Mackworth College Derby

Contents

Grade Descriptors

Inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use a five-point scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding provision which has many strengths and few weaknesses*
- *grade 2 – good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory provision with strengths but also some weaknesses*
- *grade 4 – less than satisfactory provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- *grade 5 – poor provision which has few strengths and many weaknesses.*

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1997-98, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Curriculum areas	9	60	29	2	–
Cross-college provision	18	54	24	4	–

Source: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report
Sample size: 108 college inspections

Student Achievements

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

- *as expected completions, which is the number of initial enrolments on qualifications where the student expected to complete the qualification in a given year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1995, would appear in the results for 1996-97 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification*
- *as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which the students have completed as expected (or are continuing with the prospect of late completion). For programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, that is, from the start to the end of the qualification*
- *as an achievement rate, which is the number of qualifications students have fully achieved as a percentage of completed qualifications with a known outcome. Partial achievements are not shown.*

Summary

Mackworth College Derby

East Midlands Region

Inspected April 1999

Mackworth College Derby is a general further education college in Derby. The college produced its first self-assessment report for this inspection. All staff were involved in the self-assessment process which built upon well-established procedures for the review and evaluation of curriculum provision, and for annual development planning in support functions. Some strengths in the self-assessment report were overstated and the significance of a number of weaknesses was underestimated, especially those relating to teaching and learning and students' achievements. Since the report was written, the college has made progress in addressing a number of the weaknesses it identified. Inspectors agreed with three out of the six specialist grades and two out of the five cross-college grades.

The college offers courses in all 10 of the FEFC's programmes areas, although the provision in both agriculture and construction is small. The inspection covered six of the programme areas. Teaching is well organised and planned. Entry and personal support for students is responsive and effective. The support for students with a hearing impairment is a particular strength. The Mackworth campus is spacious and provides a generally attractive environment for learning. The extensive quality assurance arrangements cover all college activities. Staff appraisal procedures are effective and staff development activities are clearly linked to college priorities. The corporation works in an open and transparent way and it has developed sound strategies to clear an inherited deficit. The management structure is effective and the financial management of the college is good. The college should: evaluate more closely the quality of teaching and learning; reduce the variations in students' retention and achievements; improve the initial screening of students' literacy and numeracy skills; reduce the inconsistencies in the implementation of the quality assurance procedures; develop arrangements for the corporation to monitor students' retention and achievements; and improve the management information systems.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Computing and information technology	3	Support for students	2
Engineering	2	General resources	2
Business	3	Quality assurance	3
Health and social care	2	Governance	2
Art and design	2	Management	2
Social sciences	2		

Context

The College and its Mission

1   Mackworth College Derby is a general further education college located on three sites within the city of Derby. The college was one of two tertiary colleges created in 1989 from the former Derby College of Further Education and a number of school sixth forms in the city. The reorganisation left only one school sixth form in Derby, but since then five of the 11 to 16 city schools have opened sixth forms and two more will open a joint sixth form in September 1999. In 1992, a city technology college was founded, and it too has a sixth form. The college's main campus is the Mackworth site on the northern edge of the city. There are two inner-city sites. The larger, at Normanton Road, houses mainly art and design and access provision. The other site, at Sidney Street, was developed to provide accommodation for training in manufacturing. It is currently leased to a local voluntary sector organisation, and was not included in the inspection.

2   The college serves Derby city and the surrounding areas of southern Derbyshire, a population of approximately 550,000. About 10% of the city population come from minority ethnic groups. Local unemployment rates are gradually falling, in line with the overall national picture. Currently, unemployment in the city is 6% and in the wider southern Derbyshire region 4.8%, compared with 4.1% for the East Midlands. Employment opportunities in the city are increasing in transport and engineering, call centres, retail, and computer software design. They are declining in general manufacturing. Major employment sectors are aero-engineering, car manufacturing, railway engineering, health, and administrative services.

3   The college provides courses in all 10 of the programme areas funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Provision in two of the programme areas, agriculture and construction, is made as part of the college's collaborative arrangements with the voluntary sector. The highest number of enrolments are in science, business, hotel and catering, health and community care, and humanities. By April 1999, the college had enrolled over 10,000 students, of whom 1,670 were full time. Approximately 81% of those enrolled were aged 19 or older, 12.5% were from minority ethnic groups, and 64% were female.

4   When the college was established in 1989, its mission was to combine the best traditions of schools and further education colleges and to increase the range and choice of courses available to the people of Derby and southern Derbyshire. The college has continued to work towards this mission. It has invested in the creation of a training and enterprise park. The college's international links have been strengthened. It has planned a major building programme to centralise its on-site provision at Mackworth. The current mission states: 'Mackworth College Derby is a leading provider of a broad range of high-quality education and training services. We will continue to provide an efficient and effective service for existing clients and to seek new markets locally, nationally and internationally'. The corporate objectives which support the mission aim to:

• increase activity and widen participation

• enhance the college's sphere of influence locally, nationally and internationally

• monitor and evaluate all college activities

• ensure that personnel policies, practices and procedures support efficient and effective staff planning and development

• achieve the above objectives efficiently and effectively within the financial forecast.

The Inspection

5   The college was inspected during the week beginning 19 April 1999. Before the inspection, inspectors reviewed the self-assessment report and considered information from other directorates of the FEFC. The college provided data on students' achievements for 1998 in the curriculum areas inspected. These data had

been audited externally and submitted to the FEFC as the college's individualised student record (ISR) data for 1998. The college's data for 1998 and the ISR data for 1996 and 1997 were used to compile the tables for the curriculum area reports. The inspection was carried out by 13 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 46 days. They observed lessons, evaluated students' work and examined college documents. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff and students.

6   This college was one of 30 in the current cycle of inspections which agreed to participate in the joint Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and FEFC assessment of careers education and guidance. The joint assessment was guided by the inspection framework, with careers education assessors contributing to judgements made by inspectors. The emphasis in this report on careers education and guidance will help colleges and careers services to improve the quality of the careers education and guidance they offer and help the DfEE to disseminate good practice.

7   The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the 79 lessons observed, 63% were judged to be good or outstanding and 5% less than satisfactory. These figures are similar to the sector averages of 65% and 6%, respectively, for all lessons observed during 1997-98.

Context

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level and GCSE	4	7	3	2	0	16
GNVQ	0	8	10	1	0	19
NVQ	1	5	0	0	0	6
Other vocational	3	17	9	1	0	30
Other	2	3	3	0	0	8
Total (No.)	10	40	25	4	0	79
Total (%)	12	51	32	5	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 (%)	19	46	29	6	0	100

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report

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

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Mackworth College Derby	10.8	73
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98	10.4	77

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report

Computing and Information Technology

Grade 3

9   Inspectors observed 14 lessons covering computing and information technology (IT) courses at levels 1 to 3. Inspectors did not agree with all the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They found that the quality of teaching and students' achievements on some courses had been overstated.

Key strengths

- good range of courses and qualifications
- generally well-organised teaching
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- carefully-managed development of practical skills
- good level of computing resources and learning materials

Weaknesses

- ineffective planning of some lessons
- poor management of assessment on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses
- insufficient support for the development of students' portfolios
- low retention rates on full-time courses
- lack of development plans to improve courses

10   The self-assessment report recognised the development of a wide range of courses and qualifications in this area. These include courses leading to the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), GNVQs at intermediate and advanced levels, and a national diploma in computing. A good range of part-time IT courses complement the full-time provision. Courses are also offered through collaborative arrangements at centres away from the college's main sites and this allows students who otherwise might not participate in further education to gain an IT qualification. Course reviews have not identified significant weaknesses or helped to improve teaching and learning. These weaknesses in curriculum management were not recognised in the self-assessment report.

11   Teaching is generally well organised. There are appropriate schemes of work. Teachers provide clear explanations and effective support for individual students. A lesson for intermediate level students introduced the ideas of forecasting and modelling using the example of car insurance to illustrate clearly how a range of factors affects the level of risk. Effective use of questions maintained students' attention. The teacher ensured the lesson was appropriately paced and included all students in the learning activities. A carefully-planned practical exercise consolidated the material covered. Teaching on the use of computer software is helped by a comprehensive range of well-presented and up-to-date study guides. Inspectors did not agree with the self-assessment report that all teaching is of high quality. Some teachers did not plan their work effectively. In some lessons students made insufficient progress because the teacher did not properly manage the work, did not give clear instructions, or failed to build upon previous work. Students' progress is monitored effectively, and teachers keep good records of assessed work. The homework set on GCE A level computing courses provides opportunities for students to practise examination questions and receive critical, evaluative feedback on their work. Students on the national diploma in computer studies complete a carefully-organised and well-managed case study on the design of a business system. This good practice is not transferred to other courses. Students' assessed work on GNVQ courses is not effectively managed. A number of assessments are not planned properly and are inappropriately

scheduled. Some assignment work makes too little demand of students. They receive insufficient support for the development and organisation of their portfolios. In the portfolios seen, insufficient assessed work had been completed.

12   The self-assessment report identified as a strength the up-to-date computing equipment and learning materials. Dedicated computing suites are designed to allow students to work with computers as well as receive theory instruction. There were instances where the teaching of theory caused disturbance to other groups working in the area. Computer equipment is modern and there is a wide range of suitable up-to-date software. The quantity of equipment available is generally sufficient, although some classes have to be split between rooms. A well-managed learning centre allows students to attend at times to suit them best and to use study packs to complete practical work for IT qualifications.

13   Students' work is generally satisfactory. In some lessons, students do not apply themselves sufficiently to the tasks given and valuable time is wasted. Retention rates vary considerably between courses. They are generally good on computer literacy and information technology courses at level 1, and national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses. The self-assessment report identified the low retention rates on GNVQ intermediate IT but did not sufficiently recognise the low retention rates on some of the other courses. Advanced vocational courses completing in 1999 already have retention rates significantly below national averages. Over the last three years the average retention rate on the GCE A level has been about 5% below the average for general further education colleges; the achievement rate exceeded the national average only in 1997. Achievement rates on the national diploma courses are generally above national levels. The achievement rate for the GNVQ intermediate IT was good in 1998.

Curriculum Areas

A summary of achievement and retention rates in computing and information technology, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	**1997**	**1998**
Computer literacy and information technology	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	752 78 37	972 86 55	1,298 84 65
GNVQ intermediate in IT	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	41 59 42	46 57 65	58 55 81
NVQ in IT	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	54 87 36	54 72 38
National diploma and certificate in computing	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	29 83 88	39 67 81	36 72 85
GCE A level computing	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	40 58 48	41 78 69	47 66 55

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
*course not offered

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 2

14   Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering craft and technician engineering courses. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but also identified additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- courses responsive to the needs of local companies

- comprehensive learning materials to support practical lessons

- effective use of questioning in lessons

- high achievement rates on advanced vocational courses

- generally good retention rates

- modern well-resourced high technology centre

Weaknesses

- excessive note-taking and dictation in theory lessons

- no work experience for full-time students

- failure to hold some formal course review meetings

15   The college provides courses in electrical, mechanical and general engineering. Inspectors agreed that strong links have been developed with major employers, leading to courses delivered specifically to meet their needs. These include a first certificate in engineering, run on a block-release basis for a large local company, and a national certificate in engineering, delivered on the premises of another major company. In both cases, regular meetings take place with company staff to monitor the attendance and progress of employees.

Specialist courses have also been provided for other companies. Formal meetings to carry out programme reviews are scheduled termly. However, as recognised in the self-assessment report, only those during the autumn term have been held. Broad targets for retention and achievement are set within the curriculum area but not for individual courses. Effective links with local primary schools allow pupils to come to the college and programme machine tools to produce a small component.

16   All lessons observed by inspectors were graded satisfactory or better. Teachers follow appropriate schemes of work, but only a minority prepare lesson plans. Practical work is well organised with activities detailed systematically on worksheets. Teachers use questioning effectively to stimulate student involvement; this was not identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. In one lesson the teacher used a simple cube to explain methods of clamping a workpiece. He carefully questioned the students to establish the possible directions in which movement could occur; students were then able to identify correctly the most suitable method of fixture. In most lessons, good use is made of well-prepared handouts. The use of dictation and copying of teachers' notes in some lessons is excessive; this weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed that assignment briefs, particularly those associated with practical work, are well presented; they contain clearly-defined tasks and assessment criteria that are individually graded. Many assignment briefs are supplemented by comprehensive learning materials to aid students' understanding of the subject. Students' work is marked thoroughly. No work experience is organised for students attending full-time courses; this was not identified in the self-assessment report.

17   Inspectors agreed with the college that the modern high technology centre is a particular strength. It is spacious and laid out effectively,

and the pleasing decor projects the image of a modern manufacturing facility. It is well equipped with a computer integrated manufacturing system and a network of computers supporting both specialist and general software. Other equipment includes robots, pneumatic test equipment and a tensile testing machine with computer printout facility. The mechanical workshop has been reduced in size to reflect the fall in demand. The machine tools, although dated, are appropriate for their purpose. The welding workshop is suitable for its purpose; it incorporates a fitting and fabrication area. The equipment in the practical investigation laboratory is satisfactory, but the project area is unsuitable for theory lessons. Classrooms used for mechanical science, drawing and electronics are in need of refurbishment. There is sufficient electronic test and basic mechanical science equipment, although the storage of science equipment is cluttered and disorganised. Staff have appropriate experience and qualifications for the subjects they teach. Technician support is adequate.

18   Students are generally industrious in their work. The quality of their assignments is good. Retention rates are generally close to or above the national averages. The self-assessment report did not recognise this strength. Inspectors agreed that the achievement rates on advanced level vocational courses are good; they have been above national averages for the last three years. Achievement rates for intermediate vocational courses have fluctuated, falling to 32% in 1996-97, largely due to poor achievement on the GNVQ intermediate in engineering course. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
Other vocational, for example computer-aided draughting	1 and 2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	65 97 94	84 97 33	63 73 71
Intermediate vocational	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	18 74 77	37 57 32	83 86 64
Advanced vocational	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	29 90 83	16 44 100	102 81 93

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

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 3

19   Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering a range of business courses. Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but key weaknesses in teaching and learning and students' achievements were not identified by the college.

Key strengths

- well-structured lessons which build upon students' existing knowledge
- high-quality learning materials
- good level of individual support for students
- carefully-prepared and organised GNVQ portfolios

Weaknesses

- some pedestrian teaching
- shortcomings in the setting and marking of assignments
- low retention rates
- some achievement rates below national averages

20   Students in this area have a range of provision to choose from, including GNVQ intermediate and advanced, and GCE A level business studies. GNVQ students can augment their studies by taking general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses in English or mathematics, RSA Examinations Board (RSA) wordprocessing or a GCE A level subject. The national certificate has been innovatively redesigned for 1998-99 to be a one-year course. Courses for accounting technicians are offered at all levels and students include trainees on modern apprenticeship schemes. The small number of teachers in the business team encourages close, informal working but more

formal communications within the team need to be improved. Students benefit from a consistent approach to the management of their courses of study. There is a growing awareness amongst staff of the need for a rigorous programme review process, but self-assessment and analysis is only embryonic and action-planning is imprecise.

21   The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well structured and build upon students' existing knowledge. Students and teachers work closely together, a strength which was recognised in the self-assessment report. The tutorial support provided for full-time students is effective but often informal. Some personal tutors are employed on contracts which do not require attendance throughout the week, and this makes it hard for their students to contact them. Part-time students have access to suitable informal tutorial support. Progress is tracked and monitored for GNVQ students through lessons dedicated to portfolio building. The self-assessment report did not identify this strength. The quality of teaching and learning was not addressed effectively in the college's self-assessment. Some lessons were uninspiring and required relatively little input from students. In these lessons, the teacher dominated proceedings and did not allow students to contribute or take responsibility for their own learning; opportunities were missed to explore issues more thoroughly as they arose; and time was often wasted because students were late arriving. Some GNVQ assignments do not fully challenge students and do not allow them to demonstrate appropriate skills of research, analysis and synthesis. Assignments set later in the year do not always increase in complexity. The written feedback from most teachers is full and helpful. Feedback sometimes fails to indicate areas for improvement or to correct errors in English and spelling. Grades are sometimes awarded against inadequate evidence. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

Curriculum Areas

22   The good quality of learning materials, such as clear handouts and overhead transparencies, was noted in the self-assessment report. The report also identified problems with students gaining access to IT. This was not observed during the inspection, although some part-time students reported difficulties.

23   The organisation and presentation of GNVQ portfolios is a particular strength, especially for year one of the advanced course. These students display planning and evaluation skills, and their work is generally on target for completion. However, the assessment of key skills is still at an early stage of development. Students' assessed work contains many errors

of English and spelling. The standard of students' achievements varies across courses. No course has both good achievement and sound retention rates. The achievement rate in the GNVQ advanced business is consistently high, but this is against a background of inconsistent retention rates. Results for GCE A level business studies generally match the national average. Achievement rates on accounting technician courses are often below average, although level 4 showed a marked improvement in 1997-98. The self-assessment report identified retention rates as an issue and there is evidence that actions taken are bringing about improvements.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	**1997**	**1998**
GNVQ intermediate business	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	47 68 50	24 83 65	30 40 100
Association of Accounting Technicians foundation	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	20 80 44	17 88 47	10 70 86
GNVQ advanced business	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	64 64 94	72 51 92	33 97 94
Association of Accounting Technicians intermediate	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	52 88 22	30 87 50	30 93 25
GCE A level business studies	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	46 91 76	47 70 63	43 67 86
Association of Accounting Technicians technician course	4	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	33 94 0	28 93 8	20 75 33

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

Health and Social Care

Grade 2

24   Inspectors observed 14 lessons covering foundation to advanced GNVQ courses and NVQ levels 2 and 3 in care and childcare. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified some additional strengths. Several of the weaknesses had been addressed by the time the inspection took place.

Key strengths
- wide range of courses
- teaching which motivates and challenges students
- high standard of academic and personal support for students
- close monitoring of students' progress
- effective curriculum and course management
- high student achievement rates on most courses

Weaknesses
- teaching in a few lessons which lacked variety
- insufficient use of small group work on a few courses
- some instances of inadequate attention to individual students' learning needs
- some retention rates which are below national averages

25   The self-assessment report identified the strength of the wide range of full-time and part-time courses. Employment-based provision is offered at the college and at other sites managed through the college's enterprise and business centre. The college has partnerships with two of the major social service employers in the area and with other employers. Work-based assessors support provision for mature women returning to work. The self-assessment report did not recognise this strength. There are good links with a range of social care agencies. Management of courses is efficient and effective. Documentation is thorough. Curriculum reviews are undertaken and minuted, action plans are implemented. Targets for retention and achievement rates have been set for college-based courses for the current year. Focus groups are effectively used to obtain students' views on a range of issues and these lead to action, where it is needed.

26   Courses are well planned and delivered. Inspectors agreed that teaching is generally good. There are clear lesson plans and a concentration on specific learning objectives. Where teaching groups are small, students' interest, participation and learning are particularly high. In a national diploma lesson, first-year students were working in three groups to assess the causes, incidence and consequences of poverty in the population, categorised by age and status. Students were knowledgeable and stimulated by the task, and later each group made high-quality presentations to the whole class. In a few lessons, teachers relied too much on teaching the group as a whole; they paid inadequate attention to students' individual learning needs, and made insufficient use of small group work. Teachers draw on students' work experience within lessons and within tutorials. Tutors provide consistent, sensitive academic and personal support to individual students on a regular basis.

27   Teaching accommodation for college-based courses is generally adequate and appropriate. The learning centre for care courses is a valuable resource, particularly for NVQ students. It is well furnished and teaching support is available one day and one evening each week. The childcare courses have no suitable craftwork room. The teaching accommodation provided by partner organisations is good.

28   Students are generally attentive during lessons. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that poor attendance and lateness are problems on some courses. Portfolios compiled by GNVQ and NVQ students are well organised and the standard of work is high. In most cases, the self-assessment report identified the strengths and weaknesses in student retention and achievement rates on college-based courses. The achievement rate on the GNVQ advanced health and social care has been consistently good and was outstanding in 1996 and 1998. However, the retention rate was poor in the first two of the three years. Achievement rates on the foundation and GNVQ intermediate in health and social care have risen over the last three years but retention rates have fallen. Retention and achievement rates on the national diploma in childhood studies are generally good. There have been consistently good achievement rates on the diploma in nursery nursing but the retention rates were weak in two of the three years. NVQ level 3 courses in care and childcare have high retention rates but achievement rates are poor in each of the three years. The college recognised that the retention and achievement rates on the NVQ level 2 courses over three years were poor. The recent reorganisation of this provision has produced a significant improvement. In 1998, the achievement rate was 100% and retention had improved. Poor retention rates on one-year GNVQ courses led to changes in the curricula and the inclusion of extra-curricular activities. These changes have had a substantial impact, and the retention rates for the current year show significant improvements.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in health and social care, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	20 83 50	14 78 79	10 59 70
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	32 76 56	24 77 54	17 55 76
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	19 53 100	15 48 73	23 70 100
BTEC national diploma in childhood studies	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	24 86 71	21 56 76	20 80 95
Diploma in nursery nursing (National Nursery Examinations Board)	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	36 49 83	37 70 81	20 61 90
NVQ childcare	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	26 84 27	48 98 31	44 87 29

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

Art and Design

Grade 2

29   Inspectors observed 16 lessons covering the six full-time vocational art and design courses, GCE A levels, and a part-time City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) craft course. Inspectors did not fully support the judgements of the self-assessment report; some weaknesses were understated or not identified including a few in teaching.

Key strengths

•   the growing range of courses available

•   teaching that is well planned and industrially relevant

•   high standards of work on a number of courses

•   thorough teaching of basic art and design skills

•   regular reviews of students' progress and assessment of students' work

•   high levels of progression to higher education for vocational students

•   good specialist resources

Weaknesses

•   some teaching which lacks pace and rigour

•   declining retention rates on some level 3 courses

•   high levels of student absence affecting progress

30   Art and design courses are based at the college's Normanton Road site. Inspectors agreed that this area offers a wide range of courses catering both for those who are 16 to 19 and older students. The recent introduction of a part-time course in drawing and painting accredited by the Open College Network provides further opportunities for mature students. The section is particularly successful in providing opportunities for students who are hearing impaired. Internal and external progression opportunities for students are increasing. The self-assessment report recognised the high levels of progression to higher education from the national diploma courses and the pre-degree foundation course. The system for internal verification of assessments is thorough.

31   Courses are well planned and organised, and have detailed schemes of work. Much teaching is delivered through work assignments which are regularly updated to incorporate 'live' briefs and the demands of higher education. There is detailed attention to the teaching of basic art and design skills, including colour theory, life and observation drawing. The weaker teaching lacks pace and rigour, so that students are allowed to lose the focus of their work. Few students, including part-time students, have the opportunity to use computers. Students benefit from individual portfolio reviews and regular assessment of their work. The personal tutorial system ensures students receive close support. There is some group discussion of students' work but students have insufficient opportunities to develop their oral skills and their confidence in talking about their work.

32   Inspectors agreed with the college that studio and workshop facilities are good. The range of specialist facilities covers all art and design processes and includes industry-standard equipment, including the latest computer graphics. The workshops are well managed by the three technicians. Students' access to the specialist computer facilities is restricted due to the lack of specialist support staff. The library at Normanton Road has a reasonable stock of books and journals. However, there are few audiovisual materials and CD-ROMs.

33   Students on the craft courses are achieving very high levels of skill, particularly in embroidery work. The impressive collections of samples produced by these mature students are

well researched and include process investigation. Fashion and graphics students on the full-time vocational courses produce work of high quality. It is industrially relevant and often in response to 'live' briefs and competitions. Elsewhere, too many drawings and ideas are developed from secondary photographic sources. The resulting work, particularly that produced by students on the general art and design diploma course, is often derivative and lacks personality. The self-assessment report underestimated the problem of declining retention rates on some courses. Retention rates on the 1997-98 GCE A level and the three national diploma courses are poor. On the courses currently running, retention rates have improved but are still below the national averages. The achievement rates on all courses are close to the national averages. The self-assessment report did not identify the high rates of absence which are affecting student progress on many courses. The average attendance observed by inspectors was 64%, a low figure in comparison to art and design courses in general.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in art and design, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
C&G	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	23 91 43	45 82 19	75 77 79
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	24 79 74	33 76 76	31 71 73
GCE A levels in art and design, fine art, photography, and graphics	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	113 82 82	95 66 81	44 52 74
GNVQ precursor*	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	74 77 75	62 58 94	76 54 85
BTEC national diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	42 79 88	53 79 79	65 86 80

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
*national diploma in design: graphics, fashion, general art and design

Curriculum Areas

Social Sciences

Grade 2

34   Inspectors observed 12 psychology and sociology lessons covering GCSE, GCE A level subjects and courses providing access to higher education. Inspectors confirmed most of the judgements identified in the self-assessment report but identified additional weaknesses in teaching and learning.

Key strengths

- well-planned and well-documented courses of study
- high-quality teaching
- good provision of books and other study resources
- helpful feedback to students based on consistent assessment criteria
- high achievement rates, especially on GCE A level courses

Weaknesses

- overuse of note-taking in some classes
- poor retention on two-year GCE A level courses

35   Courses are provided at the college and through collaborative arrangements with partners. The majority of GCE A level students are on college-based courses. Both the access to higher education course and the GCE A level subjects may be studied over one or two years. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that courses are effectively organised, that schemes of work are well planned and documented, and that lesson planning is thorough. Some course review documents lack specific targets for improvement.

36   The quality of teaching is high, as identified in the self-assessment report. Teachers convey their enthusiasm for their subject, use a variety of methods to sustain students' interest, and motivate them to achieve high standards in their work. Explanations of topics are clearly structured and students have opportunities to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. In a sociology lesson, the teacher gave a clear exposition of a complex topic, drawing on students' previous knowledge, and then set students a well-chosen task to consolidate and develop their understanding. The progress students were making was regularly checked and helpful individual advice given on how to improve their work. Occasionally, teachers provide students with conclusions which they might have been expected to work out for themselves. In a few lessons, too much time is spent by students taking notes of material which could have been better provided in a handout, allowing more time for assimilation, discussion and checking of learning. The self-assessment report did not recognise this weakness. Inspectors agreed with the college that assignments are carefully planned. Criteria are clearly stated and feedback to students is closely related to consistent assessment criteria. Written comments made on coursework are extensive, and give effective guidance on improvement.

37   Teachers are suitably qualified and knowledgeable about their subject. Learning is supported by an appropriate range of equipment and materials. Handouts are produced to a high standard. Overall, the stock of books, periodicals and videotapes for class and individual use is extensive and modern, although the stock kept at the Normanton Road site is small in relation to the number of students based there. Psychology students obtain relevant learning material from the internet. Classroom accommodation is adequate overall. Learning in some rooms is hindered by noise and by the lack of blinds. Classrooms designated as subject base rooms have relevant display material. The self-assessment report recognised these strengths and weaknesses in resources.

Curriculum Areas

38   Most students are well motivated and prepared to contribute to discussions, answer questions and complete the tasks given to them. When students are involved in group work, their attention remains focused, even when the teacher is dealing with other groups. Much written work is of a high standard and students show the capacity to analyse and evaluate evidence. As identified in the self-assessment report, retention rates are low on two-year GCE A level courses. For example, only 60% of students who began the psychology course in 1996 completed their studies. Measures have been taken to reduce the numbers of students who withdraw from courses, including closer monitoring of attendance. Data for 1998-99 indicate that retention rates have improved.

Achievement rates on GCE A level courses are often high compared with national averages. Of those who completed the two-year psychology course in 1998, 84% obtained a pass, and 60% obtained the higher A to C grades. Sociology achievement rates have risen steadily in recent years and in 1998 the pass rate for those taking the two-year course was 96%, with 54% obtaining the higher A to C grades. On the GCSE courses, which are delivered through partner institutions, retention and achievement rates have fluctuated but are high overall. The overall retention rates on the one-year, full-time access to higher education courses are reduced by those who decide to transfer to a two-year part-time course. Progression to higher education from the GCE A level courses is good.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in social sciences, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	**1997**	**1998**
GCSE psychology (grades A to C)	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	26 65 82	28 79 50	28 61 94
GCSE sociology (grades A to C)	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	27 81 50	* * *	7 71 80
GCE A level psychology (grades A to E)	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	206 76 58	174 70 67	171 64 86
GCE A level sociology (grades A to E)	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	89 73 58	74 62 67	56 64 86

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
*course not offered

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

39   Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that some strengths were overstated. Inspectors identified additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- responsive pre-entry guidance and enrolment services
- accessible academic, personal, and welfare support valued by students
- specialist support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- effective practices and procedures for guidance on careers and progression
- high profile and active student union

Weaknesses

- some variation in the effectiveness of student induction
- inconsistent implementation of guidelines for tutorials
- inadequacies in the provision of support for individual students' learning needs

40   The centralised student services provides an enquiry, guidance and enrolment service that generally responds well to students' needs. Publicity materials are clear and attractive. The self-assessment report identified the need to reduce the time taken to respond to telephone enquiries, and action is being taken to address this weakness. Productive school links allow pupils to receive comprehensive information on the college. Prospective full-time students benefit from guidance interviews, and appropriate advice helps them to make informed choices. The self-assessment report identified the variability in the effectiveness of student induction and arrangements are being reviewed for September 1999.

41   Students benefit from the range of support services provided. Overall, there is inadequate monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of all of these services. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that student welfare support is readily available. Students have easy access to a range of welfare information and personal support. Guidance officers are available at most times and students speak highly of the support they provide. They have received some counselling training, but students requiring professional counselling are referred to specialist agencies. College youth workers run a lunchtime club for students on the Mackworth site. They liaise effectively with officers of the student union in running health promotion and health awareness events. The student union is actively involved in student welfare issues. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. The union benefits from having a full-time general manager, part-time administrator and two full-time elected officers. Students use it extensively for information, consultation and support on both personal and academic issues. The union also organises social and sporting activities. Nursery facilities are available on both college sites.

42   Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the practices and procedures for advice and guidance on careers and progression opportunities are effective. There is productive liaison and joint working with the Derbyshire careers service. Guidance officers, personal tutors and careers advisers deliver a careers programme with an appropriate mix of group work and individual guidance interviews. Advice is particularly strong in support of student applications to higher education. Insufficient attention is sometimes given to helping students to explore all the progression and employment opportunities available to them.

43   Good academic support is provided by subject teachers and personal tutors. Periodic academic reviews report on the progress and

achievements of individual students. Calendars set out key areas of activity for tutors and students. Reviews are undertaken conscientiously and students receive useful feedback on their progress. Subject teachers provide much informal extra help for individuals. Students' progress files are used in tutorials to encourage students to review their own performance and to identify areas where improvements need to be made. However, there is no requirement for structured follow-up through action-planning and the short and medium-term setting of goals. Guidelines are provided for the conduct of tutorials but, overall, their implementation is inconsistent. Materials are being piloted which define a more structured programme of tutorial activities.

44   The specialist support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities allows them to access and benefit from the full range of college courses. In particular, the college provides extensive support for many students with a hearing impairment through the effective working relationships with the Derby College for Deaf People and the Derbyshire County Council Support Service for Hearing Impaired Students. Effective liaison with schools smooths the transition from school to college for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A team of qualified care workers supports individual students.

45   There is insufficient formal assessment of individual students' learning support needs. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. There is no routine screening of full-time students to identify those who need help with literacy and numeracy. A pilot project using the Basic Skills Agency screening test was undertaken in September 1998. The time-lag between the identification of students needing help and the provision of support was excessive. Appropriately structured individual learning programmes were provided, although the take-up of support by individual students was low. For students outside the pilot, there is a heavy reliance on subject and

personal tutors to identify additional literacy and numeracy learning needs and to advise them on the support required. A small number of students have received support after such referrals. Some curriculum areas provide additional support activities but there is no 'drop-in' facility available to support all students across the college. Entry and foundation level groups have learning support built into their programmes.

General Resources

Grade 2

46   Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report, although they found some strengths were overstated. The self-assessment report concentrated on weaknesses in resource management. It did not identify some more general weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good-quality accommodation for conferences, short courses and some specialist teaching
- attractive and well-maintained grounds
- easily accessible sites for wheelchair users
- varied range of catering facilities
- extensive modern sports facilities
- centralised production of high-quality learning materials

Weaknesses

- some areas which provide a poor environment
- insufficient access to computers for some students

47   The college identified as a strength the generally good environment it provides. Inspectors agreed that this is true of a number of areas. The extensive Mackworth campus has attractive grounds and playing fields with a

well-maintained and safe internal road system, extensive car parks and good-quality signs. The Mackworth reception area is modern and makes a favourable initial impression. Some specialist areas on both sites have been refurbished and provide good-quality teaching accommodation. The three catering outlets on the Mackworth site provide different types of food in modern, clean environments, although the furniture and surroundings in one fall below the standard of the other two. The college has adapted parts of the college to provide good-quality training facilities for conferences and short courses. The enterprise and business centre has well-appointed training rooms. Inspectors agreed that all areas are easily accessible to wheelchair users. There are ramps, wheelchair lifts and dropped kerbs around the sites, and the upper floors of buildings are accessible via lifts. Some areas, on both the Mackworth and Normanton Road sites, provide a less satisfactory environment. Internal and external areas are in need of decoration and maintenance. Other areas are cramped and have poor furniture and fittings. A number of rooms on both sites are currently underused. Specialist inspectors also found groups allocated to rooms which were inappropriate for the activity concerned. Adequate but unappealing catering facilities are available at Normanton Road.

48 The college maintenance team responds well to requests and has a range of appropriate skills. Comprehensive maintenance plans are in place. A capital equipment replacement plan has been developed. These plans were identified as strengths in the self-assessment report, but inspectors considered them to be normal planning tools. Detailed records of equipment, inventories and asset registers are maintained. A computer-based monitoring system is replacing the current paper-based systems which had been identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The central technician team has 17 members. There is a recognised need for more technicians to support IT and some retraining is taking place.

49 The library on the Mackworth site provides an adequate service for students. Inspectors agreed with the college that the stock of books and periodicals is appropriate, and that there are sufficient study spaces. The Normanton Road library has been improved since the last inspection and now it too provides an adequate service. Learning centres give students further access to study facilities, learning resources and computers. The need to establish a way of monitoring the effectiveness of these learning centres has been recognised. The centralised facility for the production of learning materials provides a high-quality service for wordprocessing and desktop publishing handouts, overhead transparencies, and study packs. There is close quality control and a common house style. This strength was not recognised in the college's self-assessment.

50 Inspectors did not agree fully with the self-assessment report that there is good access to up-to-date IT equipment. Inspectors found that the overall provision of computers for specialist use was good, but that only a limited number of computers were normally available for use by other students. The timetabling of one of the learning centres for lessons restricts access by individual students. Other specialist computer facilities are heavily timetabled and there is a lack of information on general availability. Staff access to computers for personal use has improved since the last inspection. The majority of computers have modern specifications and up-to-date software although there is still some use of older software. Recently-purchased machines have CD-ROM readers. Access to the internet is improving on both sites. The overall strategy for IT across the college in terms of purchasing, development and usage is underdeveloped. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

51 The Mackworth site provides good sports facilities. The modern sports hall provides excellent accommodation for a range of sports. The all-weather sports pitches are floodlit. The

facilities are well used by the community and other organisations but are underutilised by college students. The youth centre on the Mackworth site provides a social and recreational service for part of the day. In the evenings it serves as a youth centre for the local community. It is in a poor state of repair. There are plans to dispose of the current building and to build a new centre.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

52   Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but found that some of the strengths were not significant and that some of the weaknesses were understated.

Key strengths

- extensive quality assurance arrangements covering all college-based activities
- effective arrangements for monitoring the quality of collaborative partners
- productive systems for gathering clients' views
- well-established staff appraisal procedures
- staff development clearly linked to college priorities

Weaknesses

- inconsistent use of annual review data to support continuous improvement
- lack of emphasis on teaching and learning in annual reviews
- no formal timetable for reviewing all quality standards
- inconsistencies in the implementation of the quality assurance procedures

53   The college makes a strong commitment to quality and self-assessment through its mission and corporate objectives. In 1997, a self-assessment and quality task group was set up to introduce revised procedures for self-assessment. The first self-assessment report was submitted to the corporation in the autumn of 1998. A newly-constituted corporation committee will allow governors to become more actively involved in monitoring quality. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that established procedures for improving quality cover all aspects of the college's operations. Teaching and support staff understand the arrangements for monitoring quality and are involved in the quality processes. Annual reviews are completed by all curriculum and support teams. Arrangements for monitoring the quality of the collaborative provision are well documented and effective, as identified in the self-assessment report. Responsibility for monitoring quality in this area is clearly identified. Monitoring activities in collaborative provision generally match, and in one case exceed, current college practices. An annual review is produced by the college. External providers are not involved in the review until the later action-planning stage.

54   Inconsistencies in the implementation of quality assurance procedures limit their effectiveness. This was identified in the self-assessment report but its significance was underestimated. A minority of curriculum teams do not adhere to the requirements of the schedule for programme review meetings. The standards applied to teaching observations vary between curriculum areas. There is considerable variation in the rigour of evaluation in annual reports and wide variations in the range of evidence used. The lack of emphasis given to teaching and learning was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. There is variability in the rigour with which internal verification is undertaken. While some verification is

completed conscientiously and accompanied by helpful comments, feedback is restricted to the checklist in others.

55   Measurable quality standards are applied to all aspects of the students' entitlement. Teachers use curriculum quality standards for activities such as assessment and return of work, and the quality of teaching materials. Support teams have identified a range of service standards. While the achievement of some quality standards, for example, the curriculum quality standards, has been monitored, some areas have been missed. There is no formal system to ensure the regular monitoring of all quality standards. This was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

56   Arrangements for obtaining the views of those using the college are effective, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Students are satisfied that they have opportunities to raise any issues of concern and that, in most cases, they will receive a timely response. Students provide their views through programme review groups, focus groups, questionnaires, and approaches to individual teachers and tutors. There are over 100 student representatives on various college committees. The student union provides training for the representatives to support them in presenting their views. Focus group meetings allow students to meet staff not involved in their course and make their views known on any aspect of their programme of study. Employers using the college are regularly sent questionnaires and responses are monitored and acted upon.

57   The college has introduced effective systems for providing accurate data to curriculum teams, enabling them to monitor trends in achievements and retention. Targets for the improvement of students' achievements and retention are being introduced. Some curriculum teams have developed their own systems for monitoring the value added to a student's performance based on academic

achievements at entry. The college provides additional guidelines on the interpretation of student retention and achievement data in annual reviews, but there remain considerable variations in judgements on performance. The rigour with which the data are used varies considerably between teams. This inconsistency was not identified in the self-assessment report. In the best examples, the analysis adds significantly to the value of quality reviews. For example, the library makes effective use of its data to identify where improvements can be made to the services provided.

58   Staff appraisal procedures are well established. Comprehensive policies and procedures are clearly set out in the staff handbook. The system has been implemented effectively and has the support of most staff. Staff development needs are carefully identified. Appraisal procedures are closely linked to staff development, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Staff development is clearly linked to college priorities. Development needs are also identified through the curriculum review process, new job roles, and on the initiative of individual staff. Efficient use is made of the resources available for staff development. These strengths were not identified in the self-assessment report. Records are well maintained and contribute to regular summary reports.

Governance

Grade 2

59   Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but attached a different significance to some judgements.

Key strengths
- governors providing a good balance of skills and experience
- productive relationships between governors and managers

- efficient conduct of corporation business and effective clerking arrangements
- good procedures for ensuring openness and accountability
- strategic development and systematic monitoring of college finances

Weaknesses
- insufficient use of performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the corporation
- underdeveloped arrangements for the monitoring of students' achievements and retention

60　The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The board substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibility under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

61　Governors have a wide range of appropriate skills and experience, including education, business, finance, and estates. They are highly committed to the college and to helping it meet its corporate objectives. The corporation has a membership of 20. There is one vacancy. There is a good balance of long-standing governors and some recently-appointed governors. Advertising has been used successfully to identify new governors and appointment processes are effective. One appointment has been deferred to allow the college to take account of the new instrument of governance.

62　As recognised in the self-assessment report, governors receive regular and comprehensive information on most activities of the college. Members of the senior management team attend all meetings of the corporation and its finance and general purposes committee to present reports and

answer questions. Governors clearly understand their role and have a professional and productive relationship with senior managers.

63　Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that meetings are effectively managed and chaired. Meetings are well attended. Clerking arrangements are effective and the corporation and committees receive a high level of support. Agendas and minutes of meetings are clear. The range of committees is appropriate; they meet regularly and are supported by comprehensive terms of reference. The audit committee membership has been strengthened to address a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Governors are provided with a written summary of committee business, and copies of committee minutes are presented by the chair of the committee. The cycle of meetings allows sufficient time to consider and approve corporation business.

64　The corporation has developed strategies to clear inherited deficits. Financial matters continue to have a high profile. Detailed management accounts, supported by commentaries from the senior management team, are closely scrutinised at monthly meetings of the finance and general purposes committee. The overall performance of the college's companies is included within the monthly performance review report, but detailed financial data are not considered until the production of the annual accounts. Financial performance indicators have recently been approved but have yet to be incorporated into the monthly report. Items contained within the monthly report are not explicitly linked to the strategic objectives of the college.

65　Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that there is a commitment to openness and accountability. Governors have adopted a code of conduct and standing orders for the conduct of corporation and committee business. The clerk to the corporation maintains a register of financial and personal

interests of governors and staff. This is updated each year. There is a biennial review of committee remits and membership to coincide with the appointment of chairs and vice-chairs. The annual report is available on the college website, together with details of public access to minutes and papers.

66   Currently, procedures for monitoring students' achievements and retention rates are underdeveloped. The corporation has received regular reports on students' achievements but until very recently did not set targets for achievement or retention. Governors have monitored recruitment trends and planned changes in curriculum provision. To strengthen their monitoring processes, governors have agreed to establish a curriculum development and academic standards committee.

67   Governors reviewed the first four years of governance in 1996. A further review took place in preparation for the self-assessment report. Governors completed a questionnaire but there were no performance indicators or a documented list of measures to help them assess their effectiveness. Attendance is recorded but is not used as a key indicator. Some governors were unclear about the process of self-assessment. The college has started to address a weakness identified in the self-assessment report by using a questionnaire to assess governors' training needs more effectively. Induction for new governors has been provided more systematically during the last two years. Some governors have taken advantage of in-house training opportunities, and a few have attended external training events.

Management

Grade 2

68   Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report although they considered that some strengths had been overstated. An additional strength and an additional weakness were identified.

Key strengths

- clear and effective management structure
- comprehensive links with external organisations
- productive market research used to support the college's strategic development
- effective financial reporting and monitoring

Weaknesses

- no annual operating statement in 1998-99
- inefficient management information systems

69   The self-assessment report recognised that the management structure and lines of accountability are clear and effective. The senior management team consists of the principal, deputy principal and three vice-principals. The team meets weekly, has clear terms of reference and conducts its meetings with efficiency. The team is supported by eight curriculum directors and five directors responsible for support services. The college has a policy of periodically rotating the roles of the three vice-principals and the 13 directors. This is generally welcomed by managers and staff who consider it ensures a consistent college-wide management ethos. The rotation arrangement also provides enhanced opportunities for the utilisation and development of managers' skills, although it interrupts continuity of role. Line management structures are appropriate and understood. Staff have relevant job descriptions and there is an opportunity to review them annually. Communications within the college are effective and include the utilisation of the line management structure, a cycle of college meetings, a monthly information bulletin and regular presentations by the principal.

70   The strategic plan for 1997 to 2000 was updated in 1998 and 1999. The plan contains clear and appropriate corporate objectives which are publicised widely. An annual operating statement was produced for 1997-98 but not for 1998-99. As a result, the college has no single document containing a set of current annual targets against which managers, staff and the corporation can evaluate the achievement of corporate objectives.

71   A comprehensive accommodation strategy was developed in March 1998. It realistically assesses the options in the context of underutilisation of space and some poor standards of accommodation. Measures to rationalise the accommodation have been adopted, including plans for a new building on the Mackworth site and the vacation of the Normanton Road premises. Staff are fully aware of these developments.

72   The college's strategic development is effectively informed by market research, a strength not recognised in the self-assessment report. Primary research is conducted by the college with local employers, schools and potential students. Telephone research is conducted into the reasons why some students do not take up their offered place. On the basis of its research, the college decided to discontinue its auto-engineering provision and is currently developing a number of curriculum initiatives with local schools. Secondary research effectively utilises market intelligence produced by the local training and enterprise council (TEC), the local authority, the county council, and other bodies.

73   The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The college has taken successful action to clear its accumulated deficits. The three-year financial forecasts for 1998 to 2001 prudently anticipate the potential financial implications of increasing local competition, although the college has yet to formulate detailed contingency plans to deal

with them. Financial regulations and procedures are comprehensive. Clear monthly performance review reports, including comprehensive management accounts, are prepared. The management accounts include a detailed commentary and information on the operations of the college companies. Both the management accounts and budget reports are closely monitored by the senior management team. The finance team is appropriately skilled and resourced, and finance is appropriately represented on the senior management team. Financial and student data returns are submitted to the FEFC in good time. The college's internal and external auditors have not raised any significant internal control issues. The college has acted to implement past audit service recommendations.

74   Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that management information is not directly available to potential users. There is no networked system for the dissemination of information. Regular reports are prepared and distributed to relevant managers in printed form. Special reports can usually be produced within two days. There has been no formal analysis of the information needs of managers. Separate data sources exist for different functions, and this leads to duplication and inefficiency as identified in the self-assessment report. In recognition of these issues, the college has plans to revise both the systems and the organisation of the production of management information.

75   The self-assessment report recognised the long-standing and constructive links the college has with a wide range of external bodies involved in education and training. The college is an associate college of the University of Derby and has appropriate links with other institutes of higher education. It is a major provider of training for the TEC. It is an active partner in the Derby City of Learning Project. The college has liaised with schools on a number of curriculum initiatives and is currently involved

in the 'walk to college' project whereby children from local junior schools can use college facilities. There is productive liaison with many local employers, particularly through the college's enterprise and business centre, and with the local authority and the careers service. Beneficial international links have been established with institutions in a number of countries including Tunisia, Russia and Germany.

Conclusions

76   The inspection team found the self-assessment report a useful basis for planning the inspection. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements made in the report. Some strengths were overstated and different key strengths were identified in a few instances. In a number of cases, weaknesses were not identified or were understated. The specialist self-assessment reports often lacked evaluative comments on the quality of the teaching and learning. Three curriculum and three cross-college grades awarded by inspectors were lower than the college grades.

77   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 (April 1999)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	17
19-24 years	16
25+ years	65
Not known	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (April 1999)

Level of study	%
Foundation	34
Intermediate	40
Advanced	22
Higher education	1
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	3
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (April 1999)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	311	997	13
Agriculture	7	13	0
Construction	19	12	1
Engineering	75	302	4
Business	323	1,747	20
Hotel and catering	57	1,878	19
Health and community care	253	1,431	16
Art and design	195	126	3
Humanities	379	1,195	15
Basic education	51	901	9
Total	1,670	8,602	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 19% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (April 1999)

	Perm-anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	120	12	1	133
Supporting direct learning contact	12	0	1	13
Other support	123	8	2	133
Total	255	20	4	279

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£12,063,000	£11,108,000	£10,458,000
Average level of funding (ALF) Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£17.82	£18.56	£18.26
Payroll as a proportion of income	64%	53%	51%
Achievement of funding target	116%	106%	97%
Diversity of income	19%	19%	19%
Operating surplus	-£551,000	£583,000	£348,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)
ALF – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1998)
Payroll – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)
Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
Diversity of income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)
Operating surplus – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
1	Expected completions	603	1,256	794	335	1,267	1,553
	Retention (%)	87	74	81	85	82	80
	Achievement (%)	52	59	59	63	57	57
2	Expected completions	922	991	853	476	865	1,257
	Retention (%)	84	74	70	89	84	83
	Achievement (%)	61	48	53	45	68	53
3	Expected completions	–	1,700	1,649	–	792	1,049
	Retention (%)	–	83	68	–	79	77
	Achievement (%)	70	75	74	54	59	57
4 or 5	Expected completions	n/a	n/a	n/a	–	84	81
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	–	86	91
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	31	29	9
Short courses	Expected completions	337	452	729	7,672	10,519	6,790
	Retention (%)	92	93	97	99	99	98
	Achievement (%)	76	80	83	95	95	82
Unknown/ unclassified	Expected completions	529	736	548	2,512	3,580	2,093
	Retention (%)	88	68	67	94	94	92
	Achievement (%)	48	57	59	82	64	55

Source: ISR
–ISR data not collected
n/a not applicable

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