

Morley College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1999-00**

**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.

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Grade Descriptors

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1998-99, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	10	53	30	7	–
Cross-college provision	14	54	23	7	2

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*
Sample size: 104 college inspections

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 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 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

Morley College

Greater London Region

Inspected May 2000

Morley College is a specialist adult education college in central London. It offers a wide range of courses, many in unusual subjects, and has a national reputation for some of its provision.

The college has good links with a range of external bodies. The FEFC funds the college for non-schedule 2 as well as schedule 2 work. The majority of courses are non-schedule 2, although the proportion of schedule 2 work has increased in recent years and now accounts for approximately 33% of the college's funded units. Almost all of its students and teachers are part time. The college began work on self-assessment later than most others in the sector.

The report produced for inspection is comprehensive but sources of evidence to underpin judgements are few. Teachers and governors were not sufficiently involved in the process and the college did not make sufficient use of national benchmarking data. Inspectors observed some outstanding teaching, especially in music, exercise and creative writing lessons. Overall lesson grades were slightly above the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99 but lower than the college achieved in the last inspection. The college celebrates aspects of students' achievements through public performances, exhibitions and publications. However, achievement on schedule 2 courses and retention on all courses

is not adequately monitored. Inspectors found some examples of poor attendance and retention. Since the last inspection the college has made progress in developing its course information, and has improved parts of its accommodation and learning resources.

The college monitors its finances well.

Communication within departments is generally good but links between senior managers and departments are less effective. There are a number of issues the college needs to address, many of which were mentioned in the last inspection report. These include inadequate strategic planning and management information, lack of target-setting, weaknesses in quality assurance and in governance and gaps in learner support. The college also needs to produce an accommodation strategy and an IT development plan.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Exercise and health	2	Support for students	3
Music	2	General resources	3
Humanities	3	Quality assurance	4
ESOL and basic skills	3	Governance	4
		Management	3

The College and its Mission

1 Morley College is a specialist adult education college in central London. It was established in 1889 for working men and women to study subjects not connected with trade or business. The college has a national and international reputation for some of its courses. Its teachers have included many distinguished specialists, including Gustav Holst, Sir Michael Tippett and Virginia Woolf. Following the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*, it became a specialist designated institution within the further education sector in 1993. From 1993 the college has been a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

2 Figures provided by the college show that in 1998-99, there were 11,362 students enrolled on 1,349 courses, nearly all of them part time. The range of courses includes exercise and health, visual art, languages, humanities, social sciences, music, dance, drama, social studies, counselling, basic education, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). The college is funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) for schedule 2 courses leading to accreditation and non-schedule 2 courses. College figures show that in 1998-99, 33% of its funding units came from schedule 2 work, which includes access, general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses. The non-schedule 2 work provides a wide and diverse programme; examples include 'Say No to Allergies and Arthritis', 'Classical Chinese for Beginners' and 'Introduction to Music Reading and Sight Singing'.

3 The majority of students come from inner London, with over half from the local boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. In 1998-99, 69% of students were female and approximately 20% were from minority ethnic groups.

4 The college has three main buildings close together and another small building half a mile away. The Centre for Young Musicians and the National Opera Studio are based at the college and share its facilities. A number of other arts organisations are connected with the college. Community dance workshops and performances are held regularly. Exhibitions mounted by Morley Gallery and concerts run in the college attract a large number of visitors.

5 The senior management team comprises the principal and two vice-principals. Nearly all the teaching is carried out by part-time staff, many of whom are chosen for their specialist skills. There are six directors of studies, each responsible for a curriculum area. The senior managers, directors of studies, marketing manager, the head of learning resources, the administrative and finance officers and the premises manager form the college management group. There are 72 full-time equivalent staff.

6 The original objects of the college still apply:

- 'to promote by means of classes, lectures and otherwise, the advanced study by men and women belonging to the working classes, of subjects of knowledge not directly connected with or applied to any handicraft, trade, or business
- as subordinate or ancillary thereto, to assist in acquiring the requisite elementary instruction those whose age prevents them from making use of the ordinary elementary instruction
- to promote social intercourse among those following the above mentioned pursuits'.

The college is still guided by these principles. In July 1998, the governing body updated the mission statement to read: 'Morley College offers a lively, welcoming and supportive environment in which men and women from all backgrounds meet to enrich their lives through the study of a wide range of subjects from introductory to advanced levels.'

Context

The Inspection

7 The college was inspected in May 2000. Inspectors had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information about the college held by the FEFC. The college was notified of the sample of its provision to be inspected approximately three months before the inspection. The inspection was carried out by 10 inspectors and an auditor working in the college for a total of 41 days. Inspectors observed 46 lessons. They examined students' work and documentation relating to the college and its courses. Meetings were held with governors, managers, teachers, support staff and students. Discussions took place with external partners from the voluntary sector.

8 Inspectors identified weaknesses in the college's data for students' retention and achievements. The college is required to submit data for the individualised student record (ISR) for schedule 2 retention and achievement rates in the usual way, but it is not required to submit achievement rates for non-schedule 2 courses. The college acknowledges it has experienced difficulties with its data collection and analysis. Inspectors visited the college on two occasions before the inspection to check data the college had provided for 1999. On the first visit they found a number of errors. These included students recorded as achieved who had not

received the full certificate and figures given for achievement which did not match the returns from awarding bodies. It was not always possible to reconcile the retention figures given with registers, particularly where there were overlaps between long and short courses. Non-schedule 2 retention columns often showed 100% retention, which could not be reconciled with registers. At the second visit the accuracy of the schedule 2 data were substantially improved, in particular where students taking a course for interest were separated from those intending to gain a qualification. However, some queries remained and it was not possible to check records for previous years. The inadequacy of data made it impossible to form a view of trends. For this reason, tables of retention and achievement rates have not been included in the curriculum sections of the report, nor in the statistical annex. Curriculum inspectors have used 1999 data to inform judgements where they proved reliable.

9 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the 46 lessons inspected, 70% were good or outstanding and 6% were less than satisfactory. This profile compares with 65% and 6%, respectively, for all colleges inspected in 1998-99.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
Schedule 2	3	10	6	1	0	20
Non-schedule 2	12	7	5	2	0	26
Total (No)	15	17	11	3	0	46
Total (%)	33	37	24	6	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99 (%)	20	45	29	6	0	100

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*

Context

10 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Morley College	11.6	76
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99	11.2	78

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report

Curriculum Areas

Exercise and Health

Grade 2

11 Inspectors observed 12 lessons across the range of exercise, health and complementary therapy courses. They broadly agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that some strengths had been overstated.

Key strengths

- broad and innovative range of provision
- well-planned and well-managed courses
- effective teaching
- good use of mixed age and cultural backgrounds of students to enhance their learning
- careful differentiation of activities in exercise classes to meet individual needs
- good pass rates on most courses

Weaknesses

- low student pass rates on the anatomy, physiology and body massage course
- failure of teachers to challenge students sufficiently in some lessons
- inadequate accommodation for some courses

12 The college offers a broad range of exercise, health and complementary therapy courses. Students from groups traditionally under-represented in further education enrol on 'taster' courses, courses for developing interests and courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Students are able to progress from foundation level to further or higher education, professional training or employment. In consultation with professional associations the department has helped to establish training standards for teaching exercise to music and for teaching yoga. These and other new courses developed by the college have been accredited

by awarding bodies and are now taught in colleges throughout the country.

13 Inspectors agreed with the college that courses are well planned and well managed. Teachers carefully monitor the progress students make. During induction teachers ensure that students understand the aims of courses. Twice a term teachers review individual students' progress. Students complete an end of course evaluation questionnaire in which they describe the learning outcomes they have achieved. As part of the regular course review students' actual achievements are compared with the intended aims of courses. The review process is also informed by students' views on the quality of courses and lesson observation reports. Improvements have been made to teaching methods used on courses as a result of the review process.

14 Most of the teaching in lessons was good and there were examples of outstanding practice. In some very effective lessons, well-qualified and experienced teachers made good use of students' experiences to develop learning. In a postural exercise class the teacher used students' descriptions of the results of poor posture to introduce technical terms. Teachers use the mixed age and cultural backgrounds of student groups to enrich the curriculum. In a cosmetic make-up lesson evidence of cultural influence could be seen in the designs and techniques being developed in preparation for the Notting Hill Carnival. A teacher over the age of 80 is an inspirational role model for students aged up to 97 in an exercise and health class. Teachers adapt exercise sequences to meet the individual needs of students. All students, regardless of age, medical condition or mobility restrictions, are able to participate fully in the lessons. In a minority of lessons, students' superficial responses to questions did not result in further challenge or prompting from teachers to explore the level of their understanding. The development of professional skills in interacting with clients is not always encouraged on courses

Curriculum Areas

leading to professional practice qualifications. The college identified the strengths but not the weaknesses in teaching and learning.

15 The majority of students seeking a qualification achieve credits for course modules or the full awards. Pass rates on some courses are well above national averages. In 1999, all of the students on the cosmetic make-up course achieved the award compared with a national average of 69%. On the manicure course, 87% of the students passed the course, well above the national average of 68%. The college received a letter of commendation from the International Therapy Examination Council for excellent students' achievements on nutrition and diet courses. On the anatomy, physiology and body massage course student pass rates are below the national average; 71% passed the course in 1999 compared with a national average of 77%. In lessons and in their written work students demonstrate good levels of theoretical and practical skills. Teachers assess work accurately and give constructive feedback to help students make improvements. The college's self-assessment recognised the strengths and weaknesses in students' achievements. Systems for monitoring student retention rates on courses are underdeveloped and students who transfer from one course to another are not always tracked. The college recognises that retention rates on some courses appear to be low.

16 Most lessons are located in appropriate classrooms. However, for some beauty therapy courses the accommodation is inadequate. There are poor changing facilities; only one student at a time can change behind temporary screens. This results in interruptions in lessons. In one classroom, there was not enough space to use equipment trolleys during a lesson. The learning environment in most classrooms is dull and little use is made of display materials to provide stimulating surroundings for students.

Curriculum Areas

Music

Grade 2

17 Inspectors observed 12 lessons. Inspectors largely agreed with the self-assessment report, although they considered that insufficient weight was given to weaknesses in retention.

Key strengths

- a comprehensive range of music courses at progressive levels
- successful progression to higher education from the access course
- much good teaching
- extensive opportunities for performance and high-quality performances from students
- effective leadership of the department

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of retention and achievement
- poor retention on the access course
- lack of dedicated accommodation

18 Morley College has a strong music tradition in which composers such as Holst, Vaughan Williams and Sir Michael Tippett figure prominently. This tradition has given the music department a reputation for high professional standards. In 1998-99, 2,492 students enrolled on music courses. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the music offered is comprehensive and wide-ranging. A recent innovation is a two-year, full-time music access course validated by the National Open College Network (NOCN). Part-time students have a choice of classes in instrumental music, jazz, music technology, opera, music theory and popular and world music. They can also join one of the college's many music ensembles and choirs. Many part-time classes are advertised at different levels, thus catering for a wide range of

student experience and ability. Piano classes, for example, are offered at five levels with additional classes for experienced pianists.

19 The college is successful in its aim to balance opportunities to learn and perform at professional levels with the principle of access to all. A significant number of students move up through the various levels. In the 'Can't Sing Choir', which takes absolute beginners, one-third of students who joined at level 1 have progressed to level 3 where they give public concerts. The college has productive relationships with external groups, such as the Allegri String Quartet and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Students give concerts at the college and perform regularly at local venues and festivals. The department organises about 50 concerts a year.

20 The department is effectively led. A small full-time equivalent team of 3.6 staff manages about 80 part-time teachers. Schemes of work and lesson plans are all in place. Full-time staff formally observe about 25 lessons each year; 90% of part-time teachers have been assessed in this way. Student course evaluations are conducted annually but comprehensive course reviews will take place for the first time this summer. The self-assessment report recognises weaknesses in course review. For example, record-keeping for non-schedule 2 courses is poor in some cases.

21 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that most of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. Most music teachers are experienced teachers and performers and some are highly qualified. Lessons are well planned and effectively managed and teachers are well attuned to the needs of adult learners with diverse ability and experience. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods and check students' learning regularly by directing questions to individual students. In one lesson, the teacher explained the workings of the gamelan to the class and illustrated her commentary with recorded

Curriculum Areas

examples of Javanese and Balinese instruments. The students then performed a simple score using tuned and untuned percussion to simulate the gamelan sound. In a choral lesson, an effective partnership between the teacher and the accompanist provided an infectious and exuberant stimulus for the students.

22 Students exhibit high-quality performance skills. In the best lessons, students also articulate their ideas with depth and clarity. Students in lower level classes are tangibly developing their musical skills. In one lesson, students with little experience of singing were able to perform solo pieces on the stage before the rest of the class with some confidence. The achievement of access students is good. In 1999, 75% of access to music students progressed to higher education. Teachers' informal records show that part-time students achieve success in a wide variety of ways. Some take higher instrumental examinations or appear in public recitals. Students studying music technology have joined popular music groups or recorded their own compact discs. Systematic recording of these achievements has yet to be developed. Retention is an issue for the department, as recognised in the self-assessment report. The retention of access to music students is a particular weakness, with only about half of those enrolled completing the course in the past two years. Figures for 1999-2000 suggest that retention is improving on the access course. Retention on part-time courses was approximately 75% in 1998-99. The self-assessment report acknowledges that dropout is high from some of these courses but this is not sufficiently analysed.

23 There is no discrete music accommodation; students share rooms with the rest of the college. There are 25 rooms with pianos, and there are four music practice rooms, for which part-time students have to pay. While the rooms used for music are of a suitable size, the department suffers from the lack of a geographical centre with which staff and

students can identify. There are no suitable spaces for individual tutorials and the administration of the department is some distance from the majority of the teaching. New accommodation is being provided for music technology on another site. The department is well supplied with pianos and tuned and untuned percussion and is looking for ways of upgrading its keyboard suite. A full-time technician serves the music technology classes.

Curriculum Areas

Humanities

Grade 3

24 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in social sciences (offered in the department of basic education and social studies), English, philosophy and history on a range of schedule 2 and non-schedule 2 courses. The self-assessment report covered the work of the languages and humanities department and it was not always possible to identify which statements applied to specific provision. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses, but thought that some strengths had been overstated.

Key strengths

- much good teaching
- high standard of students' writing and work in class
- good quality of teachers' feedback on students' work
- good use of visual aids and handouts to aid learning

Weaknesses

- low achievements on schedule 2 courses
- lack of co-ordination of the access programme
- lack of sufficient detail in schemes of work
- insufficient analysis of reliable information for reviewing and improving the quality of courses

25 The department of languages and humanities offers over 150 humanities courses, of which about one-quarter are schedule 2 courses leading to qualifications. Non-schedule 2 courses are offered during the daytime, evening, at weekends and during the summer. Courses leading to external accreditation include part-time GCSE English, GCE A level English

language and English language and literature during the day and evening, and a one-year modular access programme.

26 Good efforts are made to maintain effective communication among 67 part-time teachers. Meetings are held for staff to discuss issues of common concern. About a third of the teachers attend. The director of studies is always accessible. Some specialist groups of teachers have met to review the programme and discuss future developments, but no formal action plans result. There has been inadequate co-ordination of the access programme since January 2000, and the monitoring and recording of students' attendance and progress have suffered. Schemes of work and lesson plans exist for most courses. However, some lesson plans are sketchy and schemes of work simply list topics to be covered.

27 Much teaching is good; some is particularly challenging and stimulating. The self-assessment report cites as a strength that most lessons are taught very effectively and inspectors agreed. The best teachers are skilful in questioning students to draw on their experience and use discussion effectively to provoke their thinking. Creative writing lessons are a particular strength. Students acquire critical thinking skills and are encouraged to read widely to develop their own creative writing skills. In a supportive atmosphere, students give each other constructive criticism on their own writing, which the teacher sums up at the end. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that some teachers use too small a range of teaching methods. In a few lessons, teaching was either unstructured or dull. Teachers are not always able to cater for the varying needs and abilities of the wide range of students in some lessons. A few students with learning difficulties or language needs were not getting the support necessary to allow them to fully participate in lessons. In lessons which included both access

Curriculum Areas

students and non-access students, the access students do not always get the help they need and sometimes their attendance and punctuality is poor.

28 The standard of students' work is good. There are examples of well-presented, well-researched and imaginative essays and creative writing. A magazine published each year provides students with opportunities to have work published and philosophy students were producing their own magazine. Students' written work is marked with detailed and constructive comments. Coversheets which teachers complete for access students' assignment work clearly indicate weaknesses in style and content.

29 Inspectors did not fully agree with the judgement in the self-assessment report that retention and achievement rates are high. Retention and achievement rates were good for the GCSE evening English course in 1998 and 1999. Achievements were good for GCE A level English language and literature in 1998, but retention and other achievement rates were below the national average in 1998 and 1999. Achievement is well below the national average for students completing the access programme in one year. A number of students take the programme over two years. At the time of the inspection, no figures on progression had been collated, but individual records indicate that in 1999 about 35% of the access students progressed to higher education and 24% continued the programme for another year.

30 There are no reliable figures for retention on non-schedule 2 courses. The department is using a system to measure assessment and recording of learning. Students have been asked to assess their own learning and progress against course and individual learning objectives. Teachers have found the process informative, but there is no summary and the results are not yet used to inform course review

or planning. The self-assessment report identifies that more work needs to be done on this.

31 Classrooms are generally pleasant and some teachers arranged seating effectively to facilitate students' interaction. In a number of lessons, students sat in rows where they were not able to see each other. Teachers made good use of video, overhead projectors and well-presented and relevant handouts to reinforce students' learning. Access students value the opportunity to use the library of South Bank University. Teachers are generally well qualified in the subjects they teach and some bring experience of publishing their own creative writing.

Curriculum Areas

ESOL and Basic Skills

Grade 3

32 Inspectors observed 10 lessons in ESOL and basic literacy. In its self-assessment report, the college included the work of the whole department including other curriculum areas of EFL, social studies and counselling. Inspectors agreed with a few strengths and most of the weaknesses and considered that some strengths had been overstated.

Key strengths

- effective initial advice and guidance
- wide range of levels in ESOL
- strategies for promoting students' independent learning

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring of retention and achievement
- lack of variety in teaching and learning methods
- insufficient provision in basic education

33 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that effective initial advice and counselling sessions ensure students are placed in classes appropriate for their needs. As well as diagnostic interviews and testing at the beginning of the academic year, weekly 'drop-in' sessions are available for new entrants. Students are able to join classes mid-year, if places are available.

34 A wide range of levels in ESOL is available at the main site during the day and in the evening at a local secondary school. This includes a class where basic ESOL literacy is taught alongside the first language. Beginners ESOL to pre-GCSE is offered at five levels. Staff have a shared understanding of levels and students are moved up to higher levels, if appropriate, thus reducing waiting for new

entrants. During 1999, a summer school provided additional classes and the same is planned for this year. Initial interviews identify some students with high levels of vocational training and education in their first language, but no specific provision is available to address their need. The college identified in the self-assessment report that there is a lack of basic skills tuition for daytime students, in particular in numeracy classes. Inspectors identified that there was little use of computer skills in the teaching of literacy or numeracy, which was not recognised in the self-assessment.

35 Teachers meet students' immediate language and confidence building needs by negotiating the topics to be addressed within the classroom. Students like the college's adult ambience and recommend it to friends. Staff are well qualified and have a good understanding of grammar and language structure. Lessons and schemes of work indicate strategies for students to practise all four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students are successfully encouraged to learn to work on their own, a strength not included in the self-assessment. Teachers give homework regularly. Marking is thorough and students' work is discussed in lessons, either individually or as a whole class. This helps students to understand what they need to do to make further progress. Students bring their own dictionaries, often bilingual, and are encouraged to use them in lessons. Course information encourages students to ensure that they have basic materials for learning. Teachers prepare everyone for external examinations, by practising past papers, but students have the choice to enter and the level of entry is negotiated.

36 Most of the lessons observed lacked variety in teaching and learning methods and few teachers differentiated exercises to take account of the needs of students in the class. Teachers used a small range of resources. There was no

Curriculum Areas

use of audio or visual material. Handouts were often copied from textbooks and there are no other materials to support learning. Classrooms lacked display materials to stimulate learning. Most teaching rooms at the main site are appropriate in size but layout does not always aid communication among students.

Information technology (IT) is not integrated within the curriculum, although one teacher has included basic wordprocessing skills.

37 College procedures do not effectively record achievement and retention. There is a course monitoring process but it is not applied thoroughly or consistently. Where data are available, they are not well used to evaluate retention and achievement. There was poor attendance in some lessons observed. Teachers do record progress for students in their own lessons but there is no individual student tracking system to monitor progress through different levels. The range of external accreditation offered is too small. For example, ESOL students can take accredited examinations but do not have opportunities to present portfolio evidence and have it externally certificated. Evidence from lessons indicates that the number opting to take examinations is low.

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 3

38 Inspectors concluded that the self-assessment report was not sufficiently comprehensive, nor rigorous. A number of the strengths claimed did not exceed standard practice, and the significance of some weaknesses was underestimated.

Key strengths

- good pre-course information and advice
- effective induction procedures
- good access to financial support
- wide range of enrichment activities

Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements for dealing with telephone enrolments
- uneven quality of on-course advice and tutorial support
- ineffective support for students needing help with basic and study skills
- inadequate support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

39 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that pre-course advice and information is good. The college has recently improved the quality of its printed publicity materials. Its course guide is well presented and explains complex material in a straightforward fashion. This is distributed across London to important public information points. During the two weeks prior to autumn enrolment, prospective students can visit the college to receive advice from teachers about their choice of course. Students planning to undertake courses leading to qualifications have a comprehensive interview. On enrolling, students receive an information pack which includes the college charter and the students' handbook. These documents are clear and easy to read. All key documents are available, on

request, in audio or large print format, though in practice this facility is little used.

40 Students can enrol in person, or by telephone or fax, using a credit card. The college also handles electronic mail enquiries. Office staff use computerised course outlines to advise enquirers appropriately. 'In person' enrolment is efficient and friendly. However, despite improvements, the system for dealing with telephone enquirers cannot cope satisfactorily with the volume of calls. The college recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report. Teachers draw upon course outlines, course guides and the tutors' handbook in order to induct students. Students quickly feel at home in the college.

41 During their course students do not always receive an adequate level of advice and monitoring of their progress. Within each department, on-course advice is available to students at a fixed time each week during term-time and by appointment at other times. Additionally, students on schedule 2 courses have an entitlement to tutorial support. This entitlement is minimal (half an hour a term) and students do not always take it up. Some students speak highly of the help they receive from teachers, others are unaware of the support available. The college sets no standards for these aspects of service provision. The significance of the weaknesses in this area was not fully recognised in the self-assessment report.

42 The college has no learning support policy. Learning support arrangements have been under review since 1997. A centralised service is proposed. Meanwhile, the basic education department offers English support workshops which are open to all students. This provision is not well used. This weakness was acknowledged to some extent in the self-assessment report. There is insufficient support for students who are dyslexic; there is a backlog of students awaiting assessment. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are asked

Cross-college Provision

to identify themselves at the point of enrolment. Teachers are then notified of students who may need support, but little guidance is given to enable them to do this effectively. The quality of support given to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not monitored. The college did not fully identify this weakness. The college offers some resources for students with disabilities/sensory impairments, including an optical reader and large-screen television and induction loops in some rooms. Reserved parking is available for people with restricted mobility. Arrangements for counselling the increasing number of students with profound personal or mental health difficulties are not systematic.

43 Progression guidance is satisfactory. Course outlines indicate to students the progression routes available to them on completion of their course. Students on the access programme rely heavily on their teachers for progression guidance, and are generally satisfied that they are prepared effectively for entry to higher education or employment. The college is considering developing centrally organised provision to improve guidance for all students. An audit conducted by South Bank Careers has indicated the developments required in order to meet an externally approved standard.

44 The college has a range of measures to ease the financial burden on students. This includes an appeal fund, established through voluntary contributions and intended to assist students at risk of dropping out of their course, as well as the college's access fund. Students' awareness of the existence of these measures is high. Inspectors judged that students have good access to financial support. A crèche and pre-school group operate on site, but their start and finish times do not fit conveniently with those of some lessons.

45 The wide and diverse range of provision offered by the college provides good

opportunities for enrichment activities. There is ample scope for students to celebrate their achievements and extend their learning. There are many ways for them to display their work, both within the college and beyond. They are also encouraged to make full use of the opportunities presented by London as a major cultural centre.

General Resources

Grade 3

46 Inspectors agreed with the overall balance of strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but considered that some strengths and weaknesses were overestimated.

Key strengths

- welcoming learning environment
- effective improvements to the buildings
- good general facilities for students

Weaknesses

- lack of accommodation strategy
- inadequate facilities for teachers
- insufficient access for students with restricted mobility

47 College buildings are welcoming and provide a pleasant learning environment for adult students. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that this was a strength. The two smallest buildings are of architectural interest. They are all clean and well-cared-for. Friendly security staff are employed and security cameras have been installed. The college makes good use of students' work and other college materials in visual displays in general areas, though not in classrooms. The entrance hall, used as a social area, has displays and useful information about the college and its activities.

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48 The buildings have difficult design features and high maintenance costs. The main building has two separate parts and eight levels. One building is a former public house with five floors; another is difficult to heat and ventilate. Facilities and access for students with restricted mobility have been improved but more than one-third of the accommodation is still not accessible, including the students' common room and the refectory. The college acknowledged this weakness in its self-assessment report. The buildings have other shortcomings. These include: inadequate storage space; insufficient rooms for purposes such as interviews; and noise in rooms adjacent to those with music classes. The college acknowledges in its self-assessment report that health and safety matters have not, until recently, been given sufficient attention. An improvement notice was served by the health and safety executive in 1999 and subsequently lifted. A risk assessment has now been completed and a revised health, safety and environment policy introduced.

49 The college has effectively improved parts of the buildings since the time of the last inspection, as noted in the self-assessment report. Over £640,000 has been spent during the last three years. This work has included improvements to heating and ventilation systems and carpeting and lighting. Asbestos has been removed and the main basement area has been refurbished. Managers have prioritised work on the buildings and there is a planned maintenance schedule. They have not formulated a long-term plan, although further works are scheduled. The college does not have an accommodation strategy. This was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The college has not carried out a room utilisation survey and does not have data that compares college usage with published efficiency measures.

50 The general facilities for students are good. Inspectors considered that the college

underestimated this strength in its self-assessment report. The college has a concert hall, recital rooms and dance and exercise studios. These provide a good environment for students' practical work. There are public performances during some lunchtimes and evenings, and staff and students value the opportunity to attend these performances. Students are able to use rooms outside of timetabled lessons to practise and rehearse. The college art gallery is open to students and the public. The college provides two common rooms for students' recreational use and a refectory and bar operate as franchised services. The refectory provides refreshments throughout the day and evening, and is also used as a social area by staff and students. Managers and administrative staff have adequate office accommodation and facilities. They have access to 48 networked personal computers. Teachers have access to a small common room. Some facilities, including access to photocopiers, have improved, but teachers do not have sufficient space to work in when they are not teaching and do not have sufficient access to computers. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

51 The college has improved information and learning technology facilities during the last three years. Inspectors did not agree with the judgement in the self-assessment report that these facilities are a significant strength. The learning centre has increased in size and is linked to the library. However, the number of spaces available for students to work on their own is still small and there are insufficient computers. There are 16 personal computers for students' use in the centre and two in the library. Only those in the library have access to the Internet. The centre has CD-ROMs for language learning, multimedia packages, scanners, laser printers and colour printers. The library has a stock of 26,000 volumes in addition to compact discs, records, videos and audiocassettes. The budget for the library and learning centre doubled in 1999-2000 to

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£27,000. It is still small, amounting to about £19 per full-time equivalent student. The library and learning centre services are not yet fully integrated. A staff development project, in collaboration with three other colleges, is promoting the use of IT to enhance teaching and learning. The college acknowledges that many teachers and students lack sufficient awareness of library and learning centre services, although this is improving.

Quality Assurance

Grade 4

52 Inspectors agreed with some strengths identified in the self-assessment report but thought that weaknesses were understated and that some weaknesses had been omitted. Weaknesses in quality assurance identified at the last inspection still remain.

Key strengths

- productive arrangements for consulting and liaising with students
- thorough and well-documented teaching observation scheme

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped quality assurance systems
- unsystematic course monitoring and reviewing
- insufficient analysis of retention and achievement
- underdeveloped staff performance and review process
- insufficient use of service standards and performance indicators

53 One of the college's strategic aims at the time of the last inspection was 'to develop and implement a comprehensive quality assurance system'. This system has not yet been developed or implemented. Managers recognise

that, whilst progress has been made, the college is still some way from a fully implemented system. The current academic quality assurance document states that some aspects of the quality assurance system are 'being piloted and are yet to be fully implemented'.

Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have still not been addressed, for example, the need to monitor academic performance systematically. The college has not yet applied for any external quality awards. Two committees are central to the implementation of quality assurance at Morley College. Both their roles are evolving. There is some confusion about the roles of the two committees. Staff do not understand why some issues should be addressed by one committee rather than the other.

54 The course monitoring and review process is not systematic. This is a weakness recognised by the college. There are considerable variations in the documentation used and the practice of different departments. Some departments are rigorous and meticulous in evaluating their work through a range of indicators. Other course files show no evidence of evaluation. Findings from course monitoring and review do not routinely affect action-planning. There is insufficient use of performance indicators and service standards to monitor performance and promote quality improvement in non-teaching functions, such as support for students. Most areas of the college do not use these, relying more on informal and intuitive assessments of performance. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment.

55 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment that good arrangements are in place to obtain the views of students. All courses may elect course representatives, who meet termly with the principal to express views and immediate concerns. This is an effective forum and is valued by students. A student executive committee deals with longer-term issues. It has

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contributed to the production of the student charter and the complaints procedure. It also produces a magazine which publicises achievements by Morley College students.

56 Staff development activities have made little impact on quality improvement. The staff development policy is inadequate; it does not contain procedures or published priorities. The staff development budget has doubled but is still low. There are no annual reports on staff development activities. Individual activities are evaluated, but there is no whole-college evaluation of its staff development programme. With the exception of IT training, staff development has not been routinely connected with individual appraisal, nor with the college's strategic development. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment. A cross-college manager has recently been given senior responsibility for staff development and is currently revising documentation and addressing these issues. Staff feel that there is now an overview of staff development and increased clarity about its operation.

57 There is a well-documented teaching observation scheme. Where it has been carried out, it affords good opportunities to give feedback to individual teachers. Staff value the professional development it provides them. Some unsatisfactory teaching has been identified and addressed through teaching observations. So far it is a pilot scheme and has not yet contributed to the overall improvement of teaching and learning. Inspectors found some decline in overall standards of teaching since the last inspection; they observed 8% fewer good or outstanding lessons. Members of staff in their probationary periods are appraised, but appraisal of other full-time staff is sporadic. Some managers have not been appraised for four years. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report.

58 The student charter is clearly written and informative. It describes what students may expect from the college and what the college

expects of them. The current charter was produced in September 1998 for last year's students. Some of the information in it is now out of date. It is being revised for students commencing in September 2000. The college has improved its complaints procedure. The process for progressing complaints is now much clearer. Students were consulted during the preparation of this new procedure. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment that the many complaints about course closures is an issue the college has not yet addressed.

59 The college began work on self-assessment later than most others in the sector. The 1998-99 self-assessment report was only the second to be produced by the college. There was little involvement of students or hourly paid part-time teachers in the process and no consultation with external organisations. Governors approved the self-assessment report, but had little input into the process. The report is comprehensive and identifies strengths and weaknesses against evidence. There is insufficient analysis of retention and achievement. The college had not submitted relevant student record data or produced retention and achievement spreadsheets in time to inform the self-assessment report. There is an overall action plan, but it is not linked back specifically to weaknesses identified in sections. Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements in the report. In some cases they considered that strengths had been overstated and weaknesses had not been identified. Inspectors agreed with two out of the four curriculum self-assessment grades and two out of the five grades awarded to aspects of cross-college provision.

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Governance

Grade 4

60 Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but thought that some strengths and weaknesses were overstated. They found additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- wide experience of governing body members
- effective monitoring of the college's finances
- productive involvement in the life of the college

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory clerking arrangements
- insufficient attention to strategic planning
- inadequate monitoring of students' retention and achievements
- slow progress in self-evaluation
- insufficient attention to FEFC requirements and guidance

61 The college has a legal framework for its operation set by its memorandum and articles of association. The governing body has a membership of 15, including the principal. There are six business governors, two nominated governors, two staff governors, one student governor, two co-opted community governors and one governor representing adult education. The current membership reflects the student body profile in terms of gender and race and governors have a wide range of skills and experience. The governing body uses this expertise to determine membership of its committees. It has established a search committee to assist with the recruitment of external governors. Vacancies are advertised and replacements are prompt. A governor has

recently been appointed with experience of strategic planning, a particular skill that the college has identified it requires.

62 As the self-assessment report claims, governors are productively involved in the life of the college. Governors are committed to the mission of the college and its curriculum. Relationships between the governors and the senior staff are good. The chair visits once a week and other governors regularly visit to discuss issues with senior staff. Governors regularly attend college events and performances and have helped in developments such as exhibitions in the Morley Gallery. They also support staff in college initiatives. For example, one governor played a major role in helping to monitor the college teaching observation scheme.

63 The self-assessment report identified induction and training of governors as a weakness. Inspectors considered that this weakness was overstated. New governors are inducted effectively through briefings from the principal, the chair of the governing body and the clerk to the governing body, as well as a standard induction information pack. However, on-going training and development for governors is underdeveloped. There has been one half-day training event this year, but governors have not formally identified their training needs.

64 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is weak. The governing body does not conduct its business in accordance with its memorandum and articles of association. It also does not fulfil its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. The clerk to the governing body is also the vice-principal (resources). The governing body has not established adequate arrangements to ensure the clerk's independence, particularly in relation to the finance and audit committees. The governing body has not agreed a separate job

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description for the clerking role. There has been no annual appraisal of the clerk by governors, nor an assessment of the time required for the clerking role to be fulfilled effectively.

65 As the self-assessment report identified, there is no annual schedule of governing body and committee meetings which identifies the key items of business for consideration at each meeting. There are no standing orders. Governing body papers provide a good basis for discussion and action. The minutes clearly identify decisions. The governing body has reviewed the position of a few governors with poor attendance records. The memorandum states that governors cannot be absent for more than 12 months but there is no annual target or report on attendance. There has been slow progress in responding to the Nolan committee's recommendations on openness and accountability. There is a register of interests but several governors have failed to make declarations. The governing body has not agreed arrangements for the appraisal of senior postholders.

66 The audit committee has not given proper consideration to some key aspects of Council Circular 98/15, *Audit Code of Practice*. The committee's terms of reference are not comprehensive. It has not established performance indicators for internal and external audit. Governors approved the audited financial statements for 1998-99, although there was no corporate governance statement on internal financial controls. This weakness was not identified by the college.

67 Governors' monitoring of the college's financial performance is rigorous. It is reviewed and discussed at each meeting of the finance committee and the governing body. The governing body has paid less attention to strategic planning. It has not monitored progress towards achievement of the current strategic plan, which it approved in 1998. It did not consider the current three-year financial

forecast, which underpins the strategic plan. The governing body has not ensured that there is an accommodation strategy. Governors receive information on enrolments each term but they do not receive adequate information to enable them to monitor students' performance in terms of retention and achievement. It has made slow progress in evaluating its own performance.

Management

Grade 3

68 Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements made in the self-assessment report. They considered that some judgements were overstated and that some weaknesses had been underestimated.

Key strengths

- effective departmental communication
- constructive links with external partners
- good financial control

Weaknesses

- poor strategic planning
- lack of target-setting
- inadequate management information and lateness of data returns

69 Communication within departments is generally good. The college recognises the need for effective communication with teaching staff, almost all of whom are part time. Inspectors thought that the self-assessment report overstated weaknesses in communication with teachers. There are regular college newsletters and management briefings. Departmental managers make particular efforts to ensure that sessional teachers receive information. Teachers and support staff speak highly of the support they receive from departmental managers. The links between senior staff and departments are less effective. The basis on

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which senior management decisions are made is not always clear to staff. For example, there is a need for greater clarification of the basis of funding allocations and of staff appointments.

70 The college strategic plan is insufficiently detailed. It does not give specific targets against which progress can be measured. There are no annual operating plans. The action plan from the self-assessment report has provided a guide to staff, but the targets are not quantifiable and there has been no formal monitoring of progress. Specific retention and achievement targets have not been set at course level. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. There is little whole-college strategic curriculum development or co-ordination. There is strong curriculum management in some areas and weaknesses in others. There are good examples of curriculum innovation in some subject areas, as described in the self-assessment report, but good practice within departments is not shared across the college. The previous inspection report identified recording of students' progress on non-schedule 2 courses as an issue that needed addressing. There has been insufficient co-ordination and monitoring of the progress made on this in teaching departments.

71 Inspectors agreed that the extensive range of external links is a strength. The college is a member of the lifelong learning partnership. It has been successful in a joint bid through the partnership for an FEFC non-schedule 2 project. This involves 24 people who are long-term unemployed, refugees, asylum-seekers or homeless people who are preparing to take part in the Notting Hill Carnival. There are links with universities, community groups and arts centres. These links provide the college with opportunities to reach a wider range of local people who have not previously been involved in college activity. There are some examples of projects to achieve this, including dance for people with disabilities and health projects with older learners in community centres. The self-

assessment report states the college's commitment to widening participation. Inspectors judged that this commitment is not systematically promoted across the college as a whole with clearly identified targets.

72 Progress has been made to develop marketing since the last inspection. The college appointed a marketing and communications manager, who has developed publicity and advertising policies. Local outlets, such as neighbourhood magazines have been used to promote the college as well as the use of local and national media. It is too early to assess the impact of this.

73 The previous inspection report identified a weakness in the college's management information systems. The college has been slow to address this. There has been insufficient accurate information for staff to review retention and achievement in relation to national benchmarking data published by the FEFC and to set appropriate targets. The college has recently purchased appropriate software, but it is too early to assess the impact of this. The self-assessment report does not give sufficient emphasis to weaknesses associated with data problems. The college has been consistently late with its data returns to the FEFC.

74 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college is in strong financial health. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. The college's finances are carefully planned and controlled by the finance team. Departmental performance monitoring reports are used effectively to monitor the financial performance of academic departments and individual courses. The budget planning process has not been comprehensively documented and the latest three-year financial forecast did not include an adequate analysis of risks, or a comprehensive set of quantified financial

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objectives. The college has implemented a new financial accounting system for 1999-2000, and financial reports are not yet produced promptly. Financial reports to governors include a detailed income and expenditure report and commentary on financial performance. The college's financial regulations have recently been updated but are not yet complete. External auditors have failed to ensure that the audited financial statements included a corporate governance statement on the college's system of financial controls.

75 The equal opportunities policy has been updated recently and there is a disability statement. Inspectors considered that strengths regarding equal opportunities in the self-assessment report were overstated. There are some examples of good practice in the curriculum. The equal opportunities committee reviews enrolment statistics and suggests targets for improvements. The committee does not monitor the retention and achievement of different groups of students. There has been an equal opportunities audit, but no action plan has been developed.

Conclusions

76 The college produced its second self-assessment report in preparation for the inspection. The inspection team found the report was partly useful in planning and carrying out the inspection. Inspectors had to request additional information from the college on student numbers and courses and on student retention and achievement data. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and many of the weaknesses identified in the report. The college reported as strengths some items, which were no more than a description of normal practice. It did not give as much weight to some weaknesses as the inspection team, partly because there was insufficient use of benchmarking data available in the sector.

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 (May 2000)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	0
16-18 years	1
19-24 years	12
25+ years	86
Not known	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (May 2000)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Level 1 (foundation)	10
Level 2 (intermediate)	3
Level 3 (advanced)	4
Level 4/5 (higher)	1
Non-schedule 2	82
Total	100

Source: college data

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

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	1	217	2
Engineering	1	360	3
Business	0	50	0
Hotel and catering	0	180	2
Health and community care	0	1,003	9
Art and design	42	4,953	44
Humanities	7	4,113	36
Basic education	8	427	4
Total	59	11,303	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (May 2000)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	14	19	0	33
Supporting direct learning contact	6	1	0	7
Other support	30	1	1	32
Total	50	21	1	72

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£3,077,000	£3,090,000	£3,653,681
Average level of funding (ALF)	£13.94	£14.06	£15.96
Payroll as a proportion of income	79%	78%	67%
Achievement of funding target	111%	102%	107%
Diversity of income	33%	36%	30%
Operating surplus	£4,000	£199,000	-£49,495

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

ALF – college (1997, 1998 and 1999)

Payroll – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

Achievement of funding target – college (1997, 1998 and 1999)

Diversity of income – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

Operating surplus – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

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