7 May 1998

CIRCULAR

REPORT OF THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE FOR 1996-97

To

College principals
Chief education officers
Heads of external institutions
Heads of higher education
institutions receiving Council funds
Others with an interest in the
further education sector

Circular type

Information

Summary

Publishes the quality assessment committee's report for 1996-97

Reference number: 98/13

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98/13

REPORT OF THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE FOR 1996-97

INTRODUCTION

1   This circular publishes the quality assessment committee's annual report to the Council for 1996-97.
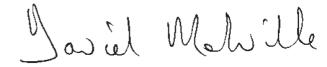
BACKGROUND

2   The *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* (the Act) gave the Council a duty to ensure that satisfactory arrangements exist to assess the quality of education provided within the further education sector. The Act also requires the Council to establish a quality assessment committee to advise it on the discharge of this duty. The committee was established in 1993 under the chairmanship of Sir Bob Reid. The membership of the committee in 1996-97 is given at appendix 2 to the annex to this circular.

3   The remit of the quality assessment committee requires the committee 'to report annually to the Council, including an evaluation of the overall quality of education in the sector'. The full terms of reference of the committee are given at appendix 2 to the annex to this circular.

4   The report is at the annex to this circular. It is based on the findings outlined in *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report,* which was published in November 1997.

PUBLICATION OF THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

5   This is the fourth report by the quality assessment committee, and the second of these to be published. The committee raises a number of issues which need to be addressed under four main headings: the curriculum; teaching and learning; quality assurance; and management. Addressing the various issues raised by the committee will be no easy task and will require a range of strategies involving the Council, the Department for Education and Employment, and college governors and senior management. The Association of Colleges and the

Further Education Development Agency will be contacted separately by the chief inspector to request their support in instigating action.

David Melville

REPORT OF THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE FOR 1996-97

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

1   The committee met on three occasions during the year. Meetings were well attended. The committee monitored the performance of the inspectorate and commented on the findings of inspection. It also considered:

- the inspectorate's work programme for 1996-97
- inspection reports on construction; business, administration and management; agriculture; humanities; and good practice in quality assurance
- the outcome of consultation with the sector on revised inspection methods, revisions to the inspection framework and guidance to colleges on self-assessment
- accreditation of colleges
- the chief inspector's annual report 1996-97
- a draft code of practice for the inspectorate
- its own annual report.

2   Early in 1997, the committee completed its review of arrangements for inspection and recommended to the Council the adoption of a revised inspection framework. This took account of advice provided by a consultative group and responses to wider consultation carried out by the Council during the summer of 1996. The Council agreed to the publication of the revised framework *Validating Self-assessment* (Circular 97/12) in March 1997. The committee also requested that the chief inspector develop additional guidance on the preparation and format of self-assessment reports. This was published by the Council at the same time as the revised framework (Circular 97/13).

3   Circular 97/12 set out the Council's commitment to establish closer working between the Council's audit service and the inspectorate. Arrangements to enable the audit of a college's governance and management to become part of the inspection process were published by the Council in June 1997 (Circular 97/22).

4   In addition to its work on the revised framework for inspection, the quality assessment committee sought the advice of a consultative group on accreditation. The committee recommended to the Council that college accreditation should be introduced during the four-year inspection cycle commencing in September 1997. Four criteria were proposed for assessing colleges' suitability for the award of accredited status:

- the existence in the college of formal and effective monitoring and quality assurance arrangements
- regular and rigorous self-assessment, validated during the course of a college inspection
- the setting and consistent achievement of appropriate targets for institutional performance and demonstration that standards of students' achievement are being improved and/or maintained at a high level over a three-year period
- effective action to address weaknesses and demonstrate the college's accountability.

5   In response to a report on accreditation from the committee, the Council issued a consultation circular in July 1997 (Circular 97/25). Responses to the consultation indicated overwhelming support for the principles governing accredited status and for the proposed procedures for accrediting colleges. The Council has considered the responses and agreed to introduce arrangements for accredited status during 1998, ensuring that appropriate criteria are established and observed.

6   In September 1997, the committee received the chief inspector's annual report for 1996-97 and recommended to the Council that it be published. It also agreed that the findings in the chief inspector's annual report should provide the basis for the committee's fourth annual report to the Council.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE INCORPORATION IN 1993

7   In 1993, further education was popularly described as the 'Cinderella sector'. Few outside the sector knew of the work of further education colleges. Over four years, the sector's incorporation, the strengthening of its voice and the realisation of its achievements has made this description out of date. It is now widely understood that further education has a central role in ensuring this

country's future prosperity and is at the heart of lifelong learning. In catering for four million students each year, the sector: provides education and training for more than two-thirds of those over 16 in schools, colleges and universities; enrols more 16 year olds than the schools sector; and offers the widest range of opportunities to adult students seeking qualifications from pre-foundation to postgraduate level. For some students, enrolment in a further education college represents an important new beginning in their quest for learning, qualifications and employment. For others, following a college programme is an essential part of keeping professional skills up to date. For the vast majority of students, participation in further education is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

8   Beyond this, the sector has also proved that it can respond coherently and dynamically to change. There is now a realisation that college governors, managers and other staff are committed and able to improve efficiency, quality and accountability. This has done much to reassure the public at large and those who represent the public's interests. During the last four years, corporations have generally dealt effectively with the variety of issues which have confronted them. The Council has issued a range of guidance to help corporations meet their responsibilities. The Council should strive to make such guidance clear and comprehensive. Members of corporations have been generous with their time and experience in supporting colleges through these early years of incorporation. In some cases, however, vacancies on corporations have not always been filled as promptly as is desirable. While there are undoubtedly many reasons why this is so, this situation places a considerable burden of work on other corporation members. This underlines the need for corporations to ensure that vacancies are filled quickly.

9   The college inspection programme for 1996-97 completed the first four-year cycle of college inspections. Colleges have responded positively to the experience of inspection and to other measures put in place by the Council to encourage the improvement of provision. During the past four years, inspectors have observed and graded over 70,000 lessons involving some 750,000 students. More than 6,900 grades have been awarded to curriculum areas and other aspects of cross-college provision.

10   The grades awarded by inspectors have charted the sector's progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning, in becoming more responsive to local community needs and in securing better resources and accommodation to enrich students' experiences. Inspection reports confirm that college staff have worked hard to meet the needs of students through more effective lesson planning, improved guidance, and by establishing a wide range of services to support students experiencing difficulties. Teachers have coped with increasing administrative burdens and changes in their contractual obligations. Many support staff have had to learn new skills and take a more central role in ensuring that students achieve their aims. Senior managers have had to make difficult decisions in achieving the best use of college resources and governors have had to face significant responsibilities steering colleges at a strategic level. Within the context of a continuously evolving curriculum, these achievements are to the great credit of all those who work in the sector.

11   Despite the sector's many successes, there are some worrying trends which have emerged over the last four years. Chief amongst these is the rising proportion of colleges (now more than 25 per cent) which are experiencing acute financial difficulties. Growth and improved performance have become increasingly challenging as colleges cope with the overall funding constraints placed on the sector, competition from other providers, circumstances inherited at the time of incorporation and convergence in average levels of funding.

12   The committee also has growing concerns that financial stringencies and meeting demands for growth will jeopardise provision for students unless college managers see that improvements in quality are integral to the sector's long-term viability. Evidence from inspection suggests that there is a correlation between effective management, comprehensive quality assurance and good education and training for students. Moreover, analysis of inspection grades and funding suggests that even those colleges with lower levels of funding can achieve and maintain good-quality provision.

13   Nevertheless, if the sector is to meet the objectives set for it, there needs to be co-operation between colleges and those that administer further education. The government has to be realistic in its financial provision; curriculum and awarding bodies should work closely with those delivering course

programmes; the Council must ensure that funding mechanisms are appropriate; and college corporations need to take a more active interest in setting targets for improvement and in monitoring college performance. In short, a real and constructive partnership is necessary to ensure that the sector fulfils its potential for delivering high-quality lifelong learning in future.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN 1996-97

14   This year has been particularly difficult for colleges. Unplanned changes in funding have caused many colleges to rethink their strategic development at short notice. This challenge has been faced at a time of fundamental developments in the role of further education and the way colleges operate. The prospect is of a more inclusive approach in the organisation of teaching, learning and support for all students, new strategies to widen participation in further education and a continued effort to find ways of becoming more responsive to community needs. This will require more attention to be paid to ensuring that all students are enrolled on appropriate programmes of study which afford them every opportunity to succeed.

15   Although the tasks facing further education colleges are substantial, evidence from the inspections carried out in 1996-97 has reassured the committee that the sector will continue to meet its many challenges. Colleges are well served by governors and the majority of colleges are effectively managed. Teachers have worked hard, in the main, to ensure that restructuring, and changes in staffing and responsibilities have caused minimum disruption to students. This does not mean, however, that the sector is without issues which urgently need to be addressed. Inspection reports highlight persistent weaknesses in, for example, students' achievement of qualifications, management information systems, aspects of teaching and quality assurance. The committee is concerned that progress in some areas has been slow and believes that the Council should be energetic in encouraging good practice and supporting those colleges which are struggling to improve the quality of their work. The introduction of accredited status for colleges should help in this endeavour if it enables the Council to focus its support more clearly on those colleges experiencing difficulty.

ISSUES FACING THE SECTOR

16   In order to secure the quality of future provision, colleges, the Council, government and other bodies associated with further education need to address a range of issues broadly concerned with the curriculum, teaching and learning, quality assurance and college management.

CURRICULUM

Developing a more Modular Curriculum

17   Since the issue of class size was raised by the inspectorate, the proportion of observed lessons attended by 13 or more students has risen slightly. This reflects the effort made by some colleges to rationalise the way courses are taught and to improve student attendance. Although the committee believes that more can be done in this area to improve efficiency, substantial progress will depend on the rationalisation of the plethora of qualifications course and awarding bodies. What is needed is the development of a more modular and unified structure for the further education curriculum, including mechanisms for students to accumulate credit for their achievements. This will enable colleges to establish courses containing common units which can be taught to larger groups of students. *This is an issue which concerns college managers and those responsible for educational policy at a national level. Colleges should continue to seek ways of teaching larger groups effectively. The Council should work closely with other bodies concerned with qualifications, to develop appropriate funding mechanisms for a more modular curriculum.*

Widening Participation and Ensuring Opportunities for Progression

18   The sector has achieved an impressive record of encouraging those with limited educational experience and achievements to participate in further education. In particular, colleges have increased the opportunity for students to undertake foundation level courses. However, to meet future needs, more should be done to ensure that students studying at this level have opportunities and the incentive to progress. Colleges also need to be more proactive in seeking out those within their communities who would benefit from further education and training, and to provide for these students course structures and schedules of study

which suit their needs. Progress towards a more modular curriculum will help but there is also a need for further development of services providing guidance and support for students, and increasingly comprehensive management information to monitor their progress. *The Council and the government should work closely together to ensure that the national framework of qualifications permits appropriate routes of progression for all those who enter further education. Colleges need to pay particular attention to the structure and delivery of their curricula to ensure that all students are provided with appropriate opportunities to achieve qualifications.*

Ensuring all Students have an Opportunity to Develop Appropriate Key Skills

19   A number of recent educational reviews have highlighted the importance of developing in students the key skills which underpin their learning. In particular, it is becoming clear that skills in communications, numeracy and the use of information technology (IT) should be central to the studies of all students, regardless of their level of study or the type of qualification they seek. Further education colleges have made good progress in tackling the difficult task of integrating key skills with other aspects of study. There is a growing understanding of how to make the teaching of key skills vocationally relevant and of how to assess students' achievements. Nevertheless, there is much work still to be done, especially to improve students' numeracy. The committee believes it is now time to extend the provision of key skills teaching beyond those courses where it is mandatory to ensure that all students are well equipped for future study and the world of work. *Progress in this area will require colleges to formulate more comprehensive policies to guide the development of key skills teaching and ensure that successful practice is shared amongst staff. The Council should also examine its funding mechanisms to ensure that colleges are adequately resourced in widening key skills provision.*

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Improving Student Retention and Achievements

20   The committee is concerned that too many students are being enrolled on courses who subsequently fail to achieve qualifications. At worst, up to 50 per cent of those who start a course of study do not achieve the qualification they are aiming for. If this is happening, college managers and corporations should not fail to examine closely the effectiveness of admissions policies, guidance, teaching and all other aspects of support for students. Evidence from a few colleges shows that dramatic improvements in retention can be made if there is a strong commitment shared by all staff. Equally, the achievement of qualifications can be improved if quality assurance systems take proper account of the reasons why students fail assessments and follow through action to improve performance. T*o encourage colleges to make progress in this area, the Council should keep under review the emphasis given in the funding methodology to the achievement of qualifications and ensure that good practice in improving retention and students' achievements is recognised and disseminated. College managers should develop clearer targets for improving retention and achievements and ensure that these are embedded in quality assurance arrangements.*

Encouraging Good Practice in Teaching

21   The great majority of teaching observed by inspectors is satisfactory or better. There is, however, concern that in some curriculum areas teachers are not adjusting their methods to cater for developments in the curriculum and an increasing diversity of students. This has been highlighted by, for example, grades awarded for teaching and learning in agriculture and basic education. The committee is also concerned that teaching on some types of course programme, for example on GCSE courses and GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses, needs general improvement. The inclusion of lesson observation as a part of self-assessment is a welcome sign that colleges are taking the identification of staff development related to teaching seriously. However, to ensure that all students benefit from the highest quality teaching, more effort needs to be put into sharing good practice within, and amongst, colleges. Those teachers who aspire to and achieve the highest standards should be widely recognised as leaders in their profession. Those who are struggling should be supported. *All teachers and college managers should address this issue, working with the sector's associations and the Further Education Development Agency to develop appropriate*

training programmes and to identify and disseminate good practice as widely as possible.

Making Better Use of Technology

22   The sector has invested a substantial amount to improve IT. Most students now have access to good-quality computers, often in newly developed and well-equipped IT centres. If this investment is to yield maximum benefit, teachers now need to be encouraged to develop effective ways of using technology to enhance students' learning. Current staff development programmes to improve managers' awareness of IT and teachers' basic skills in using IT are useful. These need to be further extended to encourage the development of materials and methods to support teaching. More support is also needed for the development of external network links to ensure that students and staff can gain access to the wealth of material available through the internet. *Colleges need to develop clear strategies which link technology, teaching and learning and staff development. The committee also encourages the Council to continue working closely with the government in securing adequate resources to underpin the development of network services for sector colleges.*

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Embedding Rigorous Self-assessment in Quality Assurance Systems

23   The committee is convinced that the new inspection arrangements appropriately reflect the growing maturity of the sector. The emphasis on self-assessment clearly demonstrates the Council's view that colleges are ready to take more explicit responsibility for assuring the quality of their provision. However, the burden of this responsibility is considerable. It is essential that colleges are realistic and thorough in their self-assessments, and that the process of self-assessment involves a wide range of staff, students and governors. The committee is concerned that, despite self-assessment being a feature of inspection during the last three years, many colleges have yet to establish this activity as a regular part of their quality assurance cycle, with appropriate links between self-assessment, strategic planning and the improvement of quality. Colleges have to realise that delays in making progress in the establishment of regular and rigorous self-assessment will diminish their chances of achieving accredited status in the

near term. *It is for college corporations and managers to ensure that priority is given to the development of self-assessment arrangements.*

Ensuring the Teaching Skills of Part-time Teachers

24   The profile of teaching staff within sector colleges continues to change. Many students are now taught by part-time teachers. Some of these teachers, while they can demonstrate up-to-date commercial and industrial knowledge, do not have appropriate teaching qualifications and experience. Although support systems for new teachers are becoming increasingly comprehensive, more needs to be done to ensure that all teachers are fully aware of the standards expected of them and that they have the requisite skills to ensure those standards are met. This is particularly an issue for part-time teachers involved with students studying at foundation and entry level. These teachers are sometimes not well equipped to deal with students who have a wide range of backgrounds and abilities. *College managers need to ensure that staff development programmes provide teachers with the skills they need to do their job effectively.*

Updating Full-time Teachers' Industrial Experience

25   The employment of part-time teachers helps to ensure that courses maintain their relevance to the world of work but the committee is concerned that, as administrative pressures on full-time teachers increase, few are able to seek opportunities to keep their experience of commercial and industrial practice up to date. Inspectors have frequently commented on this matter but there is little evidence of colleges being able to improve the situation. *This is an issue that college managers and industry should jointly seek to resolve.*

Improving the Quality of Collaborative Provision

26   The development by colleges of collaborative agreements with other providers of education and training has been a feature of the last three years. In 1996-97, over half the colleges in the sector had students enrolled on courses being taught by other organisations. This kind of arrangement accounted for about 10 per cent of all provision funded by the Council, in terms of funding units. Collaborative arrangements have important benefits in widening participation in further education, linking colleges to

commerce and industry, and in making nationally recognised qualifications available to those in work. However, the committee is concerned that, too often, the quality assurance of collaborative provision does not match the effectiveness of that exerted on courses offered directly by colleges. In some colleges, quality assurance is comprehensive and rigorous. In others it is variable and too little emphasis is given to monitoring which includes regular visits to partners' training facilities to check on the work being done and the progress of students. The committee believes it is particularly important for governors and senior college staff to take a continuing interest in the quality of collaborative provision, once it is under way. This requires regular consideration of detailed and accurate data on matters such as staffing, student attendance and progression, backed up by evaluations of quality. *This is a matter for all corporations of colleges involved in collaborative provision to address. The Council should also work with colleges to identify and disseminate good practice, and review the guidance given to colleges to ensure that the quality of collaborative provision is assured.*

MANAGEMENT

Improving Management Information

27   The need to improve management information has been a continuing issue for most colleges. Systems for submitting student records for funding purposes are frequently robust but computerised systems which enable colleges to track students as they progress in their studies are underdeveloped. Too often, central records differ from those held in departments. Inadequately detailed monitoring means that senior managers and governors remain unaware of weaknesses in student retention, the achievement of qualifications and destinations of students. Consequently, their ability to focus on improving quality is limited. Setting and achieving targets for students' achievements is now a clearly stated priority for colleges and is seen as an important mechanism for raising standards. *It is for college managers to specify appropriate management information systems to enable timely and appropriate targeting, monitoring and reporting. The Council should assist colleges with this development.*

Increasing Collaboration

28   Although competition remains acute in some localities, a growing number of colleges are discovering the benefits of collaboration with other providers, including schools, private training organisations and institutions of higher education. There are good examples to be found of colleges working together to develop resources to support learning, co-operating with others to ensure an appropriate curriculum for their community and establishing compatible arrangements for dealing with students' applications. The committee believes the way forward for colleges must involve increased collaboration. Progress already being made signals a developing maturity within the sector which should be encouraged, especially where it provides a better service for students and reduces duplicated effort. *It is for college corporations and managers actively to seek ways of co-operating with other providers in their community to improve the service offered to students.*

Improving Management Skills

29   College restructuring and the delegation of management responsibilities to a wider range of staff have resulted in more teachers becoming involved in college management and taking on administrative duties. Often, time allowances made for management tasks are small and insufficient support is available to support administrative work. The committee is concerned that more needs to be done to help teachers and other middle managers to work efficiently. *This issue should be addressed by senior college managers and those responsible for prioritising staff development. The committee would also encourage continued development of management qualifications specific to those who work in further education, especially at middle and senior levels.*

Enhancing Equipment

30   Improvements in areas such as IT should not divert attention from shortcomings in facilities for students which persist in other areas. Successive reports from the chief inspector have highlighted the need for investment to support curriculum provision in, for example, engineering. Failure to address this issue will result in students leaving college ill-equipped to cope with modern industrial practice. While colleges have it in their hands to seek industrial support for the replacement of obsolete

equipment and to enter into arrangements to share facilities with other colleges, the committee believes that there is a real danger that areas perceived as high cost might be marked for closure in some colleges putting opportunities for students in some localities at risk. *This issue is best addressed through the provision of adequate funding for the sector and by colleges increasing collaboration and establishing clear priorities which ensure that the full range of their resources is updated on a regular basis.*

Improving Financial Support for Students

31 Many colleges work hard to provide advice and financial support to students experiencing difficulties. Increasingly, these services and the remission of fees are needed to ensure the continued enrolment of students who might otherwise find themselves excluded by force of circumstance. Funding provided by the Council to colleges specifically to promote access to further education is frequently supplemented from other sources but is seldom sufficient to cater for all those who need it. The committee is concerned that the call on college funds has increased as local education authorities have reduced discretionary awards to students. Moreover, there is an unevenness in the amount of discretionary funding made available and students' chances of receiving financial support therefore vary. The committee welcomes the recent establishment of the Lane committee which will review discretionary awards. *It is for the Council, as well as colleges and the government, to consider the outcomes of the Lane committee's deliberations in terms of their impact on the availability and administration of funds to support students.*

CONCLUSION

32 This report highlights the achievements of the sector over the last four years and the main issues it must face in securing quality in education and training in the future. The committee has no reservations in expressing its belief that colleges can, and will, deliver what is required to underpin the further development of the country's economy and lifelong learning. The committee is convinced that the pursuit of high quality should lie at the heart of the sector's development. However, the speed with which the sector as a whole can develop will depend on:

- the continued development of rigorous self-assessment monitored through independent inspections of quality
- strengthening the existing collaboration between colleges, the Council, the government and other agencies concerned with the well-being of the sector
- increased emphasis on the promotion and dissemination of good practice
- focused support for colleges experiencing difficulties.

33 The committee sees an important role for the Council in making these a feature of strategies to improve provision for students.

MAIN ISSUES FACING THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Issue	*Responsibility for addressing issue*
CURRICULUM	
Developing a more modular curriculum (paragraph 17)	College managers and those responsible for educational policy at national level
Widening participation and ensuring opportunities for progression (paragraph 18)	Colleges, the Council and the government
Ensuring all students have an opportunity to develop appropriate key skills (paragraph 19)	Colleges and the Council
TEACHING AND LEARNING	
Improving student retention and achievements (paragraph 20)	The Council and college managers
Encouraging good practice in teaching (paragraph 21)	All teachers and college managers working with the sector's associations and the Further Education Development Agency
Making better use of technology (paragraph 22)	Colleges, the Council and government
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
Embedding rigorous self-assessment in quality assurance systems (paragraph 23)	College corporations and managers
Ensuring the teaching skills of part-time teachers (paragraph 24)	College managers
Updating full-time teachers' industrial experience (paragraph 25)	College managers and industry
Improving the quality of collaborative provision (paragraph 26)	College corporations and staff, and the Council
MANAGEMENT	
Improving management information (paragraph 27)	College managers and the Council
Increasing collaboration (paragraph 28)	College corporations and managers
Improving management skills (paragraph 29)	College managers and the Council
Enhancing equipment (paragraph 30)	Colleges and the government
Improving financial support for students (paragraph 31)	Colleges, the Council and the government

MEMBERSHIP OF THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE IN 1996-97

Chairman

Sir Bob Reid   Chairman, Sears plc

Education Members

Dr Paul Gallagher OBE   Principal, Bradford and Ilkley Community College

Mr Colin Greenhalgh OBE   Principal, Hills Road Sixth Form College*

Ms Christine Lee-Jones   Principal, Eccles College

Mr Keith Rowland OBE   Principal, Tresham Institute (retired December 1997)

Ms Ruth Silver CBE   Principal, Lewisham College*

Mrs Jenny Fitton   Principal, Taunton's College±

Employer Members

Mr Dudley Cloake   Partner's Counsellor, John Lewis Partnership

Mr Keith Court   Chairman, South West Water plc (retired March 1997)

Mr Alan Dick   Managing Director, Alan Dick Engineering Ltd§

Vacancy

Student Representative Member

Mr Douglas Trainer   President, National Union of Students

*   with effect from February 1997

±   with effect from July 1997

§   with effect from May 1997

QUALITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Terms of reference

1   To advise the Council on the quality of education provided:

   a.   in institutions within the sector;

   b.   in institutions for whose activities the Council provides, or is considering providing, financial support (in which respect, it will be necessary to have regard to the advice from local education authorities, the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools and the Higher Education Funding Council for England).

2   To recommend to the Council and keep under review methods for assessing quality.

3   To receive assessment reports on the quality of education and advise on any necessary action.

4   To report annually to the Council, including an evaluation of the overall quality of education in the sector.

5   To advise on other matters as requested from time to time by the Council.