St Brendan's Sixth Form College

> REPORT FROM THE INSPECTORATE 1999-00

> > THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

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

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

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

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College statistics

Grade Descriptors

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

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



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

St Brendan's Sixth Form College South West Region

Inspected October 1999

St Brendan's Sixth Form College is a Roman Catholic sixth form college on the south-east edge of Bristol. The college produced a comprehensive self-assessment report which was based on the existing quality assurance procedures. The self-assessment process was well managed and involved all staff. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report, but some weaknesses had been understated and others omitted. Inspectors agreed with a majority of the grades, but awarded lower grades for two curriculum areas and two aspects of cross-college provision.

The college offers courses in six of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. Provision in four of these was inspected, together with aspects of cross-college provision. The college's Roman Catholic and Christian ethos is clearly expressed in its mission and clearly evident in college life. Governors and staff support this mission and work hard to realise it successfully. The college offers a good range of GCE A level and GCSE subjects and provides vocational courses at intermediate and advanced level in three subjects. There is some good teaching and learning, especially on GCE A level courses and in business subjects. Some courses have achieved consistently high examination pass

rates. Tutors and the chaplaincy service offer high-quality support to students. There is a good range of enrichment activities, including competitive team sports. The college is well governed and well managed. Communications are effective and there is some strong teamwork. There is a clear commitment to quality improvement throughout the college. Quality assurance is closely linked to strategic planning. There have been significant improvements to college accommodation and resources since the last inspection, including improved access for students with restricted mobility. Students benefit from the high-quality library and information centre and good access to up-to-date computers. The college identified many of the major issues that need to be addressed in its self-assessment report. In order to improve the quality of provision further, the college should address: poor results and retention on some courses; some weaker teaching and learning, especially on GCSE and enrichment courses; the unsatisfactory teaching accommodation provided by some classrooms; inadequate arrangements to provide additional learning support; the lack of access to important areas of the college for students with restricted mobility; the lack of monitoring of some college policies.

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

| Curriculum area | Grade | Cross-college provision | Grade |
|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Mathematics and computing | 3 | Support for students | 2 |
| Business | 2 | General resources | 2 |
| Art and design | 3 | Quality assurance | 3 |
| English and communications | 3 | Governance | 2 |
| | | Management | 2 |

St Brendan's Sixth Form College

Context

The College and its Mission

1 St Brendan's Sixth Form College was opened in 1981 as a Roman Catholic sixth form college, following reorganisation of Roman Catholic education in the Diocese of Clifton. The college has four Roman Catholic 11 to 16 partner secondary schools. It also attracts students who seek education within a Christian context from many other schools in the area, most of which have their own sixth forms. The number of full-time 16- to 19- year-old students has grown to about 1,000. From September 2000, the college and its partner schools will offer initial teacher training for people wishing to teach in Roman Catholic schools in partnership with Newman College, Birmingham.

2 Bristol and Bath and the surrounding villages and small towns depend on skilled technical industry, financial services and the tourist industry. Significant numbers of residents from Bath and North East Somerset commute to Bristol daily. Unemployment in these areas was well below the national average in September 1999, at 2.7%. At the same time, unemployment in Brislington, where the college is sited, was 4% compared with 3.5% for the city of Bristol. A number of wards close to the college have higher levels of unemployment and increasingly the college is recruiting students from these wards. The college is part of a South Bristol post-16 providers working group that is extending the range of courses available to students in the area. There is also a scheme to improve the qualifications of football apprentices from Bristol Rovers Football Club. Of the college's students, 36% are Roman Catholic. There is significant competition for students from secondary schools with sixth forms and independent schools, the four further education colleges in Bristol, and the two colleges in the Bath area, one of which has an annex in Keynsham, about 3 miles from the college. St Brendan's Sixth Form College works with the further education colleges in Bristol to produce joint marketing information.

3 The college offers mainly advanced level courses. There are 34 subjects at general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), 20 GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects and three general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) at advanced level. At intermediate level, 17 subjects are offered at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and three GNVQ intermediate qualifications. Approximately 60 students each year study five GCSE subjects as a full-time course in order to gain access to advanced level courses or employment. Students studying at advanced level can also take GCSE English and mathematics. Certificate in theology lessons for all full-time students are in keeping with the Christian mission of the college. The enrichment programme promotes sport, music and drama. All students on advanced level courses take a computer literacy course in their first year.

The college employs 89 full-time equivalent 4 staff of whom 60 are teachers and a further 13 directly support learning. The senior management team of the college comprises the principal, vice-principal, the finance officer and the director of studies. There are 11 teaching departments. Heads of department and course team leaders manage teaching and learning. Five senior tutors work with the heads of department to assure quality. Each senior tutor is also responsible for nine or 10 personal tutors and has responsibility for an aspect of work across the college, for example, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support staff assist with administration and technical work throughout the college.

5 The college's mission is to witness to the value of Roman Catholic education and Christian ideals within a caring community. The college promotes opportunities for the academic, spiritual, moral and physical development of each individual student. The theology programme, assemblies and charitable action

Context

serve to heighten spiritual awareness, deepen understanding and remind the community of issues of justice beyond itself.

The Inspection

6 The college was inspected during the week beginning 11 October 1999. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's selfassessment report and reviewed information held about the college by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors used data on students' achievements derived from the individualised student record (ISR) for the years 1997 and 1998 to inform the inspection. The college provided data for 1999 which were checked by inspectors before the inspection. The inspection was carried out by eight inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 38 days in the college. Inspectors observed 51 lessons and examined students' work. The inspection team examined documents provided by the college to support its self-assessment report and held meetings with governors, managers, staff, students, representatives of partner schools and others from the community served by the college.

7 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the lessons inspected, 57% were judged to be good or outstanding and 4% were less than satisfactory. This profile is lower than the national averages of 65% and 6%, respectively.

| Programme | Grade 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Totals |
|--|------------|----|----|---|---|--------|
| GCE A/AS level | 6 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 32 |
| GCSE | 0 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| GNVQ | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Total (No.) | 7 | 22 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 51 |
| Total (%) | 14 | 43 | 39 | 4 | 0 | 100 |
| National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99 (%) | 20 | 45 | 29 | 6 | 0 | 100 |

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

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

St Brendan's Sixth Form College

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8 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 (%) |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| St Brendan's Sixth Form College | 13.0 | 89 |
| 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

Mathematics and Computing

Grade 3

9 Inspectors observed 13 lessons including GCE A level and GCSE courses in mathematics and computing. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the report but identified a few additional weaknesses. Weaknesses regarding computer hardware had been remedied by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- high pass rates in GCSE information technology (IT)
- good retention rates in computing and IT in 1998 and 1999
- well-prepared lessons
- well-planned and well-organised courses
- careful setting and thorough marking of students' work
- high-quality accommodation and facilities for computing courses

Weaknesses

- achievements in GCE A level mathematics below national benchmarks
- declining retention rates in mathematics
- a narrow range of approaches to teaching and learning in mathematics
- some poor learning environments in mathematics and IT
- some ineffective teaching
- little use of IT to enrich mathematics

10 Inspectors agreed that courses are well organised and that students are well informed about course content and assessment. Student numbers have increased since the last inspection. GCE A/AS level in mathematics is modular and flexibly arranged to meet the needs and interests of individual students. Some of the earlier entries for GCE A level mathematics on the ISR have been inaccurate, but inspectors found that the department held accurate data.

Teaching is satisfactory or better. Working 11 relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers have high expectations of their students. Progress is assessed regularly and includes reports to students and their parents. Homework is marked fairly and corrected and teachers' comments include guidance on how students may improve their performance. Students' learning is well supported by timetabled workshops, planned lesson activities and specially-developed course manuals. Inspectors agreed with the college that lessons are carefully planned. In GCE A level computing lessons there is a balance between theoretical and practical work. Lectures are usually followed by a practical session in the adjacent computer room when students work on their own to complete practical exercises using high-quality instruction manuals or worksheets. In mathematics, teachers emphasise the importance of correct notation and of presenting logical solutions. In the better lessons, teachers drew together key points and showed students how to develop their work further. In some other lessons, a small number of students did not respond well to the teachers' questions or pay full attention to the lesson. In a small minority of lessons the teaching was dull and uninspiring. Inspectors did not agree with the judgement in the self-assessment report that teachers always provide students with a variety of learning experiences in their lessons. For example, mathematics lessons did not include the use of IT as a mathematical tool.

12 Students' work is well presented and shows that examination requirements are thoroughly covered. However, few classroom displays were evident. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that retention rates for most courses are above the national average for sixth form colleges. They have improved considerably in the past two years in both computing and IT. In GCE A level mathematics, retention rates have declined over the past three years to 78% in 1999. The self-assessment report acknowledges that examination pass rates in GCE A level mathematics are below

national benchmarks. The self-assessment report incorrectly states that intermediate level achievements are significantly above the national average. Inspectors agreed that this is true for GCSE IT, but pass rates for GCSE mathematics vary from below the national average in 1997 to equal it in 1999. Most students work hard in their lessons. Attendance at lessons observed was 91%. Computing students consistently achieve GCE A level grades above those predicted by their GCSE grades on entry to the course. In mathematics, students' grades are improving each year and in 1999 they achieved GCE A level grades which matched those predicted by their GCSE grades on entry.

13 A new computer suite has significantly improved the facilities for GCE A level computing courses. However, these facilities are not easily available to GCSE IT students who are based in a poor-quality mobile classroom.
As identified in the self-assessment report, a few classrooms are too small for the sizes of classes using them and become hot and overcrowded. Noise from other classrooms was a distraction in a few lessons.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in mathematics and computing, 1997 to 1999

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and | Completion year | | ar |
|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | outcome | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
| GCSE IT | 2 | Number of starters | 26 | 20 | 35 |
| | | Retention (%) | 69 | 90 | 89 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 94 | 94 | 68 |
| GCSE mathematics | 2 | Number of starters | 211 | 217 | 211 |
| | | Retention (%) | 78 | 85 | 79 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 36 | 56 | 41 |
| GCE A level computing | 3 | Number of starters | 31 | 48 | 50 |
| | | Retention (%) | 61 | 75 | 82 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 95 | 72 | 85 |
| GCE A level mathematics | 3 | Number of starters | * | * | 91 |
| | | Retention (%) | * | * | 78 |
| | | Achievement (%) | * | * | 82 |
| GCE AS mathematics | 3 | Number of starters | * | * | 21 |
| | | Retention (%) | * | * | 86 |
| | | Achievement (%) | * | * | 72 |

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999) *data unreliable

Business

Grade 2

14 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering GCE A level business studies and economics, GNVQ in business at intermediate and advanced levels and computer literacy and information technology. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report and identified some additional strengths and weaknesses. Most significantly, the weaker teaching and learning for computer literacy and information technology courses is not identified in the selfassessment report.

Key strengths

- good students' achievements on GCE A level courses
- effective teaching and learning in business studies and economics
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- well-managed courses
- good communication and teamwork between teachers
- easy access to computers and the Internet
- high-quality work by GCE A level students

Weaknesses

- weaker teaching and learning on computer literacy and information technology courses
- mainly poor retention and achievement rates on GNVQ courses
- a few poor-quality classrooms

15 The college offers GCE A level business studies and economics and GNVQ courses in business at intermediate and advanced levels.All full-time students in the college follow a computer literacy and information technology programme. Courses are well managed.Teachers meet regularly to plan improvements to the quality of provision. Students follow a comprehensive induction programme, which they enjoy and find useful. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the departmental tutorial system works well to support academic progress. Students' progress is closely monitored by their teachers. Course reviews are thorough and pay good attention to student retention and achievement.

16 The quality of teaching is good. Of the lessons observed, 75% were graded good or outstanding, which is 10% above the national average for the business programme area. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Lessons are carefully planned to include a balance of exposition, individual work and small group work. For example, in one lesson students were assessing their own level of communication skills. First the teacher read aloud a poem on the use of the spell checker on a computer. Students then read the poem through themselves and discussed it in pairs. They then had to correct any wrong spellings. The exercise was lively and entertaining and stimulated much interest and debate. In another lesson the topic of financial gearing was introduced. It was carefully related to realistic commercial practices. Students contributed fully to class discussions and then moved on to work individually on their assignment, which included this topic. This exercise helped them all to understand the concept of financial gearing. Staff and students work well together and this is evident in lessons and individual tutorials. Assessment is thorough and fair. Teachers give constructive advice to students on how to improve their performance. Grammatical and spelling errors are carefully corrected. Teaching and learning on computer literacy and information technology courses are satisfactory, but less effective than other teaching in the department. There is a lack of appropriate learning materials and students largely rely on teachers' help. The self-assessment report acknowledges that some teachers lack adequate knowledge and skills to be effective on these courses.

The quality of GCE A level students' work 17 is good and some is outstanding. Students demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge, skills and understanding, a strength not fully acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Students work effectively on their own and in groups. For example, in a lesson on critical path analysis students completed an exercise in groups on stock control for a large manufacturing company. They organised their work well together and each group made good progress. Students make effective use of IT skills to enhance the presentation of their work. Retention and achievement rates are generally high on GCE A level courses over the last three years. GNVQ intermediate retention and achievement rates were poor in 1997 and 1998, but have improved significantly in 1999 to well above the national average. In 1998, during the first pilot year of the GNVQ intermediate course, few students passed the key skills element. Retention and achievement rates on the GNVQ advanced course are below the national average, but retention is improving. All of these strengths and weaknesses are recognised in the self-assessment report.

18 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teachers show a high level of commitment to their students and have appropriate academic and vocational qualifications. The recently-extended IT facilities are well used by business students and allow them easy access to computers. As identified in the self-assessment report, a few lessons are held in dilapidated classrooms. Some of these rooms are too small for the size of the groups in business studies.

| A summary of retention and achievement |
|--|
| rates in business, 1997 to 1999 |

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and | Completion year | | | |
|------------------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------|------|------|--|
| | | outcome | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | |
| GNVQ intermediate | 2 | Number of starters | 18 | 26 | 15 | |
| business | | Retention (%) | 44 | 62 | 80 | |
| | | Achievement (%) | 100 | 0 | 83 | |
| GNVQ advanced business | 3 | Number of starters | 22 | 18 | 21 | |
| | | Retention (%) | 27 | 61 | 67 | |
| | | Achievement (%) | 100 | 55 | 57 | |
| GCE A level economics | 3 | Number of starters | 20 | 19 | 16 | |
| | | Retention (%) | 95 | 95 | 62 | |
| | | Achievement (%) | 95 | 89 | 100 | |
| GCE A level business | 3 | Number of starters | 73 | 90 | 92 | |
| | | Retention (%) | 73 | 81 | 79 | |
| | | Achievement (%) | 96 | 99 | 94 | |

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

Art and Design

Grade 3

19 The inspection covered GCSE art and design and music courses and GCE A level courses in art and design, textiles, photography, theatre studies, music and music technology. Inspectors observed 12 lessons. They agreed with many of the strengths recognised in the self-assessment, but identified a number of additional key weaknesses.

Key strengths

- consistently high pass rates in GCE A level art and design, textiles and photography
- detailed teaching schemes
- thorough research and observation skills in some students' work
- a wide range of visits and events
- constructive feedback on students' work

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on music, textiles and photography courses
- low pass rates on GCSE art and photography courses
- proportion of A to C grades achieved at GCE A level below the national average
- casual attitudes to practical work in art studios
- unclear assessment criteria
- some small and cluttered practical work areas

20 The courses inspected are based in the creative and performing arts department. Individual courses are well organised with detailed schemes of work. However, the department is not exploiting the opportunity for collaboration between music, drama and the visual arts. There are few links with design technology which is offered by a different department. This issue was recognised by the

college in its self-assessment report. A range of visits to galleries and theatres and trips to Berlin and Paris are used well to enrich students' experiences of their subjects. There is an annual theatre production. Rehearsals for a production of West Side Story were underway at the time of the inspection.

21 Most teaching is well planned. Assignments are designed to develop students' individual abilities. Teachers use a good range of appropriate teaching methods. In music and theatre studies, group work and ensemble work is regularly encouraged. Theatre studies teachers use questions well to draw out students' ideas. Music teachers make effective use of the range of instruments and specialist equipment to ensure that theory lessons are supported by practical applications. Too often, art and design teachers do not have high enough expectations of their students. They do not insist on a professional attitude to work. Students are often casual in their approach and in the care they take with materials, equipment and the storage of their work. Studios are often left cluttered with unfinished work. In photography, many students' prints are marked by scratching or dirt from poor processing. These issues were included in the college's internal inspection report, but not in the self-assessment report. Extended staff absences in photography, music and art and design, although covered by supply teachers, have disrupted the continuity of teaching. Assessment is regular and verbal feedback is constructive and helps to build students' confidence. The criteria for assessment are often unclear. Students in music and theatre studies are often unsure about the criteria for the assessment of their performance.

22 Examination pass rates for students who complete the GCE A level visual arts subjects are consistently close to the national averages for these subjects for sixth form colleges. In theatre studies, music and music technology, pass rates are often below the national average. Pass rates for GCSE art and photography are improving,

but have been very low. Retention is often below national averages in the three visual art subjects and music. The percentage of students achieving high pass grades in GCE A level is often below the national average in visual arts courses. In theatre studies there has been a steady improvement in the proportion of higher grades achieved and it is now above the national average. Students of visual arts subjects are not achieving the GCE A level grades that their GCSE grades on entry would predict. This weakness was not included in the self-assessment report. The best student work demonstrates good observation and thorough research. There are some good drawings based on natural forms that show careful and detailed observation. Many students' logbooks contain detailed research of historical influences. Some of the artwork is poorly presented with poor and often over-elaborate mounting. Theatre studies and music students demonstrate good performance skills.

A purpose-built art block provides 23 reasonable facilities for textiles, printmaking, photography and sculpture. The space for photography is too small. Many studios are cluttered with extraneous material and equipment which restricts workspace for students. Theatre studies is based in a large mobile classroom. Space for performance is restricted and the lighting system is basic. The accommodation for music is poor; there is one small teaching space and only one practice room. Lack of space severely limits opportunities for students to practise and develop ensemble work. The lack of specialist graphic software in the college means that students do not learn how to manipulate images on the computer.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in art and design, 1997 to 1999

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and | Completion year | | ar |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|
| | | outcome | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
| GCSE photography art and design | 2 | Number of starters Retention (%) | 28 75 | 53 74 | 42 69 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 32 | 25 | 69 |
| GCE A level art and design, | 3 | Number of starters | 126 | 120 | 126 |
| photography and | | Retention (%) | 75 | 68 | 72 |
| textiles | | Achievement (%) | 96 | 93 | 94 |
| GCE A level theatre | 3 | Number of starters | 42 | 36 | 39 |
| studies | | Retention (%) | 64 | 72 | 95 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 85 | 73 | 84 |
| GCE A level music and | 3 | Number of starters | 29 | 14 | 13 |
| music technology | | Retention (%) | 59 | 93 | 58 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 100 | 64 | 81 |
| GCE AS art and design | 3 | Number of starters | * | * | 22 |
| | | Retention (%) | * | * | 96 |
| | | Achievement (%) | * | * | 48 |

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999) *course did not run

English and Communications

Grade 3

24 Inspectors observed 14 lessons covering GCE A levels in English literature, English language and communication studies and GCSE English language. The self-assessment report identified the majority of the strengths, but overstated some. Weaknesses in students' achievements were identified, but those in teaching and learning were not.

Key strengths

- good teaching in the majority of GCE A level lessons
- good examination pass rates in GCE A level English language
- well-designed schemes of work and course guides
- outstanding library provision for English courses
- attractive classrooms with effective displays of students' work

Weaknesses

- some weak teaching, particularly in GCSE lessons
- some poor examination results in GCSE English and GCE A level communications
- low retention rates in GCSE English and GCE A level communications
- declining numbers of high grade passes in GCE A level subjects

25 Nearly 200 students each year take GCE A level courses in English language, English literature and communication studies. Around 100 students from other areas of the college repeat GCSE English in order to improve their grades. Teaching is good in the majority of lessons and is sustained at GCE A level by well-planned schemes of work and study guides on specific aspects of the course. Lesson preparation is thorough. In the most successful lessons, students' interest is captured by the imaginative way teachers present the work and the variety of learning methods used. These include work in pairs and groups, presentations by students and lively question and answer sessions and debates.

26 Teachers provide material effective which is carefully structured to build on students' interest and develop their understanding. For example, students in the early stages of their GCE A level English language course had carefully constructed their own language histories in order to examine effectively their speech patterns. A lesson on Othello illustrated the richness of Shakespeare's language by requiring students to abbreviate the meaning of short passages into the style of a telegram. The same scene from Richard II was viewed in two different productions which illustrated the range of interpretations possible in the analysis of Shakespeare's theatre craft. There are opportunities for students to enhance their studies through visits to theatres, and there is an annual day conference on English language topics in the college. Teachers willingly support students who require extra help. Written work is effectively marked with helpful advice and criticism. In a number of lessons, however, teachers failed to involve all students in their work and, at times, some students lost interest. Group work was at times impaired either by a failure to focus the group activity sufficiently or by allowing the group to work on too long. In GCSE English lessons, there was little variety in the teaching methods used. Too often the teacher talked too much and failed to make students work hard enough. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

27 The pass rate in GCE A level English language over the past three years has been very good. The majority of students perform above their target grades predicted by their GCSE grades at entry. GCE A level literature pass rates have been below the national average

for sixth form colleges for the last two years. Pass rates in GCE A level communication studies have declined to well below the national average in 1998 and 1999. There has also been a sustained decline in the number of higher grades achieved on all GCE A level courses. In GCSE English, the number of A to C grade passes also declined to well below the national average in 1999 though these are the subject of an enquiry by the examination board. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Retention on English literature courses at GCE A level is good, but retention on communications GCE A level and English language GCSE are well below the national average. Students display good oral skills in GCE A level lessons. Their written work at its best is lively and accurate and demonstrates their ability to present arguments clearly. Two students recently won prizes in a national poetry competition. Attendance during the inspection was good, particularly in GCE A level classes.

28 Communication between teachers is effective. There is some evidence of the sharing of good practice, particularly in GCE A level language courses. The self-assessment report identifies difficulties with meetings at course level with part-time teachers. Teachers are generally effectively deployed across GCE A level courses, though there is some imbalance in the size of the GCSE classes they teach.

29 Library support for English courses is outstanding. Particularly good is the collection of twentieth century poetry. The suite of English classrooms is well furnished, carpeted and pleasantly decorated with students' work and appropriate posters. There is only one video recorder available in the department. There is little storage space and facilities in the staff workroom are restricted. These weaknesses are identified in the self-assessment report.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in English and communications, 1997 to 1999

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and | Co | ar | |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | outcome | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
| GCSE English language | 2 | Number of starters Retention (%) | 118 75 | 120 81 | 109 71 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 67 | 63 | 36 |
| GCE A level English | 3 | Number of starters | 117 | 83 | 97 |
| literature | | Retention (%) | 84 | 86 | 88 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 95 | 90 | 87 |
| GCE A level English | 3 | Number of starters | 84 | 99 | 83 |
| language | | Retention (%) | 75 | 79 | 81 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 97 | 92 | 100 |
| GCE A level | 3 | Number of starters | 60 | 53 | 47 |
| communications | | Retention (%) | 65 | 72 | 68 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 92 | 58 | 72 |

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

Support for Students

Grade 2

30 The self-assessment report was detailed and inspectors agreed with most of its findings. The college identified a weakness in relation to learning support, but significantly underestimated its importance.

Key strengths

- the Roman Catholic and Christian ethos as a central part of the college's core values
- effective liaison with Roman Catholic partner schools
- comprehensive pre-course guidance, enrolment and induction
- effective monitoring of students' attendance and progress
- the comprehensive range of enrichment activities

Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements for learning support
- some low retention, attendance and achievement rates on enrichment courses

The Roman Catholic ethos and Christian 31 values of the college, as outlined in the mission statement, are strongly supported by governors, management, staff and students. As the self-assessment report identifies, there are strong links with the local Roman Catholic community. The college effectively provides an environment for students to develop and practise their faith. In addition to a full-time lay chaplaincy leader, the college has a Roman Catholic priest and an Anglican priest as part-time chaplains. Liturgies, assemblies, residential retreats, special events and Christian action groups are well co-ordinated. Action groups for the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development and Amnesty International are particularly well attended. Counselling support

is available through the chaplain, senior tutors and a college counsellor who attends on one day every week. The college satisfies the legal requirements for providing collective acts of worship. Mass is celebrated weekly and on holy days. While most students are of other faiths and denominations, all students must be receptive to the distinctive Roman Catholic and Christian character of the college. Students accept this and speak highly of the college's respect for other denominations. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, many designed to allow students to discuss and reflect on moral, religious and spiritual issues. All students must follow a course leading to a certificate in theology. Some students choose to study for GCE A level in general studies as part of their enrichment programme. However, attendance at these lessons and achievement of the final qualifications are often low.

Students receive comprehensive pre-course 32 information and guidance. The prospectus and individual course leaflets are attractive, informative and clearly laid out. Inspectors agreed with the college that links with the four Roman Catholic partner schools are good. Pupils and parents are well informed of the provision available. There is a 'taster' day for year 10 pupils and a separate open evening. Recruitment interviews take place in partner schools. A central recruitment team gives impartial advice and carries out all interviews. A further open evening is held for other schools. Induction is comprehensive and supported by an informative handbook. All students receive a copy of the comprehensive student handbook. There are clear procedures to help students who decide to change their course after enrolment.

33 Students are well supported by their personal tutor and the senior tutors. All students have a personal tutor who, in most cases, is also one of their teachers. Tutorial support is highly valued by students. Tutor groups meet daily either for registration or assembly. Assembly provides an opportunity for

reflection and prayer. Inspectors agreed with the college that students' progress and attendance are carefully monitored. Attendance, punctuality and performance against minimum target grades for each student are recorded centrally. These measures, together with a detailed record of achievement for each subject, are effectively used in individual reviews by personal tutors. Students have at least one such review each term. Action plans are produced for each student.

There is no college-wide system for the 34 initial assessment of students' learning support needs. Students who have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support. For other students, workshops are available in mathematics, English and computing, but the system for referring students to these is ineffective. Students either refer themselves or are referred by a subject teacher or their personal tutor. In practice, this means only that the students' name is added to a list. There is no facility to inform the learning support staff of the level of need or depth of the problem. Attendance is not monitored. Learning support staff are not aware of how many students will attend each workshop. There is no system to inform teachers or tutors of students' progress. There are no systems to measure the success of the support offered. The college recognises weaknesses in its learning support systems in the self-assessment report. However, it did not recognise the ineffective referral system, inadequate monitoring of attendance or lack of feedback to teachers and tutors.

35 Inspectors agreed with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report regarding careers education and guidance. There is an extensive and well-stocked careers library. Guidance and resources for students wishing to progress to higher education are particularly strong. The college works closely with Learning Partnership West, the local careers service. 36 There are strong links with parents through parents' evenings and information evenings on higher education. There are regular parents' evenings and reports regarding students' progress are shared with parents. Parents appreciate the contribution made by the college towards travelling expenses, particularly as some students travel a long distance. There is a small hardship fund to assist individual students with travel and with payment for study visits. These strengths are identified in the selfassessment report.

General Resources

Grade 2

37 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They agreed that the college has made good progress in improving its accommodation and resources since the last inspection. While agreeing with the college that there have been improvements to access for students with restricted mobility, inspectors judged that access difficulties remain a weakness, which the college had not identified.

Key strengths

- attractive and well-maintained accommodation
- an effective and well-used library and information centre
- accessible and high-quality computing facilities
- a continuing programme of effective improvements to accommodation
- wide range of sporting facilities

Weaknesses

- lack of access to some important areas for students with restricted mobility
- some unsatisfactory, small teaching spaces

38 The college occupies an attractive and secure site in extensive and well-maintained grounds. Inspectors agreed with the college that the accommodation is clean. well-cared-for and provides a good learning environment. The attractive chapel offers students and staff a peaceful place for contemplation and prayer. The chaplaincy base is pleasant and welcoming to all students. As the self-assessment report states, there have been some significant improvements in the quality of accommodation since the last inspection. A major building project has almost doubled the size of the library, and created two new classrooms, an open-access computer suite with 36 modern machines and a fine auditorium with seating for 250 which is used for assemblies, drama and music performances and public meetings.

39 Classroom accommodation is generally good. The college has created larger teaching spaces to accommodate bigger teaching groups. Much of the older hutted accommodation has been taken out of use, and less than 8% of lessons take place in this unsatisfactory environment. Inspectors observed a few overcrowded classrooms which affected the quality of teaching and learning. These weaknesses are identified in the self-assessment report. Some classroom equipment, such as overhead projectors and video playback facilities are old, but are still serviceable. Most teachers have sufficient space for working and reasonable access to computers. There is also a pleasant central staff room. Workspaces for administrative and technical staff are adequate. There is a central reprographics facility to support the production of teaching materials.

40 Inspectors agreed with the college that there has been sustained progress to improve the accessibility of facilities to students with restricted mobility. More curriculum areas are now accessible than at the time of the last inspection. However, important areas of the college, such as the library, remain difficult to use. The college has made arrangements to enable students with mobility difficulties to have access to the library catalogue and support from the library staff in a room on the ground floor. Other areas of the college provide a difficult working environment for students with restricted mobility. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

41 The library and information centre is well used, highly regarded by students and offers a wide range of accessible and modern materials to help students to learn. The self-assessment report places suitable emphasis on this provision. The wide range of books, CD-ROMs and journals are closely linked to the courses that students are following. There are 150 workspaces, some of which can be booked for small group work or seminars. The recent extensions to the library have relieved much of the congestion apparent at the last inspection. In some specialist areas, there are older books that could be removed without detriment to students' learning.

42 As the college identifies in its self-assessment report, students have good opportunities to use modern computers in their studies. There are over 140 computers available across the college, with 16 providing controlled access to the Internet. Workstations and the design of the computer suite in the library and the new open access suite offer a good working environment. Inspectors found that these facilities were well used. Students report that there is generally easy access to these computers, although there have been a few initial problems where machines or software have not operated well. There is a planned programme to upgrade some of the computers in classrooms.

43 A wide range of sports facilities is available to students. This strength is recognised in the self-assessment report. These include a large sports hall, a gymnasium, weight training facilities and extensive playing fields used for rugby, soccer and hockey. The college

also has an arrangement with Bristol Rovers Football Club, whose base is adjacent to the college, for students to use the all-weather pitches and physiology room. These facilities provide good support for the wide range of sporting activities on offer in the college. Improvements to the students' common room and refectory have created a bright and well-decorated facility. The refectory offers a range of hot and cold food and drinks at reasonable prices.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

44 Inspectors agreed with much of the college's assessment of its quality assurance arrangements, but identified some additional weaknesses relating to the lack of impact of quality assurance on the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievements.

Key strengths

- an effective system for reviewing the quality of provision in many areas of the college
- good links between quality assurance and strategic planning
- an effective and well-regarded staff development programme
- careful monitoring of complaints
- a comprehensive self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- lack of impact of quality assurance procedures on students' achievements in some curriculum areas
- the overgenerous self-assessment of aspects of the college provision
- lack of formally-defined standards in some support service areas
- the poor quality of some course reviews
- lack of measurable outcomes in some action plans

45 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is a strong commitment to quality assurance among managers and staff. The quality assurance framework is comprehensive and covers both teaching and cross-college functions. Quality assurance is well managed. Procedures to implement policies and quality reviews are clear. Senior managers conduct internal inspections of all curriculum and support services to check the extent to which quality standards are met. Governors play an active role in quality assurance through the planning, curriculum and student provision committee of the corporation. They scrutinise reports, and contribute to aspects of quality assurance such as the setting of realistic targets.

Course review and evaluation forms the 46 basis for the college's quality assurance system. Undertaken twice a year it addresses key performance indicators, including students' actual performance compared with predicted GCE A level grades. Course teams compare students' retention rates and achievements with national benchmarking data and with data from the previous year. The results of surveys of students' views are analysed and recorded in review documents. Senior managers ensure that the review process is implemented. These reviews lead to action plans that are agreed and monitored by heads of department and senior tutors. For courses judged to be performing below expectations, the senior management team monitors the action plans. As the college acknowledges in the self-assessment report, some course reviews lack rigour and the quality of action plans arising from them is poor.

47 Targets for enrolment, attendance, retention and students' achievements were introduced in 1997. As recognised in the self-assessment report, established standards and performance indicators are not in place in many support service areas. In some sections, for example the library, staff have identified standards and there are procedures to obtain

feedback from customers on levels of performance. In other support areas, the process of establishing standards is at an early stage.

48 The college's quality assurance procedures have not yet had an impact on students' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning. There has been an improvement in examination results and retention rates in some curriculum areas over the past three years but, in others, pass and retention rates are declining. Overall, there has been a decline in the percentage of students gaining high grade passes in GCE A level from 55% in 1997 to 46% in 1999. There is a well-organised programme of lesson observations that contributed to the judgements in the self-assessment report. The college awarded higher grades to lessons than those awarded by inspectors. The overall quality of teaching and learning has remained the same as at the last inspection.

49 Students have a good understanding of their rights, responsibilities and entitlements. The college's charter and complaints procedure are distributed to all students. The charter contains some measurable targets, and progress towards reaching these is monitored. The college acknowledges that further quantitative measures are required for some aspects of the charter. As the self-assessment report indicates, there is regular monitoring of the college's response to students' complaints.

50 Arrangements for staff development are good and are well regarded by staff. Staff development policies are supported by a useful handbook. Staff development is closely linked to strategic objectives. Activities are evaluated and the staff development programme is reviewed annually. The self-assessment report acknowledges that the development of appraisal has been slow. The previous staff appraisal scheme was cumbersome. It has been replaced by an annual review by line managers which is clearly linked to staff development needs. Many staff have yet to be appraised.

Self-assessment is comprehensive, well 51 planned and builds on existing quality assurance arrangements. It forms an integral part of the annual cycle of planning and review. All staff and governors are involved. There are reports covering all courses and departments and all support services. The self-assessment committee, comprising the senior management team and senior tutors, closely scrutinises all of the contributory reports on which the college's self-assessment report is based. Inspectors agreed that the self-assessment process is comprehensive and well co-ordinated. The self-assessment report recognised many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors, but understated some weaknesses and omitted others. Inspectors awarded lower grades than the college in two curriculum areas and two aspects of cross-college provision.

Governance

Grade 2

52 Inspectors were broadly in agreement with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. They considered some weaknesses to be overstated, whilst others were omitted.

Key strengths

- an effective committee structure which makes good use of governors' skills and experience
- efficient conduct of the business of the governing body and its committees
- the close working relationship between governors and senior staff
- effective contribution to strategic planning
- thorough self-assessment of governance
- effective monitoring of students'
 achievements

Weaknesses

- inadequate monitoring of some college policies
- the potential for a conflict of interest in the servicing of the resources committee

53 The self-assessment report recognises that the quality of governance is a strength. The college is well governed by members who are strongly committed to the Roman Catholic ethos and core values of the college expressed in its mission statement. An appropriate range of committees makes effective use of governors' skills and experience. The governing body has established committees for finance, audit, remuneration, personnel, planning and provision for students. They meet regularly and have clear terms of reference. An oral report from each committee is presented at every meeting of the governing body. Minutes of committee meetings are circulated to all governors.

There are 18 governors, comprising 54 10 foundation governors appointed by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Clifton, two parent governors, two staff governors, one student governor, one governor nominated by Western Training and Enterprise Council, one co-opted senior member of staff and the principal. There is currently one vacancy. Members have a wide range of expertise which includes law, finance, personnel management, education, social services and local business. One of the governors is a Roman Catholic priest. The chair of the audit committee is a qualified accountant. Many of the governors have, or have had, children studying at the college.

55 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The governing body substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. 56 Governors are closely involved in strategic planning and the budget-setting associated with it. They hold an annual planning event to confirm the college's strategic direction. They have a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and management. Governors are well represented at college events such as open days and parents' evenings. Some governors have taken steps to improve their awareness of college life, for example by shadowing a student for a day.

Governors receive regular and informative 57 written reports from the principal on a wide range of issues. They closely monitor students' achievements. The reports they receive enable them to compare examination pass rates with college targets and national benchmarking data. In 1997-98, the financial reports presented to governors significantly underestimated the year-end surplus. As a result governors now require more frequent and informative reports to be produced. Governors are actively involved in self-assessment. A detailed self-assessment by the governing body informed an action plan for governance. Induction of governors was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. It has since been improved by the introduction of mentors for new governors. Inspectors considered this weakness to be overstated. The self-assessment report did not refer to a weakness in the governing body's monitoring of the health and safety and equal opportunities policies. Governors do not receive sufficiently detailed reports to enable them to discharge this duty.

58 The governing body conducts its business openly. Minutes of meetings and the register of interests are open to public scrutiny, although this is not widely publicised. Governors have adopted standing orders, a code of conduct and a 'whistleblowing' policy. An annual report on the attendance of governors is made to the full governing body. Over the past year attendance at full board meetings has averaged 75%.

59 Clerking arrangements are generally effective. An independent clerk supports the work of the full board of governors and the audit committee. Three senior staff service the work of the other committees. The clerk and the senior staff ensure that the business of the governing body and its committees is conducted efficiently. Agendas, supporting papers and minutes are clear and concise. Minutes are circulated soon after each meeting. The college benefits from close working relationships between governors, the principal and the senior staff. The finance officer, who is also a governor, acts as minute taker to the resources committee. This raises the potential for a conflict of interest, although to date no conflict has occurred.

60 Appraisal of the principal takes place every two years. Governors do not carry out the appraisal personally. The principal of another college appraised the principal and produced a report for the chair of the board. The conduct of the appraisal included discussions with several college managers. The process was useful and set personal objectives for the principal, but it did not result in an evaluation of the principal's performance.

Management

Grade 2

61 Inspectors agreed with the majority of strengths and weaknesses identified by the college in the self-assessment report. Inspectors identified a few additional weaknesses that were not referred to in the report.

Key strengths

- effective promotion of the Roman Catholic identity of the college
- thorough strategic planning process
- clear and effective management structure
- the close attention paid to student retention and achievement

- effective action to monitor and improve attendance
- clear and effective procedures for setting and monitoring budgets
- the strong financial position of the college

Weaknesses

- incomplete monitoring and reporting on equal opportunities
- few opportunities for some staff to be involved with cross-college issues and developments
- some omissions in the content of management accounts

62 Staff effectively promote the Roman Catholic identity of the college. They understand and support the mission. The college has good links with the Roman Catholic community. For example, college staff teach adult students at the diocesan religious education centre in Bristol. College students have the opportunity to participate in a weekly act of worship and the college provides religious education for all students.

63 Members of the senior management team work together effectively. Since the last inspection student numbers have increased, efficiency has improved and new facilities have been provided for staff and students. Funding targets have been met. In 1999, there was a reduction in the overall level of students' achievements and autumn term enrolments were below target. The proportion of Roman Catholic students has fallen. Managers are very aware of the possible tension between recruiting a significant proportion of Roman Catholic students, widening participation and improving students' achievements. These issues are fully explored in the strategic plan, but the way forward has not yet been clearly identified.

64 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment judgement that there is a thorough, well-documented strategic planning process, linked to the quality assurance cycle. The strategic plan is updated each year and there are good opportunities for staff to contribute to the planning process. The plan contains a review of progress against the previous year's objectives and a statement of operating objectives for the current year. Teaching and support departments undertake a mid-year review to identify strengths, weaknesses and actions, cross-referenced to headings in the annual operating statement.

65 Targets for retention, pass rates and high grades are set. Where results are below national averages or college targets, the reasons are thoroughly investigated. Value-added analysis is used effectively. Students' GCSE results are used to set minimum target grades for each of their GCE A level subjects. Minimum target grade data are aggregated to provide targets for pass rates and for the proportion of students achieving higher grades in each subject. There is a college-wide attendance target. Attendance monitoring is effective and prompt action is taken if students are absent. The self-assessment report recognises the need for managers at all levels to develop a wider range of performance standards and make more systematic use of performance indicators.

66 The senior management team manage the college effectively. The college has addressed many of the inconsistencies in middle management identified at the last inspection. A reorganisation in 1997 significantly reduced the number of senior staff and middle managers. The resulting structure works well. Responsibilities are clear and understood. Staff and resources are efficiently deployed. The college management information system meets the needs of staff. They have ready access to reliable reports on, for example, students' attendance and progress.

Communication in the college is good. 67 There are sufficient opportunities for meetings between managers and for managers to meet their staff. The self-assessment process identified the ineffectiveness of task groups charged with the development of areas such as the library, equal opportunities, IT, marketing and health and safety. Staff generally supported the transfer of task group functions to management groups, in particular the senior tutors' group and the heads of department group. However, the loss of task groups limits the opportunities for some staff, particularly support staff, to be involved with key issues such as equal opportunities and IT developments.

68 The equal opportunities policy was reviewed in 1999. It focuses on the recruitment of staff and students. There are few references to race, gender or disability. The policy does not include monitoring arrangements. However, some monitoring of equal opportunities is carried out. For example, an analysis of examination results by gender highlighted the comparatively poor performance of male students in some subjects.

69 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. The college historically has been in a strong financial position. There are clear budget-setting procedures and adequate information is available to budget holders to enable them to manage delegated budgets effectively. The overall budget is monitored closely by senior management. Management accounts comprise an income and expenditure account which is forecast to the year end. Periodic cashflow forecasts and balance sheets are not produced. Management accounts are prepared for consideration at resources committee meetings, which are held six times a year. Senior management formally reviews the management accounts before resources committee meetings. The full governing body does not receive management accounts, but arrangements are in place to introduce this in 1999-2000.

Conclusions

70 Inspectors found the college's self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning the inspection. It is comprehensive and detailed. It was supported by further detail in departmental internal inspection reports which had been completed for all college departments. The report contained action plans, some of which were detailed and allocated responsibilities clearly. Inspectors' assessments of the quality of teaching and learning were generally lower than those of the college. Since the self-assessment report was completed additional examination results have become available. Some of these were weaker than anticipated by the college. In two curriculum areas and two cross-college aspects, inspectors awarded a lower grade than that awarded by the college.

71 Strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection are listed under each section of this report. The main strengths and weaknesses are identified in the summary.

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (September 1999)

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

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (September 1999)

| Level of study | % |
|------------------------|-----|
| Level 1 (foundation) | 0 |
| Level 2 (intermediate) | 9 |
| Level 3 (advanced) | 91 |
| Level 4/5 (higher) | 0 |
| Non-schedule 2 | 0 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: college data

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

| Programme area | Full time | Part time | Total provision % |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Science | 299 | 0 | 30 |
| Business | 63 | 0 | 6 |
| Hotel and catering | 20 | 0 | 2 |
| Health and community care | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Art and design | 128 | 0 | 13 |
| Humanities | 478 | 0 | 48 |
| Total | 998 | 0 | 100 |

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 16% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (September 1999)

| | Perm- anent | Fixed term | Casual | Total |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Direct learning | | | | |
| contact | 57 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| Supporting direct | | | | |
| learning contact | 12 | 1 | 0 | 13 |
| Other support | 16 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Total | 85 | 4 | 0 | 89 |

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Income | £3,159,000 | £3,069,000 | £3,019,000 |
| Average level of funding (ALF) | £19.88 | £19.21 | £18.21 |
| Payroll as a proportion of income | 73% | 69% | 71% |
| Achievement of funding target | 102% | 106% | 100% |
| Diversity of income | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| Operating surplus | £77,000 | £327,000 | £114,000 |

Sources: Income – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999) ALF – Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1997 and 1998), Funding Allocations 1998-99 (1999) Payroll – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999) Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1997-98 (1997 and 1998), college (1999) Diversity of income – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999) Operating surplus – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Students' achievements data

| Level | Retention | Students aged 16 to 18 | | | Students | Students aged 19 or over | | |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|----------|--------------------------|------|--|
| | and pass | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | |
| 1 | Number of starters | - | 998 | - | - | - | - | |
| | Retention (%) | - | 50 | - | - | - | - | |
| | Achievement (%) | - | 32 | - | | - | - | |
| 2 | Number of starters | 525 | 590 | 609 | - | - | - | |
| | Retention (%) | 85 | 74 | 80 | - | - | - | |
| | Achievement (%) | 82 | 96 | 83 | - | - | - | |
| 3 | Number of starters | 1,540 | 2,144 | 1,938 | - | - | - | |
| | Retention (%) | 85 | 68 | 77 | - | - | - | |
| | Achievement (%) | 80 | 88 | 74 | - | - | - | |
| 4 or 5 | Number of starters | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | Retention (%) | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | Achievement (%) | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Short | Number of starters | 1 | 16 | 163 | 177 | 123 | 13 | |
| courses | Retention (%) | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | |
| | Achievement (%) | 0 | 0 | 96 | 99 | 100 | 96 | |
| Unknown/ | Number of starters | 1,014 | 0 | 1,051 | - | - | - | |
| unclassified | Retention (%) | 93 | n/a | 83 | - | - | - | |
| | Achievement (%) | 32 | n/a | 37 | - | - | - | |

Source: ISR

-ISR data not collected n/a not applicable

FEFC Inspection Report 13/00

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