

**Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education**  
**Reinspection of Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities:**  
**February 2000**  
**Report from the Inspectorate**  
**The Further Education Funding Council**

## **THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL{PRIVATE }**

*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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**Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education  
West Midlands Region**

**Reinspection of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:  
February 2000**

**Background**

Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education was inspected in November 1998. The inspection findings were recorded in the FEFC's college inspection report 18/99, published in February 1999. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was graded 4.

Inspectors agreed that good relationships between teachers and students helped some students develop new skills. Students valued the high level of support from teachers and there was some effective franchised provision in the community. These strengths were outweighed by a number of weaknesses. There was no strategic plan or policy statement for this provision. There were few opportunities for students to progress to other suitable programmes in the college. Most students were located on a separate site and lacked opportunities to play a full part in the life of the college. The abilities and learning needs of students were not effectively assessed and individual goals were not established. Much of the teaching failed to extend students' skills and understanding and there was little development of students' ability to work on their own.

The provision was reinspected over four days in February 2000. Twelve lessons were observed. Discussions were held with managers, staff and students. Students' work and college documentation were examined. Provision made in collaboration with partners was visited on two sites.

**Assessment**

The college has made some progress in addressing some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Provision has been relocated onto the college's main site enabling students to join college clubs and to make good use of the college's facilities, such as the refectory. Some students progress to vocational options within the college but the range of these is restricted to four curriculum areas. There is a policy for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and clear reference to this provision is made in the strategic plan. The policy does not have a procedure or measurable targets.

Procedures for initial assessment have been revised but these do not adequately identify students' interests and acquired skills. These procedures are not yet having sufficient impact on students' learning programmes. Some students follow inappropriate programmes and individual learning plans do not relate specifically to their future life prospects. These action plans do not specify in sufficient detail what students need to learn. The aims and objectives of students' programmes are not specific enough to enable teachers to plan learning effectively. The recording of students' progress is not sufficiently detailed.

The quality of teaching and learning in seven of the 12 lessons observed was less than satisfactory. Lesson plans focus on whole group activities and most do not take account of individual learning needs and goals. There is little evidence of planning for the differentiated learning needs of students. Students were observed waiting for long periods while teachers focused on another student completing an activity. Some teachers do not demonstrate an

understanding of the educational implications of working with students with complex cognitive impairment. Much teaching fails to extend students' skills or understanding. Some students with poor literacy or numeracy skills spend time on inappropriate activities, such as copying letters and using plastic money. In some lessons students who are unpunctual or who behave inappropriately are not challenged. Support staff are not used effectively in some lessons

In order to address these weaknesses the college should: improve the quality of teaching and learning; extend the scope of initial assessment of students' learning needs; establish comprehensive individual learning plans for students and accurate tutorial records of their progress; tackle deficiencies in classroom management.

**Revised grade:** provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities 4.