

**Burnley College**  
**Reinspection of Art and Design and Performing Arts: January 2001**  
**Report from the Inspectorate**  
**The Further Education Funding Council**

## **THE FURTHER EDUCATION 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 assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum, disseminates good practice and advises the FEFC's quality assessment committee.*

### **REINSPECTION**

*The FEFC has agreed that colleges with provision judged by the inspectorate to be less than satisfactory or poor (grade 4 or 5) should be reinspected. In these circumstances, a college may have its funding agreement with the FEFC qualified to prevent it increasing the number of new students in an unsatisfactory curriculum area until the FEFC is satisfied that weaknesses have been addressed.*

*Satisfactory provision may also be reinspected if actions have been taken to improve quality and the college's existing inspection grade is the only factor which prevents it from meeting the criteria for FEFC accreditation.*

*Reinspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circulars 97/12, 97/13 and 97/22. Reinspections seek to validate the data and judgements provided by colleges in self-assessment reports and confirm that actions taken as a result of previous inspection have improved the quality of provision. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work they inspect. The opinion of the FEFC's audit service contributes to inspectorate judgements about governance and management.*

### **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

*Assessments use grades on 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 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.*

*Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT  
Telephone 02476 863000  
Fax 02476 862100  
website: <http://www.fefc.ac.uk>*

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## **Burnley College North West Region**

### **Reinspection of art and design and performing arts: January 2001**

#### **Background**

The college was inspected in January 2000 and the findings published in the inspection report 48/00. Art and design and performing arts was awarded a grade 4.

The key strengths were: the improved retention and achievement in level 2 courses in 1998-99; and good teaching and standard of students' work in music and media. The key weaknesses were: the failure of many students to gain a qualification in 1997-98; poor retention and achievement in several courses at advanced level; insufficiently high expectations of students; some art and design work at advanced level below standard; and shortcomings in the co-ordination and management of courses.

Reinspection took place in January 2001. Inspectors observed 10 lessons in art and design, performing arts, popular music and media. They examined a range of documents, scrutinised students' retention and achievement data, looked at students' practical and written work, had meetings with staff and spoke with students from a range of courses.

#### **Assessment**

The college has made significant progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. The proportion of outstanding and good lessons has improved from 27% to 70%, around the average for the profile of lessons observed nationally by inspectors in this programme area. After the last inspection, the college took prompt action to address weaknesses in teaching and learning. It made good use of teaching observations and staff appraisal to identify and respond to staff development needs and to identify good practice. Lessons and assignments are well planned and well organised. The expertise of teachers is deployed well across different curriculum areas of the division. Teachers plan activities which take into account the needs of individual students. They select carefully appropriate teaching methods to capture and retain students' interest and to help them to learn. In a three-dimensional art session performing arts students successfully created models and designs for a future performance. Each was encouraged to develop a unique style and to experiment with new techniques and materials unfamiliar to them. In most lessons students participate effectively in discussion and generate good ideas. In a few lessons, teachers failed to engage students sufficiently in discussion and evaluation. In lessons with small numbers of students there were fewer opportunities for a range of learning activities to take place. Key skills are effectively developed and integrated with the curriculum. Students are supported well in the learning resource centre both by a key skills teacher and the class teacher.

There have been notable improvements in students' achievements on some courses. For example, in the BTEC first diploma in performing arts, the BTEC national diploma in popular music, GCE A level media studies, and GNVQ art and design, pass rates are well above national averages. Although there has been some improvement in retention rates, there remains an unsatisfactory record of student retention on a significant number of courses. Most have retention rates below and some well below national averages. Only 40% of students enrolled on GNVQ advanced art completed their course compared with 65% at intermediate level. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment that retention on a number of

courses has been low and below the national average. Since the last inspection the college has developed a range of strategies to improve retention, the effect of which have yet to be demonstrated in end-of-year data. The college has improved the provision of learning support, reviewed and adjusted course entry requirements and implemented more rigorous attendance monitoring and tracking of student progress. Evidence from the current academic year suggests that, for example, in-year retention has already increased by 29% in full-time and part-time courses compared with this time last year. There is a good standard of student work in intermediate art and design. Much of the work is above the standard expected by students at level 2. Textile and ceramic skills are well developed. The standard of students' finished products in fashion and clothing are enhanced by print and textile design. In first-year advanced art courses, the standard of student work is good. In music, media and performance the students experience is enriched by the use of live projects and active involvement in community work and music festivals. However, in the second year of advanced courses, students' skills in painting, sketchbook development and three-dimensional design are underdeveloped. Students have a poor understanding and knowledge of historical and contemporary art. They lack confidence in oral and critical analysis of their own and others' work. However, teachers act swiftly to give extra support to individual students. They monitor rigorously their progress and provide extra lessons to help students improve the standard of their work. Students benefit from attending workshops with other groups and life drawing classes to improve skills. They have tutorial assignments on presentation skills and assignment development. Teachers' assessment of assignments is efficient and rigorous. Students receive supportive and constructive feedback which helps to improve the standard of their work.

The co-ordination and the management of courses is much improved. Since the last inspection the structure of the division has been reviewed and teachers and managers now have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. There are now more full-time staff who provide good programme leadership for all courses. The four areas of the division are each led by a curriculum area leader. The curriculum leaders work well together to ensure the sharing of good practice and the most efficient use of staff expertise. Curriculum teams meet regularly. Teachers are actively involved in curriculum planning and groups dealing with cross-college issues. Course teams are clearly focused on teaching and learning activity and identify action to improve standards. Self-assessment is generally self-critical and realistic.

The college has improved the learning environment for students in art and design. There is better storage space and each student has their own workstation in appropriate studios. Fashion and textiles are effectively integrated with other provision in the curriculum area. The college has made efficient use of planned investment in accommodation and equipment to support learning in art and design. The media suite is refitted and well equipped with appropriate new IT resources and new sound and light equipment for performing arts. There is good technician support.

**Revised grade:** art and design and performing arts 3.