

Kensington and Chelsea College
Reinspection of Computing and Information Technology: November 2000
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.

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Kensington and Chelsea College Greater London Region

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Background

Kensington and Chelsea College was inspected in October 1999. The findings were published in inspection report 16/00. Computing and information technology provision was awarded a grade 4.

The main strengths were good quality learning materials and effective partnerships with community organisations. These strengths were outweighed by significant weaknesses which included: pass rates well below the national average; poor management in some lessons; inadequate open access IT facilities; and some students' lack of punctuality.

The provision was reinspected in November 2000. Ten sessions were observed including a tutorial. The inspector examined a sample of students' assignments and work; talked to staff and students; examined documentation and evaluated student achievement and retention data.

Assessment

The college has taken action to address weaknesses identified in the inspection. It has: improved the management of the provision; strengthened the tutorial system; and provided staff development to improve the management of IT workshops. It has made good use of the standards fund, for instance, to improve learning resources and the quality of its data on student retention and achievement. The learning materials are of good quality, and the college has improved students' access to learning materials through the intranet. Most lessons observed were good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Staff used an effective range of teaching methods and provided opportunities for more able students to progress with more difficult exercises. Students' attendance and punctuality is monitored. Attendance during the reinspection was below the average for all lessons inspected in 1999-2000. Assessments and practical exercises are effective and student work is of a satisfactory standard. Teachers provide useful feedback to students on how to improve their work. Course documentation is of good quality. Feedback from students is used in the evaluation of courses by course teams. Improvements have been made to the college's IT facilities. There is now adequate access for students to IT facilities outside of timetabled lessons. Achievement rates on most programmes are above the national average. Retention is above average on some courses, but below average on others. There continue to be effective community partnerships which encourage people to join courses in local venues, who might not otherwise have participated in further education.

The college should improve student retention and attendance on some courses.

Revised grade: computing and information technology 3.