

**Kidderminster College**  
**Reinspection of Business: November 1999**  
**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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**Kidderminster College  
West Midlands Region**

**Reinspection of Business: November 1999**

**Background**

Kidderminster College in the West Midlands was inspected in October 1998 and the findings were published in inspection report 06/99. Business was awarded a grade 4.

The main strengths were the constructive and comprehensive assessment of students' work; the range of courses for women returners; and the strong links with employers. These strengths were outweighed by a number of weaknesses: low achievement on academic courses; declining achievement on NVQ business administration and higher level courses; significantly poor retention rates; lack of systematic target-setting and monitoring of retention and achievement; poorly-furnished and poorly-equipped classrooms in the management development unit.

The reinspection of business took place over four days in the week commencing 29 November 1999. Inspectors studied the self-assessment report and action plan in response to the last inspection. They observed 12 lessons, met with senior managers, section managers, teachers and students. Students' assessed work and portfolios were examined.

**Assessment**

The college has made significant progress in addressing weaknesses identified during the previous inspection. Inspectors found that teaching is effective. Schemes of work are clear and lesson plans are used to record evaluative comments by the teacher following the lesson. Most of the students are adults and teachers draw on their experience to enliven lessons and to engage interest. IT is an integral part of most courses and the large IT rooms are used flexibly by staff in order to combine individual and group work within the same session.

Since the inspection course teams have done much work to address low achievement and poor retention. For example, the GCSE accounts students were given a half-hour tutorial preceding their evening class to receive individual feedback and support. Retention has improved and the pass rate is now significantly higher than the national average. Management courses and NVQ programmes in accountancy have improved significantly over a three-year period and retention and achievement rates now exceed the national averages.

The management of the business studies curriculum area changed early in 1999 as part of a whole college reorganisation. It is too early to judge its overall impact. There is now a more focused and consistent approach to course review. Inspectors observed that much progress has been made in improving the teaching environment in the management development centre. Some new weaknesses were found. The choice of full-time courses for 16 to 19 year olds is limited as the GNVQ at intermediate and advanced level in business is not offered, and there is no day-time course in GCE A level business studies. Teachers do not check students' individual folders and a number of these are poorly organised. However, some NVQ portfolios are of a high standard.

**Revised grade:** business 3.