 The college has improved access to most of its buildings for students with restricted mobility since the last inspection. New lifts, ramps and toilets for people with disabilities have made all curriculum areas accessible to people with mobility difficulties. The college's accommodation strategy includes plans to resolve the remaining access problems.

65 Classrooms are comfortably furnished and equipped with modern teaching aids. A student survey in 2000 found that 73% of students considered classrooms and workshops to be good or very good. Teachers have good access to audiovisual equipment. A well-used media resources centre provides staff with a wide range of multimedia equipment and support. Most curriculum areas have designated learning

areas, some of which are well resourced, attractive and popular with students. Library provision is well co-ordinated across all sites. The stock is regularly checked for suitability and relevance. However, there are insufficient bookstocks for some curriculum areas. The library at the Riley centre is overcrowded. The self-assessment report did not identify weaknesses in the library provision.

66 The college leases its IT equipment. Computers are replaced every three years. The current ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students is 1:8. All the college's computers are networked and provide intranet and Internet access. Portable computers are available for lessons at community-based venues. Computers are available in the libraries, in the learning centres and by informal arrangement within timetabled IT workshop lessons. Students do not always understand how to access computers held in specialist areas. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that support for users of IT is poor. The college has had difficulties in recruiting staff to the IT services team. Many users experience problems and delays when trying to connect to the network.

67 Cafes and refectories are well managed and popular with staff and students. They offer a wide choice of food. Surveys of users indicate satisfaction with the quality, range and value of the food provided. The college has received the 'Heartbeat' award for its healthy menus. The Park Street centre has a 'cyber café' with six Internet-linked computers. Though the self-assessment report indicated that social and recreational facilities for students are poor, inspectors did not agree with the college that this was a major weakness. Each centre has a student common room. The rooms are popular and well maintained. There are no sports facilities for students other than at the Riley centre where a well-equipped fitness suite is open to students and staff.

Cross-college Provision

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

68 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a comprehensive framework for self-assessment and quality assurance
- a well-developed internal inspection process
- a sound response to the views of students, parents and employers
- well-planned and extensive staff development

Weaknesses

- quality assurance activities yet to improve students' performance
- some unsatisfactory course reviews
- insufficient use of performance indicators in some service areas

69 The college has a comprehensive framework for the quality assurance of all aspects of its operations. Procedures are effectively linked to strategic and operational planning cycles. A calendar for quality assurance activities details reporting arrangements and responsibilities, and the quality assurance committee, chaired by the principal, ensures a systematic approach.

70 The main procedure for assuring the quality of the curriculum is the cycle of self-assessment. Course teams conduct four reviews each year. The first review focuses on enrolment and induction, the second on target-setting and on monitoring targets, the third is the annual course review and the fourth reviews rates of student retention and

achievement. Each review is accompanied by a grade, a report on progress against the action plan and a fresh plan. Staff find the system helpful in identifying areas for improvement. However, as the college acknowledged in its self-assessment report, some reviews are insufficiently thorough. Insufficient use is made of appropriate benchmarking data. Some action plans lack timescales and fail to designate responsibilities, and others do not state clearly enough how improvements are to be achieved. The format for some of the recording does not encourage a concise and evaluative response. The college is currently considering ways of simplifying both process and the format for responses.

71 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the college has a thorough cycle of review. Each term, heads of school summarise the course team reviews into a school self-assessment and action plan. This summary contributes to the establishment of the school development plan, the college's self-assessment report and the strategic plan. All of the school self-assessment reports are discussed at the relevant board of study, which validates each grade. Boards of study assess each school using eight performance indicators. Underperforming courses are identified and an action plan drawn up to effect improvements. The assistant principals, who chair the boards of study, conduct periodic audits of schools in their area.

72 Each school is subject to an annual internal inspection by a team of trained observers drawn from main grade lecturers. During the internal inspection they observe lessons, interview students, scrutinise records and assess the resources. In 1999-2000, 436 lessons were observed. The resulting reports are appropriately detailed and informative. They include grades on the different aspects of provision, and an analysis of students' achievements. The school reports contribute to the college's self-assessment report. They are

Cross-college Provision

widely circulated and include examples of good practice. The strength of these arrangements was noted in the self-assessment report.

73 The sound developments in self-assessment and internal inspection activities have not been in place for long enough to register measurable gains in performance. Over the last three years, there has not been systematic improvement in students' achievements, and the retention rate has shown a steady decline. The profile of grades awarded by inspectors for curriculum areas is lower than for the previous inspection.

74 All service areas evaluate their work, many obtaining feedback through user groups and surveys of staff and students. Each area publishes an annual self-assessment report and an annual report to the relevant college committee. These reports are insufficiently linked. Some service areas make insufficient use of performance indicators which would enable them to set targets and measure trends. Some of the self-assessment reports for the service areas lack sufficient evidence, and many action plans lack timescales and fail to specify responsibilities.

75 The college makes effective use of the views of parents, students and employers. The results of the analysis of student questionnaires contribute to each of the termly course reviews. Student representatives on course teams state that staff respond positively to their views. Complaint and praise cards are widely used, and appropriate managers are thorough in their follow-up of the comments made. The college charter is supplemented by a published series of student entitlements, which are regularly monitored.

76 The college's quality assurance arrangements also cover franchised provision. College staff pay frequent visits to providers to check compliance with college policies, conduct reviews and undertake internal inspection. A separate charter, for franchised provision, informs students of the procedure for making

complaints and giving praise, and of the support services available to them at the college.

77 All full-time staff have an annual review, normally with their line manager. The reviews identify staff development needs effectively. Many part-time staff also take advantage of their entitlement to a review. Some, for example, cleaning staff, conduct their reviews in groups. As the self-assessment report indicated, staff development is well planned and well managed, and the opportunities are extensive. An annual plan lists 15 priority areas for development that relate to the needs of individuals, teams and the college. It draws on appropriately detailed identification of needs and links to the college's strategic priorities. The volume of staff development activity is considerable, and staff speak highly of the opportunities available. Activities are evaluated and a detailed annual report published. The college's status as an Investor in People was reconfirmed in February 2000.

Governance

Grade 3

78 Inspectors and auditors agreed with most of the college's judgements on governance but identified some issues of non-compliance.

Key strengths

- effective role in setting the college's strategic direction
- close monitoring of college performance
- the positive contribution of governors to the operation of the college

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped self-assessment procedures
- inappropriate clerking arrangements
- failure to meet some statutory duties

Cross-college Provision

79 The corporation has 20 members; there are two vacancies. As identified in the self-assessment report, governors have a wide range of experience and skills, for example, in the areas of industry, commerce, finance, technology, personnel, health, arts, law and education. They use their own expertise and experience to help the college, for example in the development of external partnerships and in the college's provision of higher education opportunities. They receive an appropriate induction and, drawing on an audit of governor skills, have established a training programme composed of essential and elective elements. The programme includes their attendance at external events and presentations by college managers at corporation and committee meetings.

80 Governors make an important contribution to college committees. They are represented on the college's quality assurance committee, and on each of the college's advisory committees. In addition, many attend staff development days and college functions. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that governors were strongly involved in setting the college's mission and strategic direction. The recently revised mission was debated energetically at corporation meetings and options were voted on by the college staff before a final decision was taken by the corporation. The strategy committee has considered long-term issues such as curriculum 2000 and franchised provision. Governors receive regular reports on the implementation of their strategic priorities.

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

82 The corporation has a set of standing orders and policies on 'whistleblowing',

complaints, and fraud and irregularity.

A governors' code of conduct has been updated to comply with best practice. A register of interests is updated annually. Minutes of the corporation are advertised as being publicly available in college, and are included on the college intranet and on the college website. As noted in the self-assessment report, the finance and capital planning committee reviews the college's financial position monthly. The quality and audit committee meets twice each term. Separate agendas cover issues involving quality assurance and audit. This committee has not formally established its own performance indicators to use when reviewing the work of the internal and external auditors. The search committee includes external co-opted members. The board has minimised the need for confidentiality in corporation and committee business. Attendance of governors is monitored and reported to the corporation which set an attendance target of 70% and, over the last year, exceeded this target by 10%. Governors confirm that they receive agenda and minutes in good time for their meetings.

83 The current clerk, an external part-time appointment, commenced duties in July 2000 and has attended all corporation and committee meetings held since then. Prior to this appointment, some committees, including the finance and capital planning committee, were minuted by college staff in the absence of the clerk. This arrangement did not provide the appropriate level of independence. The corporation did not ensure that it received appropriate advice in relation to this lack of independence, nor in relation to the requirement, under the financial memorandum, to approve the annual budget before the start of the financial year. The corporation has delegated the approval of the annual budget to the finance and capital planning committee. This action as minuted is in contravention of the articles of government. The governing body has not given final approval to the revenue or capital

Cross-college Provision

budgets. The corporation does not receive its own financial reports on the implementation of the college's capital expenditure programme. These areas of non-compliance were not specifically identified in the self-assessment report.

84 Governors monitor the college's academic performance closely. They receive a wide range of reports on the college's non-financial performance, for example on health and safety, equal opportunities, the college's academic performance, franchised provision, and on internal inspection. They have requested and received further information on accident statistics, on sickness rates among staff, and required changes to the format of financial reports to make them clearer to those governors who do not have a financial background.

85 The self-assessment report on governance was written following the receipt of a consultant's report commissioned by them and the completion by governors of a questionnaire based on a set of quality assurance statements adopted by them as part of their quadrennial assessment process. Governors debated a draft self-assessment report. They then strengthened the report by adding measures of performance in order to improve the rigour of their self-assessment activity. The report was the first prepared by governors during the current four-year inspection cycle. Governors have agreed to make self-assessment an annual process in future.

Management

Grade 2

86 Inspectors and auditors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. By the time of the inspection, the college had addressed one of the weaknesses. Inspectors identified an additional weakness.

Key strengths

- open and supportive management style
- clear and systematic strategic planning processes
- effective communication
- good financial and resource management
- effective partnership arrangements for widening participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient reliable data on student rates of retention and achievement
- some unsatisfactory aspects in the management of the curriculum

87 Greater responsibility has been devolved to curriculum schools since the previous inspection and boards of study have been created. Staff confirm that the management style is open and supportive of their work and that they feel valued as members of the college. As the self-assessment report noted, communications within the college are good. Staff at all levels are aware of the college's priorities and the issues that it faces. Well-organised meetings of staff promote effective teamworking and communication. Management teams at all levels in the college meet regularly. Team briefings are used effectively to share information.

88 Arrangements to co-ordinate and develop curriculum practice are well developed. The college council and academic board takes an overview of academic development and, through its subcommittees, monitors the standard of provision, and discusses and disseminates curriculum and resourcing matters. Advisory committees, with external membership, keep the boards of study well briefed on current business needs and developments. Detailed guides, such as the college's curriculum handbook, provide useful information for staff. The self-assessment

Cross-college Provision

report, however, did not identify weaknesses in curriculum management. In some programme areas there are insufficient curriculum links between staff running similar courses in Goole and Hull. The college has a strategic priority to improve rates of student retention and achievement. Each school develops its own plans, overseen by the boards of study, to achieve this strategic priority. Courses that have consistently low achievement rates are identified and proposals submitted for money from the standards fund to assist in the drive for improvement. Other actions taken by the college include: obtaining help from welfare officers to support individual students; research into the reasons for poor rates of student retention; and membership of an area-wide partnership which is seeking to address students' poor achievements throughout the LEA. Student rates of retention and achievement have, however, continued to decline over the last four years.

89 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. Operating surpluses were produced in 1997-98, 1998-99 and in 1999-2000 when the unaudited financial statements reported an operating surplus of £1,669,000. The college is financially sound, having income and expenditure reserves of £3,638,000 and investments and cash balances of £5,381,000 at 31 July 2000. Management accounts, in an appropriate format, are prepared monthly for review by the college's senior management team and the governors' finance and capital planning committee. Reports on franchised activity are presented to the corporation termly. A range of strategic financial targets have been determined and performance against these targets is reported clearly to the corporation. Financial regulations are updated annually and the college has a fraud and irregularity policy and response plan. The college's internal auditors reported that in 1999-2000 the internal control system was

sound. The college submits its financial statements in accordance with FEFC deadlines. A finance service co-ordinator holds helpful monthly meetings with each budget holder. Resource performance indicators are used to monitor the efficiency of each school's operation. The self-assessment report recognised these strengths.

90 The college's strategic priorities are developed systematically, clearly presented and reviewed annually. The planning and quality assurance cycles are inter-linked and a calendar of activities published. School development objectives which are derived from the college's strategic priorities are regularly reviewed. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that, at the level of school and board of studies, the standard of review and minuting is uneven. College policies are systematically reviewed and their implementation monitored appropriately.

91 The college is highly responsive to the educational needs of its local communities. The college enrolls a high proportion of its students at levels 1 or 2. A number of innovative programmes, such as 'Voyager,' provide for the educational needs of disadvantaged people. The college has played an important role in helping schools in Hull to develop a vocational curriculum for years 10 and 11 and is a partner in the education action zone. The college has a large TEC contract and runs innovative employer-based programmes for a number of companies. The college is a partner in some major regional initiatives and leads on several others. For example, it is the hub partner in learndirect and leads a consortium of colleges and universities developing higher education through further education colleges. Partners speak well of the college's responsiveness and of the principal's high profile in the city.

92 The self-assessment report recognised weaknesses in the college's management information systems. The college's four centres

Cross-college Provision

are networked and a wide range of reports is produced. The central database is reaching the end of its useful life and is due to be replaced. Not all staff have easy access to the network, some have not received sufficient training, and breakdowns in equipment have affected the use some staff are able to make of the information. The lack of reliable data on students' achievements has restricted the college's ability to identify and address poor rates of student retention and achievement. Prior to the inspection the college resubmitted its student record returns for 1997-98 and 1998-99 to the FEFC in order to generate more accurate data on students' achievements.

Conclusions

93 The college's self-assessment report was comprehensive and evaluative. Its format followed the guidelines of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. Inspectors found that the report formed a useful basis for planning and undertaking the inspection. They agreed with many of the strengths identified and found a few additional ones. They also agreed with many of the weaknesses, though some, particularly those relating to rates of retention and students' achievements, were overlooked or given insufficient emphasis. Inspectors agreed with four of the nine curriculum grades in the report, but awarded lower grades for the other five. They agreed with two of the grades for cross-college provision but awarded lower grades for the other three.

94 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 2000)

Age	%
Under 16	4
16-18 years	17
19-24 years	15
25+ years	64
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 2000)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation) and entry level	31
Level 2 (intermediate)	27
Level 3 (advanced)	20
Level 4/5 (higher)	4
Level not specified	17
Non-schedule 2	1
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision (%)
Science	321	3,192	13
Agriculture	11	29	0
Construction	275	963	5
Engineering	366	2,615	11
Business	300	3,229	14
Hotel and catering	300	1,456	7
Health and community care	784	5,552	24
Art and design	589	750	5
Humanities	921	3,343	16
Basic education	253	917	5
Total	4,120	22,046	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1998-99 ISR data, the college recruited 34% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 2000)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	252	131	3	386
Supporting direct learning contact	85	34	0	119
Other support	196	54	0	250
Total	533	219	3	755

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1998	1999	2000
Income	£21,612,000	£20,471,000	£22,839,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£16.86	£16.64	£17.13
Payroll as a proportion of income	66%	67%	64%
Achievement of funding target	100%	103%	100%
Diversity of income	25%	24%	26%
Operating surplus	£15,000	£576,000	£1,669,000

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
1	Number of starters	1,179	1,686	2,246	1,566	2,044	2,209
	Retention (%)	84	78	80	80	80	72
	Achievement (%)	55	47	47	65	59	48
2	Number of starters	1,834	2,725	2,762	2,890	3,384	3,344
	Retention (%)	79	77	72	85	78	73
	Achievement (%)	77	68	61	70	68	71
3	Number of starters	1,083	1,928	1,845	1,794	2,621	2,551
	Retention (%)	87	76	71	81	78	71
	Achievement (%)	71	70	59	67	68	66
4 or 5	Number of starters	8	6	5	318	332	374
	Retention (%)	88	100*	60	91	92*	76
	Achievement (%)	43	100	100	54	53	52
Short courses	Number of starters	2,007	1,897	2,061	16,849	16,883	15,595
	Retention (%)	97	95	93	96	97	94
	Achievement (%)	70	80	65	81	85	77
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: ISR

*ISR data may not be reliable

n/a not applicable

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

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

Telephone 024 7686 3265

Fax 024 7686 3025

E-mail fehcpubs@fefc.ac.uk

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