

Thomas Danby 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

Thomas Danby College

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

Inspected November 1999

Thomas Danby College is a medium-sized general further education college in Leeds. The college prepared a thorough and evaluative self-assessment report. It was last inspected in June 1997. Action has been taken to address many of the weaknesses identified in the 1997 inspection report and in the college's self-assessment report for 1997-98.

Self-assessment is a process that is well established and integrated with planning. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report. A few weaknesses identified by inspectors had not been recognised by the college and the significance of others had been underestimated.

The college provides courses in eight of the 10 programme areas funded by the FEFC. The inspection covered provision in four programme areas, together with aspects of cross-college provision. Standards of teaching and learning are mostly good. The proportion of lessons judged by inspectors to be good or outstanding was well above the average for colleges in the sector inspected during the previous year, but the proportion judged to be less than satisfactory was slightly above the average. The rates of retention and achievement of students is improving but is still below national benchmark figures for colleges with a similarly high

percentage of students from disadvantaged areas. Support services are responsive to students' needs. Standards of accommodation and facilities for IT have improved during the last two years, and are now of a good standard. The quality assurance framework is comprehensive and carefully managed. The college has an extensive programme of staff development. The corporation closely monitors the college's financial performance.

Management structures are effective and the college is responsive to the needs of the local community. To maintain progress, the college should improve: standards of teaching in some areas; rates of student retention and achievement; the level of additional support for students; programme reviews in some areas; the clerking arrangements for the corporation; and management information systems.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Information technology	3	Support for students	2
Hospitality, catering and bakery	2	General resources	2
Childcare	2	Quality assurance	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2	Governance	3
Basic education	3	Management	2

The College and its Mission

1 Thomas Danby College, named after the first mayor of Leeds, is a general further education college located near the centre of Leeds. The college had its origins in the mid-1950s, acquired its present name in the 1960s and moved to purpose-built premises in 1977. In addition to the main site, the college now provides courses in 79 schools, community centres and training centres in east Leeds. It is located close to the Chapeltown and Harehills districts which traditionally have registered low educational achievement and where high proportions of people who are unemployed come from minority ethnic communities. The college has a long-established policy to attract students from the local community and to widen participation. The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has identified the college as one of a group which typically recruits a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas. It has developed an extensive presence in the community.

2 Leeds is the second largest metropolitan district in England and has a population of 727,500. The college is one of six further education colleges in the city; there is also a sixth form college. The city's economy is based on a wide range of industrial and commercial activities. These include: clothing; engineering; financial services; distribution; hotel and catering; and leisure and tourism. Service industries have expanded in recent years and now employ over 70% of the workforce. The college, since its early days, has specialised in hospitality, food manufacture, hairdressing and childcare. More recently, it has developed other areas of provision including information technology (IT), business studies, sports studies, art and design, access courses and basic education. The college now offers a wide range of courses in eight of the 10 programme areas funded by the FEFC.

3 The unemployment rate in Leeds, 4.6% in January 1999, is one of the lowest in England. Unemployment in the inner city area is higher, 10% or more in some districts, and it is from this area that the college recruits most of its students. In 1998-99, the college achieved more than 21,000 course enrolments from 14,593 students. Of these students, 93% were part time, 64% were women and 75% were aged 25 and over. About 20% of the students come from ethnic communities which account for 6% of the population of Leeds. Most students, 91%, are taking courses which are funded by the FEFC. A significant feature of provision is the high proportion of students following foundation level programmes.

4 The college is in the fourth year of a recovery plan following serious financial difficulties in 1995. A major restructuring of the college took place during 1995-96. The college now has 333 full-time equivalent staff of whom 28% are part time. The senior management team comprises the principal and two vice-principals. The management team is formed from the five heads of school and seven cross-college managers, in addition to the senior managers. The college works collaboratively and effectively with neighbouring colleges and a wide range of other partners. One project, for training employees of small and medium-sized companies, aims to link all 18 further education colleges in West Yorkshire.

Context

5 The college's mission is to 'provide quality education and training supportive of individuals and responsive to the needs of our local and wider community'. A central feature of the college's purpose is to be a 'college of opportunity' providing lifelong access to a range of advice, learning support and leisure activities. The college's strategic aims are to: identify and provide for customer needs; make decisions quickly and adapt services appropriately; provide value for money at every operational level; encourage staff to become part of the decision-making process; provide clear lines of responsibility and accountability; have effective management information systems; and provide opportunities for self-evaluation.

The Inspection

6 The college was inspected in November 1999. Inspectors had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information about the college held by other directorates of the FEFC. The college was notified of the sample of its provision to be inspected approximately two months before the inspection. The inspection was carried out by 13 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 48 days. Inspectors observed 70 lessons. They examined students' work and documentation relating to the institution and its courses. Meetings were held with governors, managers, teachers, support staff, students and others with an interest in the college.

7 Data for 1997 and 1998 were taken from the FEFC's individualised student record (ISR). Data on rates of retention and achievement for students for 1999 were validated during two visits to the college by inspectors. They used primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by awarding bodies. Most data were reliable. The data for a few courses, particularly those in basic education, had some discrepancies. During the inspection, inspectors were able to verify sufficient data held by the college to help them to form their judgements.

8 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the 70 lessons inspected, 78% were good or outstanding. This profile is significantly better than the average for colleges in the sector inspected during 1998-99. However, 9% were less than satisfactory which is worse than the average.

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Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GNVQ	4	6	2	0	0	12
NVQ	5	11	2	2	0	20
Other vocational	5	10	2	0	0	17
Other	6	8	3	4	0	21
Total (No.)	20	35	9	6	0	70
Total (%)	28	50	13	9	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

9 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 (%)
Thomas Danby College	10.3	75
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

Information Technology

Grade 3

10 Inspectors observed 13 lessons in IT at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- much good teaching
- effective teaching of software techniques
- good pass rates for most students completing courses in 1999
- effective organisation of IT workshops
- well-planned and well-managed courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of IT as an aid to learning
- low retention rates on most courses
- poor achievement rates for many students on courses ending in 1997 and 1998
- unsatisfactory results from the 'pilot' general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) single award
- insufficient work experience for full-time students

11 The college provides a good range of IT courses with progression routes from foundation to advanced level. The broad range of introductory and short courses and the extensive provision in the community, meet the needs of a wide range of students who can arrange to attend at locations and times convenient to themselves. There is some weekend provision. Full-time students do not have enough opportunities to experience professional and industrial practice through work placements. This weakness is identified in the self-assessment report.

12 The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Of the lessons observed, 10 were good or outstanding which is a higher proportion than the college indicated in its self-assessment report. Teachers have developed guidance notes to make the teaching more effective. The notes place an emphasis on clear objectives and an appropriate range of teaching and learning styles. Teachers share the learning materials. On some courses, the materials need further development to meet the wide range of student abilities. Full-time students are taught techniques that reflect recent industrial practice. In one lesson, students used up-to-date simulation software to design an IT system to control a lift. There was little use of IT as an aid to help students to learn. This shortcoming is recognised by the college. Teaching demonstrations are not linked to multimedia resources or on-line teaching packages. The overall attendance at lessons observed was poor at 68%. The college has initiated rigorous monitoring of attendance. The self-assessment report is aware that such monitoring has not yet made its full impact on levels of attendance.

13 As the college recognises in its self-assessment report, achievement rates on most courses were poor in both 1997 and 1998. Action has been taken to improve course management, to review teaching and learning and to strengthen support for students. New teachers have been appointed. These changes have begun to be effective. Teachers now have a common approach to teaching in IT workshops. They enable students to study at a pace and level appropriate to each of them. This development has contributed to recent improvements in achievements. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that pass rates improved in 1999, especially on level 1 courses. Many pass rates are now at, or above, national averages for the sector. An exception, identified in the self-assessment report, is the GNVQ advanced one-year single award. This is a new 'pilot' course on which only one student was successful within the normal timescale.

Curriculum Areas

Many courses still have retention rates below national averages, which have led to lower overall success rates. The college in its self-assessment did not identify this weakness. Nevertheless, many students demonstrate high levels of motivation and enjoyment.

14 Teaching staff are well qualified for the range of provision. There is a high proportion of relatively new and part-time teachers. Effective management ensures that they have shared aims and clearly designated roles and responsibilities. Courses are well planned and well managed. Many teachers lack recent industrial experience, although some part-time teachers do bring valuable experience into the classroom from their full-time jobs. IT resources are appropriate and students have good access to the Internet. Faulty equipment interrupted learning in some lessons.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in information technology, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G IT certificate	1	Number of starters	130	222	162
		Retention (%)	71	66	69
		Achievement (%)	26	52	85
RSA computer literacy and information technology	1	Number of starters	504	880	849
		Retention (%)	81	80	70
		Achievement (%)	30	32	84
Short IT skills programmes	2	Number of starters	124	154	105
		Retention (%)	100	92	82
		Achievement (%)	1	20	76
GNVQ intermediate	2	Number of starters	*	*	16
		Retention (%)	*	*	63
		Achievement (%)	*	*	50
National diploma and GNVQ advanced	3	Number of starters	23	29	18
		Retention (%)	78	69	67
		Achievement (%)	67	71	80
GNVQ single award	3	Number of starters	*	*	38
		Retention (%)	*	*	63
		Achievement (%)	*	*	4

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

*courses not running

Curriculum Areas

Hospitality, Catering and Bakery

Grade 2

15 Inspectors observed 21 lessons in hospitality, catering and bakery including provision in the workplace. They agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report and identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a wide range of effective methods for teaching and learning
- good planning of teaching
- good teaching in bakery
- some good and outstanding pass rates in 1999
- an extensive and appropriate range of courses
- good specialist accommodation and equipment

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates and retention rates on some courses
- insufficient development of students' culinary skills
- insufficient development of key skills in work-based provision

16 The school of hospitality and food manufacture is responsible for the provision of courses in hospitality, catering and bakery. The school's organisational structure is clear and well understood by staff. There are regular meetings of school managers and programme teams. The school's operating statement is based on the action plan contained in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the report that the college offers a wide and appropriate range of provision from entry to higher level. Students are able to

attend full time, part time or at the workplace at mutually convenient times. In 1999, the college started a vocational pastry course for students from the Chinese community. A continuing strength, identified at the last inspection, is the strong range of work-based and specialised short courses for industry. Courses rarely found in further education, such as sugar boiling and chocolate making, are provided at the college and on employers' premises.

17 Most teachers use a range of effective methods that encourages learning and maintains students' interest. In one lesson, the teacher discussed with students some cookery processes and how they are used in different food styles found in the catering trade. The planning of teaching and learning is effective. Teaching schemes and lesson plans are appropriately detailed and vocationally relevant. Students in workplaces are provided with learning materials of high quality that support learning while they are away from the college. The standard of teaching is high in bakery and cake decoration. In the college's restaurant kitchen, as the self-assessment report partially recognises, students' culinary skills are not always developed effectively. Teachers sometimes do not correct unsatisfactory practice. Some catering operations do not have appropriate documents, including role descriptions and dish specifications. Students on work-based programmes are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop key skills.

18 Inspectors did not fully agree with the college's judgement that students' achievements are outstanding. Pass rates were high in 1999 for the national vocational qualification (NVQ) food preparation, cooking and bakery at level 2. They were also good for service of food and drink and cake decoration at level 1, and for the national licensee's certificate. Some other qualifications showed improvement between 1997 and 1999. Cake decoration has maintained a high pass rate for the last three

Curriculum Areas

years. Pass rates were unsatisfactory in 1999 for GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering and were below national benchmarks for NVQ food preparation and cooking at level 1 in 1997 and 1998. The retention rate for the programme area is better than the average for the further education sector on only a few courses. For NVQ food preparation and cooking at level 2, retention rates are below national benchmarks. Most students, including those on work-based provision, gain appropriate vocational skills. The college has a successful record in catering and bakery competitions. At a recent competition, organised by the Institute of British Bakers, students won prizes in cake decoration and in bread and marzipan modelling.

19 Teachers have relevant professional qualifications and appropriate experience in the industry. Most have vocational assessor awards and teaching qualifications. As the self-assessment report indicates, the specialist accommodation for hospitality, catering and bakery is of a high standard. It includes production and training kitchens, bakeries, a restaurant, a licensed bar and a bakery shop. Accommodation for work-based provision is of a similar standard. Most equipment is good and up to the standard found in industry. The library provides a good range of specialist books and periodicals but there is a shortage of books on cookery that have been published recently.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in hospitality, catering and bakery, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cooking	1	Number of starters	61	75	92
		Retention (%)	89	69	68
		Achievement (%)	58	67	77
NVQ catering and hospitality serving food and drink	1	Number of starters	19	187	89
		Retention (%)	80	75	78
		Achievement (%)	73	72	90
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cooking	2	Number of starters	98	114	71
		Retention (%)	69	61	59
		Achievement (%)	75	77	92
NVQ catering and hospitality serving food and drink	2	Number of starters	76	131	68
		Retention (%)	67	71	69
		Achievement (%)	73	71	93
NVQ craft baking	2	Number of starters	80	45	39
		Retention (%)	78	69	87
		Achievement (%)	61	82	97
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	Number of starters	26	14	25
		Retention (%)	69	79	72
		Achievement (%)	46	44	56
British Institute of Innkeeping national licensee's certificate	3	Number of starters	*	224	419
		Retention (%)	*	100	100
		Achievement (%)	*	98	99

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

*course not running

Curriculum Areas

Childcare

Grade 2

20 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in childcare. They agreed with most of the judgements made in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- well-structured lessons
- effective teaching and learning activities
- effective organisation and monitoring of work experience
- good use of the learning centre
- effective arrangements for local partnerships

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates on some courses
- insufficient integration of IT with the development of key skills
- the poor quality of most classrooms

21 The college provides a good range of childcare courses to meet the diverse needs of individuals and organisations in the local community. In addition to the programmes of the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education, the college offers BTEC national awards in childcare. NVQ programmes are available for playwork, early years care and education. Other courses include a range of validated short courses for classroom assistants, special needs assistants and a course providing access to higher education. Curriculum management is good. Comprehensive handbooks are produced for students. Inspectors agreed with this strength identified in the self-assessment report. Staff in childcare are making a significant contribution to the development of new qualifications in the care sector through involvement as nursery inspectors and work as consultants to awarding bodies. Teachers have developed effective local

partnerships with a range of voluntary and statutory agencies which include: the health authority; social services; the local education department; and private childcare providers.

22 Most teaching is good or outstanding. Teachers use a wide range of appropriate teaching methods to promote learning and motivate students. During a lesson on stereotyping, skilful questioning by the teacher enabled the students to question their own stereotypes and to identify overt and covert discrimination in some children's books. Lessons are well structured and include effective activities to develop practical vocational skills and knowledge. In a few lessons, students spend too long copying from overhead projector slides. Teachers make good use of work experience to underpin childcare theory, and students draw on their own experience in the production of assignments. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the organisation and monitoring of work experience is a strength. Teachers make effective use of work placement visits to monitor students' progress.

23 The self-assessment report did not fully identify weaknesses in students' achievements. Most retention and achievement rates fluctuated between 1997 and 1999. In the three-year period to 1999 pass rates on NVQ programmes have been low but shown some improvement, and the pass rate for the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education certificate has fallen. Teachers are taking steps to improve some low levels of achievement. Some pass rates are high, including those for the BTEC national diploma and national certificate courses. Retention rates on some courses have declined, but most are good. Communication skills are integrated with childcare programmes but IT development is given insufficient attention. This weakness was not identified in the college's self-assessment report. Students' assignments are well designed and are supported by clear guidelines and assessment criteria. Grading is appropriate and teachers

Curriculum Areas

give constructive feedback to students on how work could be improved or extended by further research. The standard of students' written work is good for the level of course being followed.

24 Teachers are well qualified and most hold a professional qualification in childcare. They value their personal development reviews and specialist staff development activities. Teachers in co-operation with staff in the resource centre have made effective arrangements to use the materials to support students' independent learning and assignment work. Teachers also liaise effectively with professional staff who provide childcare and education in statutory and voluntary agencies. This liaison helps teachers to maintain strong awareness of current professional practice. The college recognises the poor quality of some childcare classrooms where an uninspiring environment inhibits teaching and learning activities.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education certificate	2	Number of starters	46	43	46
		Retention (%)	67	53	80
		Achievement (%)	71	70	59
NVQ programmes	2/3	Number of starters	25	45	9
		Retention (%)	88	82	78
		Achievement (%)	41	38	49
Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education diploma	3	Number of starters	36	89	58
		Retention (%)	94	76	69
		Achievement (%)	56	62	73
BTEC national diploma	3	Number of starters	49	33	48
		Retention (%)	96	81	97
		Achievement (%)	100	81	97
BTEC national certificate	3	Number of starters	30	22	15
		Retention (%)	100	68	80
		Achievement (%)	97	80	100

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

Curriculum Areas

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

Grade 2

25 Inspectors observed 11 lessons in hairdressing, beauty therapy and complementary therapies. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- a flexible and responsive curriculum
- an effective and comprehensive work placement programme
- improving rates of achievement
- good specialist accommodation in hairdressing

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some courses
- some inadequate specialist accommodation

26 The college provides an appropriate range of full-time and part-time courses that meets the needs of students and industry and the local community. The self-assessment report correctly identified this strength. The curriculum is flexible and responsive.

Arrangements include intensive courses as well as short, part-time and full-time courses. They are planned to suit the needs of individuals. Specialist courses such as 'eyelash perming' and 'mendhi henna' skin decoration are provided in response to local demand. The college offers certificated courses in some outreach centres. These include aromatherapy, body massage and NVQ level 2 in hairdressing. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to their work and their students. There are regular team meetings. Managers effectively involve part-time teachers and those from the outreach centres in the planning and monitoring of work.

Teachers provide effective pre-entry guidance and initial assessment for students. The tutorial system is good. Students receive regular reviews and develop learning plans.

27 There are high standards of teaching and learning. Of the lessons observed, nine were good or outstanding which is well above the average for the sector for this programme area in 1998-99. Teachers use a wide range of activities that meet the needs of the students. In one hairdressing theory lesson, students used computers to evaluate some demonstration techniques. The students were enthusiastic, analytical and participated effectively. There was good student interaction and regular checks by teachers to ensure that students understood the work. In a few lessons, the students were unresponsive. Teachers have good schemes of work and lesson plans. They give students clear course structures, assignments and tutorial calendars to help them to plan their learning. Students receive constructive feedback about their work, although not all spelling errors were corrected. The assessment process is well structured and benefits from clear guidelines. The internal verification system is carefully monitored, implemented and recorded. As the self-assessment report states, work experience is well organised and closely supervised. Opportunities for assessment within the workplace are available and well used by students.

28 Students' achievements have improved between 1997 and 1999. Many courses had achievement rates above national benchmarks in 1998 and 1999. In 1999, the achievement rates in NVQ level 1 in hairdressing and the diploma in aromatherapy were 100%. The achievement rate for the NVQ level 2 in hairdressing is below the national benchmark but has improved significantly during the last three years. The college recognises that some retention rates, which include NVQ level 1 and level 2 in hairdressing, are below national benchmarks. The retention rate for NVQ level 2

Curriculum Areas

in beauty therapy is also below the national benchmark and has declined during the last three years. Teachers have introduced some new syllabi in an attempt to improve the low retention rates on some courses. Students have well-organised portfolios and produce good practical work that conforms to commercial requirements. The self-assessment report recognised these strengths and weaknesses.

29 Teachers have relevant teaching and vocational qualifications. Many of the full-time teachers are external verifiers for awarding bodies. The specialist accommodation for hairdressing is of a good standard. It comprises a reception area similar in style to commercial premises, and three well-equipped and spacious hairdressing salons. These have appropriate resources and include modern equipment. The

self-assessment report identified some deficiencies in specialist accommodation for beauty therapy, and inspectors agreed with this judgement. Some salons are in need of refurbishment.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy , 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
NVQ in hairdressing	1	Number of starters	33	17	30
		Retention (%)	48	71	60
		Achievement (%)	6	50	100
NVQ in hairdressing (one-year and two-year courses)	2	Number of starters	101	106	112
		Retention (%)	79	68	70
		Achievement (%)	26	42	69
NVQ in beauty therapy (one-year and two-year courses)	2	Number of starters	132	80	88
		Retention (%)	73	63	72
		Achievement (%)	36	80	73
BTEC national diploma in beauty therapy	3	Number of starters	16	13	15
		Retention (%)	63	92	47
		Achievement (%)	83	71	85
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	Number of starters	11	70	14
		Retention (%)	100	100	93
		Achievement (%)	72	80	100
Certificate in body massage	3	Number of starters	47	54	49
		Retention (%)	91	87	92
		Achievement (%)	81	80	85

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

Curriculum Areas

Basic Education

Grade 3

30 Inspectors observed 13 lessons in literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and access to further education. In its self-assessment report the college aggregated judgements on this provision with the wider curriculum area of humanities and community education. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements about basic education. They identified some additional weaknesses on students' achievements.

Key strengths

- effective monitoring of students' progress
- thorough planning at course level
- effective communication and teamwork
- responsive and collaborative programme

Weaknesses

- unclear learning objectives in some lessons
- poor rate of achievement of qualifications by students
- some courses inappropriate to the needs of students
- deficiencies in curriculum co-ordination

31 Teachers have achieved effective partnerships with Leeds City Council, local employers and other organisations in their development of a range of programmes. Inspectors agreed with this strength which was noted in the self-assessment report. In many of its outreach centres in the local community the college provides family learning programmes, courses for adults returning to education and basic education courses. Some centres, including the East Leeds Family Learning Centre, enable local people to receive guidance in addition to taking basic education courses.

The college has established clear progression routes from outreach provision to courses on the main college site. The management structure, recently changed, has made communication between the college and its centres more effective. Responsibility for the basic skills programme is still shared between college-based and community-based managers, which inhibits effective curriculum co-ordination. Managers have inadequate information about students' achievements and give insufficient attention to monitoring of performance.

32 Inspectors found inconsistent standards of teaching and learning. The self-assessment report recognises this weakness. Teachers plan courses and lessons thoroughly. A few teachers do not include in their plans precisely what students should learn at the various stages of the courses. Most teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods. The college underestimated this strength in provision. Teachers make checks on the progress of their students in lessons. Most basic skills students have reviews of progress which are recorded by teachers. In some lessons, students made little progress because the pace was too slow or the lessons lacked clear objectives. There is little use of IT by teachers to promote learning. On the few courses which did not meet the needs of students, teachers were: developing the numeracy and literacy skills of students whose over-riding need was for an ESOL course; teaching a 30-week pre general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) course for students whose preference was to attend 'drop-in' workshops; or developing oral skills that did not match employers' needs.

33 The number of enrolments in this area has increased during the last three years. However, enrolments for courses that lead to qualifications have declined by 28% which contrasts with national trends. Retention rates overall during this three-year period have averaged 70%, which is below the national average in the sector for the programme area, and dropped to

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49% in 1997-98. Although teachers determine the qualification aims of many students some time after enrolment, the achievement rate overall was 72% in 1999. Achievement rates for some qualifications are below national benchmarks. These include City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) 3750 numeracy stage 2 and the Associated Examining Board (AEB) achievement tests, on short courses. An unsatisfactorily low proportion of students achieve their intended qualifications. In 1999, only 27% of students who started courses leading to qualifications went on to achieve the qualification. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

34 Teachers have appropriate qualifications and good opportunities for further training. They work well together as a team. The quality of teaching accommodation has improved since the last inspection and much of it is now good. Some outreach centres are unsatisfactory. They lack adequate equipment and suitably furnished rooms. The college recognised these shortcomings in its self-assessment report. Most teachers have adequate specialist resources to help their students to learn. Computers are available to most students to help them with their work.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in basic education, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G 3750 numeracy stage 1 (one year)	1	Number of starters	42	9	19
		Retention (%)	55	56	11
		Achievement (%)	48	60	100
C&G 3750 numeracy stage 2 (one year)	2	Number of starters	1	43	60
		Retention (%)	100	65	62
		Achievement (%)	100	50	46
AEB achievement tests in literacy and numeracy (one year)	Mixed levels	Number of starters	31	26	139
		Retention (%)	100	93	76
		Achievement (%)	48	85	73
AEB achievement tests in literacy and numeracy (short)	Mixed levels	Number of starters	12	75	121
		Retention (%)	100	86	51
		Achievement (%)	0	51	48
National Open College Network literacy programmes (one year)	Mixed levels	Number of starters	*	138	364
		Retention (%)	*	73	63
		Achievement (%)	*	26	**
National Open College Network numeracy programmes (one year)	Mixed levels	Number of starters	*	98	70
		Retention (%)	*	75	56
		Achievement (%)	*	41	73
RSA ESOL profile (one year)	Mixed levels	Number of starters	*	247	*
		Retention (%)	*	62	*
		Achievement (%)	*	33	*

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

*courses not running

**more than 25% of completers with no known outcome

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

35 Inspectors agreed with most of the conclusions in the self-assessment report. The college has taken action to remedy some weaknesses noted in the report.

Key strengths

- comprehensive pre-entry guidance
- effective learning support for students
- strong appreciation of counselling service from students
- improving tutorial arrangements
- effective response of support services to learners' needs

Weaknesses

- low levels of additional support for students
- significant variations in the standards of tutorials

36 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that there is comprehensive pre-entry advice and guidance, and clear admissions procedures. Publicity materials are well designed. There are open days and other promotional events for school-leavers and adults. Good links have been established with schools. These links are of particular value in supporting the needs of disaffected pupils, many of whom attend the college part time. Nearly 300 pupils from local schools attend vocational 'taster' courses at the East Leeds Family Learning Centre. A cross-college group has been formed to support the development of school links but attendance has been poor. Applicants for full-time courses receive an interview at the college. Most students applying for entry level programmes for the academic year 1999-2000 were interviewed at home. Surveys show that students value the interview process.

37 Tutors are provided with a range of initial assessment and diagnostic tests. They have the responsibility, together with liaison tutors for learning support, to refer students for additional learning support. In 1998-99, a low proportion of students, 218, were referred for additional support. Students are also encouraged to refer themselves. In 1998-99, 84% of students who had been referred took advantage of the extra tuition available. Regular written reports on the progress of students, which include a record of attendance, are provided to course tutors. A high proportion of students receiving learning support go on to achieve their main qualification. In 1998-99, 74% of these students were successful; which is a higher success rate than the average for the college as a whole. The college recognises in its self-assessment report that only a small number of students have received additional support on community programmes. More resources are now being provided for this group of students. A college plan describes the activities to be covered during induction. Both student and tutor sign an induction checklist to verify that all specified induction issues have been dealt with. Students confirm that their experience of induction helps them to settle in to their courses. Students are provided with a college handbook explaining the range of support services available. A plan has been introduced to provide students who join courses after they have started with an induction to the college.

38 The college has a strong commitment to provide learning opportunities that are responsive to the range of students' needs. It is a key partner in a 'second chance school' initiative which has been successful in recruiting young adults who have not succeeded at school. A recently opened 'cyber cafe' in Chapletown provides a mentor and introductory study programmes for residents who would not usually consider attending education courses. The college, following a review of its action plan for inclusive learning, has made progress in broadening the range of learning styles and

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assessment materials. These opportunities and the progress that has followed constitutes a strength in the college's provision. This strength was noted in the self-assessment report. A confidential personal counselling service is available five days each week. Students state that they value this service. The college responds effectively to the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff development is provided to raise awareness about disabilities such as dyslexia, hearing impairment, Asperger's syndrome and epilepsy.

39 Full-time students have a timetabled weekly tutorial. Arrangements for part-time students are less systematic. The quality of most of the eight tutorials seen by inspectors, nearly all on the main site, was good. Most sessions focused on individual progress reviews, and tutors used a standardised planning sheet. Tutors discuss students' progress appropriately in relation to learning targets, and tutors and tutees sign an agreed action plan. The conclusions from the college's own observation of tutorials, described in the self-assessment report, indicated significant variation in practice, particularly for part-time students and students at outreach centres. Overall levels of retention are still marginally below the average for colleges in the sector which are recruiting students from disadvantaged areas. As a consequence, clear objectives and closer monitoring for tutorials have been introduced to achieve a more consistent approach. The college is providing additional resources for tutorials aimed at those students felt to be at risk of leaving the college before the completion of qualifications. Nearly 300 students participate in a student progression award programme, designed to make them more effective learners. Personal, social, moral and health issues are not specified as aspects of the tutorial programme.

40 As the self-assessment report concludes, careers staff at the college have made an effective contribution to group tutorials. They teach the element of the student progression award that concentrates on planning for the future. Over 3,000 guidance interviews were conducted in 1998-99. College staff have a close working relationship with the Leeds Careers Guidance Service. Advisors from the service contribute to group sessions and provide interviews for individual students although the take up of these offers of interviews is low. Good links have been established with higher education institutions in the locality.

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General Resources

Grade 2

41 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. The report mistakenly aggregated some judgements on specialist resources with others on general resources.

Key strengths

- significant improvements to accommodation
- secure buildings with a welcoming atmosphere
- upgraded facilities for IT
- a well-organised learning centre
- good access for people with restricted mobility

Weaknesses

- some classrooms of poor quality
- at peak times, restricted access to computers for students
- inadequate library resources in some subjects
- insufficient workspace in staff rooms

42 Many improvements have been made to the accommodation at the main site since the last inspection. These include: the remodelling and refurbishment of the entrance foyer and enquiries desk; a new student guidance centre; an extension to the learning centre; and the conversion of two rooms into a new crèche. The college has also enhanced the quality of accommodation at some community centres, including the Ramgarhia Sikh Centre and the East Leeds Family Learning Centre. A closed-circuit television system has been installed at the main site, and staff are employed to provide additional security. The main site is clean, brightly decorated and well maintained.

It provides a safe and welcoming environment which is a strength that was identified in the self-assessment report. Direction signs are clear, and students' work is displayed prominently in general areas of the building. The college is fitted with a lift and ramps, and all areas of the building are accessible to people with restricted mobility. Some space on the main site is underused which is acknowledged in the accommodation strategy. Most general classrooms are of a satisfactory standard. Some rooms on the main site, and a higher number in some community centres, are poor. The college has an annual maintenance programme. The self-assessment report acknowledges problems with the main site's heating and ventilation system.

43 The college has made a large investment in IT facilities during the last two years. An IT strategy group is responsible for developing facilities at the college and at community centres. The overall ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students has improved significantly since the last inspection from 1:19 to just over 1:9. A suite of four IT rooms contains 70 computers and others are available to students in curriculum areas. In the learning centre, 30 computers are available for use by students on an open access basis. The provision is inadequate at peak times, a weakness that was noted in the college's self-assessment. All computers use industry-standard software, and all are networked. Access to Internet and electronic mail facilities has been extended, and a college intranet is being further developed. Several community centres have also benefited from recent improvements to IT facilities, and the college is linking these centres to the network at the main site. There is a good level of technician support on the main college site, and the college has responded to the need for better technical support in community centres by appointing a new IT technician. The college administrative network has been improved.

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44 The learning centre is well organised; there is a welcoming and purposeful atmosphere. It is effectively managed by professionally qualified staff, and there are effective links between centre staff and subject teachers. The centre provides discrete areas for group work, private study, additional learning support, careers guidance, counselling support, and access to IT for students and staff. The number of study spaces has recently been reduced. The computerised catalogue enquiry system has recently been upgraded. Newspapers, journals and CD-ROMs supplement the bookstock of 24,000 items. Students and staff value the centre; its strengths were recognised in the self-assessment report. The range of books and other materials in some subject areas is poor. Some outreach centres have an inadequate range of learning resources. Students who are taught at their workplaces are not provided with information about learning resources that are available in or from the college.

45 Sports and social facilities are restricted on the main site to a small gymnasium. Students can use the sports facilities at the Ramgarhia Sikh Centre close to the college. The college is awaiting the outcome of a bid submitted for sports lottery funding for the development on land behind the main building of a community campus with outdoor sports facilities, developmental child play area and pavilion. A large refectory provides a good standard of service, and is popular with students. Two common rooms provide appropriate areas for students to meet. Some staff accommodation has been improved, but many staff rooms are overcrowded and lack sufficient IT facilities. The recently opened crèche on the main site provides 24 childcare places, and community centres provide 250 childcare places.

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

46 Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the college's self-assessment of quality assurance, and identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a comprehensive framework for quality assurance
- a self-critical approach to self-assessment
- the integration of quality improvement with strategic planning
- the effective use of lesson observations
- well-planned and extensive opportunities for staff development

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory programme reviews
- underdeveloped use of feedback from students and employers
- insufficient participation of staff in personal development reviews

47 The college has made considerable improvements in quality assurance since the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with this judgement in the college's self-assessment. The quality assurance framework is comprehensive. It covers academic and support functions, and pays due attention to outreach and franchised provision. Procedures and documents have been revised to integrate self-assessment with the quality assurance process, which in turn is closely aligned to the college's planning cycle. A comprehensive and clearly presented quality manual provides guidance to staff on the revised quality procedures. The college's second self-assessment report was developed from reports by curriculum and support teams, and was validated by managers and the college self-assessment group. Inspectors found that

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the report was appropriately self-critical. It contained evidence that actions resulting from the previous self-assessment had led to improvements.

48 Programme teams evaluate their provision three times a year, using documents closely linked to the quality statements of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. The reviews and action plans are aggregated by curriculum area and school. The self-assessment report failed to note that some programme reviews are insufficiently rigorous. The poorer reviews are not evaluative and their action plans are not explicit. A well-developed system of lesson observations included tutorials, learning support sessions and outreach and franchised provision. The observers evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in each curriculum area and discussed them with course teams. The self-assessment report indicated that standards of teaching and learning were improving. This was confirmed by inspection: the proportion of lessons graded 1 and 2 rose from 57% in the last inspection to 78% in the current one. In addition to the observations used for self-assessment, teachers observe each other's lessons for the purposes of professional development. There are effective quality assurance arrangements for support areas. Staff in these areas have service agreements that contain measurable performance standards. They report on their performance four times a year. Franchised provision is subject to systematic monitoring, which includes observation of training, unannounced visits, evaluation by trainees, and reports from providers.

49 As part of their review, curriculum teams monitor their performance against targets which they have set using past results and national benchmarking data. Schools produce detailed statistical analyses of the performance of their courses, and the vice-principal checks areas of poor performance. The college has set itself an overall annual target of 3% improvement in

rates of retention and achievement, but data for 1996 to 1998 fail to show a consistent upward trend. In 1998, the college's retention and achievement rates were below the national average for colleges in the sector with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas. College data for 1999 show an overall improvement in achievements to a level closer to the national average.

50 The college charter is well presented, and clearly outlines students' entitlements and obligations. It includes the results of student surveys. It is available in three versions: for students on the main site, in the community, and on franchised programmes. A charter review group updates the charter annually. Although there is no specific monitoring of charter performance, student surveys are designed to test the college's charter commitments. The principal reads and responds to all complaints, and a report is submitted to the quality assurance working group. In an attempt to avoid too many questionnaires for students, the college has centralised student surveys. The marketing unit issues college-wide questionnaires. These are well designed. An effective analysis is made by broad curriculum area. It is not possible to compare responses at course level which reduces the value of the feedback. The response rate is low. Students' views are sought in a variety of other ways such as representation at course team meetings and participation in user groups. As the self-assessment report acknowledges, feedback from employers and community groups lacks co-ordination and is insufficiently used in quality assurance.

51 All full-time staff are expected to take part in an annual personal development review, which is normally held with their line manager. The main purpose of the review is to identify individual development needs rather than appraisal of performance. The scheme is well organised and uses helpful documents. Only two-thirds of full-time staff completed reviews in

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1998-99. Reviews for part-time staff are voluntary, and 14% participated in 1998-99. The college achieved Investor in People status in May 1997. Staff development opportunities are well planned and extensive. An annual plan describes objectives that meet the needs of individuals, teams and the college. It draws on a careful and detailed identification of training needs. A key priority in improving the quality of teaching and learning is the support available for teachers. The volume of staff development activity, provided both in-house and externally, is considerable. The budget for training and development amounts to 1.3% of total college expenditure. A wide range of activities is provided. Events are well publicised, and the evaluation and dissemination of the outcomes are of a high quality.

Governance

Grade 3

52 Inspectors and auditors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- effective monitoring of the college's financial performance
- good attention to the college's general activities
- regular reviews of the college's major policies

Weaknesses

- two inquorate meetings of the corporation
- weaknesses in the clerking arrangements
- a number of instances of non-compliance with good practice

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

54 The corporation currently has 11 members, including three women and one member from the minority ethnic community. The position of vice-chair remains unfilled, following the resignation of the previous vice-chair in July 1999. There are currently six vacancies. The corporation decided to leave a number of vacancies unfilled, pending the outcome of consultations on the modified instrument and articles of government. Progress in filling these vacancies has been slow since the revised membership was determined in May 1999. The search committee, responsible for advising the corporation on new appointments, did not meet between May and November 1999. As noted in the self-assessment report, governors have a range of appropriate expertise. A formal skills audit has not been carried out. Induction procedures have recently been formalised. Governors receive a comprehensive handbook and an induction checklist. They have not formally assessed their own training requirements but training opportunities are provided within the college. In addition, they receive information about relevant external training courses. Participation in these events has been low.

55 The corporation has met seven times in the last 12 months. There are no standing orders to determine the conduct of meetings. The clerk to the corporation has a contract and job description. There are a number of deficiencies in the clerking arrangements. A misunderstanding of the quoracy rules resulted in one corporation meeting being held inquorate and another being allowed to continue after it became inquorate. Some important matters,

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including the approval of the college's achievement targets, were agreed while the corporation was inquorate. The corporation and committee minutes do not always form a sufficiently complete record. The self-assessment report did not identify these weaknesses. Attendance is recorded at both corporation and committee meetings, but is not reported to governors and no attendance targets have been set. Average attendance is good at 82%.

56 Corporation committees comprise: search; finance; audit; employment and policy; curriculum performance and strategic direction; and remuneration. There are joint consultative councils, one for staff and another for students. Reporting arrangements to the corporation are good. The finance committee meets bi-monthly and carefully reviews the college management accounts. Governors receive these accounts each month; monitoring of the college's financial performance is good. Financial targets have been established. Monitoring of performance against some specific targets, such as proportion of income from the FEFC and staff costs as proportion of income, is not sufficiently frequent. Membership of the audit committee includes an external co-optee who has financial expertise. The committee has generally operated effectively and monitored the performance of the internal and external auditors against pre-determined criteria. Its terms of reference require updating to reflect the model terms of reference included in Council Circular 98/15, *Audit Code of Practice*.

57 Corporation and committee agendas, minutes and papers are available for inspection from the clerk. Some documents are placed in the college library. Corporation minutes are also placed on the college intranet. The incidence of confidential items in the minutes is low. The register of interests is open to inspection and covers the interests of all governors and their close relatives. It has recently been updated and extended to cover the interests of college staff

with significant financial responsibilities. The availability of minutes and the register of interests are publicised in the annual members' report. The code of conduct has not been updated to reflect the recommendations of the Nolan Committee on standards in public life. The corporation approved a public interest disclosure procedure in January 1999. The corporation has been closely involved in the production of the college's self-assessment reports. Training has taken place, questionnaires have been completed by members, and discussion has taken place on the draft reports. A formal review of governors' individual performance has not been conducted. As stated in the self-assessment report, governors regularly review major college policies. Detailed and well-structured reports, for example on health and safety, are received.

58 The corporation receives regular and detailed reports. These include progress against funding unit targets, students' achievements and franchised provision. As the self-assessment report states, governors take an interest in curriculum matters and receive information reports on related issues. In order to strengthen this part of their role, they have established the curriculum performance and strategic direction committee. Governors play an appropriate part in determining and revising the mission, values and strategic objectives. They are well informed about the key issues facing the college. Inspectors did not agree with the corporation's view that there is insufficient involvement by governors in general college activity. They attend college functions and some have been involved in staff development events which have included an event on 'whistleblowing' procedures. The two joint consultative committees involve several governors.

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Management

Grade 2

59 Inspectors and auditors agreed substantially with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- effective management structures
- comprehensive planning processes
- successful internal communication
- effective responses to the needs of the community
- efficient deployment of resources

Weaknesses

- weaknesses in management information
- insufficient impact of curriculum development on student performance

60 As the last inspection report describes, in 1995 the college was in a serious financial position. It had a large accumulated deficit, was incurring significant annual deficits, and was not operating within its financial memorandum. The recovery plan resulted in considerable staff redundancy, restructuring and financial restrictions. Since then, college leadership and the commitment of staff has enabled the college to improve its financial position and achieve its financial targets. The college has also improved aspects of teaching and learning and maintained its commitment to widen participation. Throughout this period, the college has operated with a low average level of funding.

61 Management restructuring has created a framework of schools and resource units which staff understand. Management responsibility, including budgets, has been successfully devolved. A training programme for budget holders, that includes review processes, has enabled the college to maintain appropriate

controls. An effective committee structure allows staff at all levels of the college to participate in debate on college issues and to contribute to developments. Staff teams meet regularly and decisions are recorded. Cross-college committees provide good support for college developments. As the self-assessment report states, there are some inconsistencies in the degree to which deadlines for actions are met. Communication within the college is good. Staff are well informed about policy and operational issues. Staff briefings, supported by information sheets, take place monthly and information is disseminated quickly. The aim is to ensure that staff have received and discussed issues within 72 hours. A college information file that includes policies is held in each staff room. Newsletters are produced quarterly.

62 Planning procedures are coherent and comprehensive. They are integrated with self-assessment arrangements and enable appropriate contributions to be made by senior managers and staff teams. Detailed operating objectives are established for schools and cross-college units. These contribute effectively to the overall college strategic and operating objectives. Progress against operating objectives is regularly and carefully reviewed. Careful attention is given to curriculum development and curriculum plans identify how national issues and initiatives impact on performance. A college manual, providing guidance on curriculum development, forms a valuable teaching resource. These developments have yet to lead to sufficient improvement in performance. The college is successful in continuing to widen participation among the communities that it serves. Managers have a co-operative approach to development activity. There is effective liaison with a wide range of external organisations. Many initiatives are designed to recruit and support prospective students from disadvantaged areas of Leeds. Links with employers are strong in some

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curriculum areas such as bakery, care and hospitality. Inspectors agreed with all these strengths which were identified in the self-assessment report.

63 The college has made improvements to its management information system. Computer networks have been established and new software systems introduced. There is an active user group which has appropriate representation. A range of useful reports is produced and staff are increasingly relying on the system for information. However, the management information system is not yet fully effective; this shortcoming was not recognised in the college's self-assessment. Outreach centres are not fully networked and rely on paper-based systems. This situation leads to errors when data are transmitted. Room utilisation and teaching timetables are also paper-based. Inspectors found difficulty in reconciling some of the aggregated statistics on students' achievements with course records. Until recently the college has had a history of making data returns to the FEFC after deadlines have passed.

64 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. In 1995, the college was required to prepare a formal recovery plan. The senior management team has closely monitored financial performance described in the plan and the college has produced operating surpluses in each of the last four years. The operating surplus for the year ended 31 July 1999, as shown in the draft financial statements, is £332,000. These financial statements have been produced on a timely basis. The college's financial position, although still weak, has improved. It has net current liabilities of £945,000 and a deficit on its income and expenditure account of £1,854,000. Comprehensive management accounts are prepared monthly by the finance department. The department is led by the vice-principal responsible for resources, and the

financial controller. Both have recognised professional accountancy qualifications. The college's performance against a number of financial targets, for instance non-FEFC income as a proportion of total income, is not reviewed regularly. Heads of school are required to explain significant variances in their pay and non-pay budgets at monthly monitoring meetings. The college's financial regulations have recently been updated with the inclusion of fraud and credit card policies. The reports of the internal and external auditors indicate that the college has sound systems of internal control.

Conclusions

65 For inspection, the college submitted a self-assessment report for 1997-98 based on the guidance in Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*; this document was used to plan the inspection. Four weeks before the inspection, the college produced a self-assessment report for 1998-99 which was used during the inspection. This report gave evidence of improvements that had resulted from the action plan. Five of the 10 areas being inspected had self-assessment grades which indicated specifically where the college believed improvement had taken place between 1997-98 and 1998-99. The updated report was concise and clear. It was self-critical in many areas but overestimated improvement in the rates of student retention and achievement. Inspectors agreed with most of the college's analysis of strengths and weaknesses, but considered that overall it had been overgenerous in its grading. Two of the 10 inspection grades were lower than the college's grades in its updated self-assessment report.

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

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (July 1999)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	1
16-18 years	11
19-24 years	13
25+ years	75
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1999)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Level 1 (foundation)	52
Level 2 (intermediate)	21
Level 3 (advanced)	18
Level 4/5 (higher)	1
Non-schedule 2	8
Total	100

Source: college data

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

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	155	1,208	9
Engineering	0	445	3
Business	81	3,421	24
Hotel and catering	275	1,486	12
Health and community care	400	3,780	29
Art and design	111	681	5
Humanities	61	1,517	11
Basic education	0	972	7
Total	1,083	13,510	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 44% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1999)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	93	66	0	159
Supporting direct learning contact	49	25	0	74
Other support	98	2	0	100
Total	240	93	0	333

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£9,641,000	£9,197,000	£9,949,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£16.70	£16.08	£16.20
Payroll as a proportion of income	69%	65%	62%
Achievement of funding target	102%	94%	107%
Diversity of income	79%	77%	79%
Operating surplus	£21,000	£34,000	£332,000

Sources: college (1997, 1998 and 1999)

ALF - Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1997 and 1998), Funding Allocations 1998-99 (1999)

Payroll - college (1997, 1998 and 1999)

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

Diversity of income - college (1997, 1998 and 1999)

Operating surplus - college (1997, 1998 and 1999)

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
1	Number of starters	157	262	377	1,074	1,845	2,305
	Retention (%)	57	74	76	73	73	75
	Achievement (%)	70	37	47	45	30	44
2	Number of starters	749	859	704	1,208	1,577	2,311
	Retention (%)	70	73	68	72	77	71
	Achievement (%)	68	35	47	58	44	55
3	Number of starters	545	626	548	1,033	1,441	1,625
	Retention (%)	76	76	73	77	81	71
	Achievement (%)	75	69	62	72	53	62
4 or 5	Number of starters	1	4	4	122	84	94
	Retention (%)	100	100	75	89	76	68
	Achievement (%)	*	0	50	65	33	53
Short courses	Number of starters	200	71	951	2,550	1,783	1,926
	Retention (%)	67	61	85	78	81	83
	Achievement (%)	66	21	36	35	36	66
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	899	551	637	2,631	2,329	3,519
	Retention (%)	96	97	95	94	96	95
	Achievement (%)	70	50	58	63	35	63

Source: ISR

*data not available

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