

Braintree College

REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1998-99

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 inspects other further education provision funded by the FEFC. In fulfilling its work programme, the inspectorate assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum, disseminates good practice and advises the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circulars 97/12, 97/13 and 97/22. Inspections seek to validate the data and judgements provided by colleges in self-assessment reports. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work they inspect. A member of the Council's audit service works with inspectors in assessing aspects of governance and management. All colleges are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

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Grade Descriptors

Inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use 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 the 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.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1997-98, are shown in the following table.

| | Grade | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|----|----|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Curriculum areas | 9 | 60 | 29 | 2 | – |
| Cross-college provision | 18 | 54 | 24 | 4 | – |

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report*
Sample size: 108 college inspections

Student Achievements

Where data on student achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in three ways:

- as expected completions, which is the number of initial enrolments on qualifications where the student expected to complete the qualification in a given year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1995, would appear in the results for 1996-97 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification
- as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which the students have completed as expected (or are continuing with the prospect of late completion). For programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, that is, from the start to the end of the qualification
- as an achievement rate, which is the number of qualifications students have fully achieved as a percentage of completed qualifications with a known outcome. Partial achievements are not shown.

Summary

Braintree College

Eastern Region

Inspected November 1998

Braintree College is a tertiary college which opened in September 1992 on the site of a former further education college. It is the only post-16 establishment in Braintree. The college's first self-assessment report was produced in 1998. The report builds on existing quality assurance procedures. The self-assessment process was thorough. The report is comprehensive and evaluative. Statistical data on students' achievements were accurate. Students, staff, managers, governors and employers were involved in the self-assessment process. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report.

The college offers courses in eight of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. Five of these programme areas were inspected. The college has productive links with its partner schools and works closely with the LEA and Essex TEC. Corporation members are committed to the success of the college and take a keen interest in curriculum developments. There is effective financial management. Strategic planning is comprehensive. Rigorous performance targets are set for improvement. Course management is effective. The quality assurance arrangements are thorough. Tutorial support for full-time students is excellent. Accommodation and learning resources are of a

high standard. The college should address: low levels of retention on a few courses; ineffective classroom management in a minority of lessons; the low take up by students of learning support; the deficiencies in library bookstock; and the role of the academic board.

The grades awarded as a result of the inspection are given below.

| Curriculum area | Grade | Cross-college provision | Grade |
|---|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Leisure and tourism | 2 | Support for students | 2 |
| Health and childhood studies | 2 | General resources | 1 |
| Art and design | 2 | Quality assurance | 1 |
| English, history and law | 2 | Governance | 2 |
| Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and adult basic education | 2 | Management | 2 |

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Braintree College is a medium-sized tertiary college and is the only post-16 establishment in the town of Braintree. In 1992, post-16 education in the town was reorganised. The three 11 to 18 secondary schools stopped offering post-16 provision and the college of further education closed. Following this reorganisation the college opened in new and refurbished accommodation on the site of the former further education college. The college attracts most of its students from Braintree town and the surrounding districts of Black Notley, Cressing, Rayne, Silver End and Rivenhall. There are productive working relationships with the three 11 to 16 partner schools which are located within a three-mile radius of the college. Approximately a third of the first-year full-time students are from the partner schools. The college recruits about 95% of the school-leavers in Braintree who stay on in education post-16. The participation rate of students in education after the age of 16 in Braintree is 68%, which is also the average staying-on rate for the county of Essex. Strong links exist with local primary and secondary schools, with pupils attending the college on a Saturday for classes in, for example, IT and mathematics. Three other further education colleges are located within 15 miles of the college: Chelmsford College; The Sixth Form College, Colchester; and Colchester Institute.

2 Braintree, Halstead and Witham are the three major towns which make up the district of Braintree with an estimated population of 126,000. This covers an area of more than 236 square miles which is essentially rural in nature with poor transport facilities and few direct road or rail connections. Within Braintree district the college is the second largest employer after Braintree District Council. Most local industry is confined to small and medium enterprises with few companies employing more than 10 staff. Employment trends indicate a shift from manual

and semi-skilled work to technician and supervisory jobs and a growth of 5.2% in mostly part-time jobs to 2003. Growth is forecast in the 'hi-tech' industries, the service sector, business and legal services. Unemployment in Braintree district is 3.3% compared with the national rate of 6.2%. The future development and growth of Stansted Airport will be of particular relevance to Braintree in terms of industrial development.

3 At July 1998, the college had 3,955 enrolments of whom approximately 63% were part time. Of the college students, 37% are studying at foundation level, 16% at intermediate level, 32% at advanced level and 4% are enrolled on higher education courses. As an associate college of Anglia Polytechnic University, the college's students can gain credit for modules completed at the college and continue on to degree or higher diploma courses at the university. The college offers a wide range of courses in all the Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC's) programme areas except agriculture and construction. Courses include general national vocational qualification (GNVQ), national vocational qualification (NVQ) and other vocational courses to provide access to further and higher education. General certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses are offered in over 30 subjects and are taken by approximately 10% of students. The college employs 174 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 47 are full-time equivalent support staff.

4 The college's mission is to serve its local community by providing education and training of the highest quality to school-leavers, adults and corporate clients.

The Inspection

5 The college was inspected during the week beginning 2 November 1998. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and the information on

Context

the college held by other directorates of the FEFC. Inspectors used data on students' achievements drawn from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1996 and 1997. The college submitted its own data on students' achievements for 1998 which were checked by inspectors against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies.

6 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. The

college was notified approximately two months before the inspection of the sample of its provision that was to be assessed. The inspection was carried out by 10 inspectors, working for a total of 40.5 days, and an auditor working for five days. They observed 58 lessons, including tutorials, and examined students' work and college documentation. Meetings were held with governors, managers, college staff and students. Inspectors evaluated the college's contacts with employers and Essex Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

| Programme | Grade | | | | | Totals |
|--|-------|----|----|---|---|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| GCE A/AS level | 2 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| GNVQ | 6 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| Other vocational | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Other | 4 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Total (No.) | 15 | 29 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 58 |
| Total (%) | 26 | 50 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 (%) | 19 | 46 | 29 | 6 | 0 | 100 |

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report*

7 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1997-98.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

| | Average number of students | Average attendance (%) |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Braintree College | 12.7 | 80 |
| National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 | 10.4 | 77 |

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report*

Curriculum Areas

Leisure and Tourism

Grade 2

8 The inspection covered courses in GNVQ leisure and tourism at intermediate and advanced level. Twelve lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. The college underestimated the effectiveness of course management and did not identify some shortcomings in teaching and learning.

Key strengths

- high standard of teaching
- good retention and pass rates
- well-devised learning materials for key skills
- careful monitoring of students' progress
- strong individual support for students
- effective course management

Weaknesses

- few opportunities for full-time students to relate their theoretical knowledge to current vocational practice

9 Course provision is mainly for full-time students at GNVQ intermediate and advanced level. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that students are able to study for additional trade qualifications in, for example, the Association of British Travel Agents primary certificate and the Galileo travel consultant award. The self-assessment report understated the effectiveness of course management. The course team meets regularly to review course structure and delivery. Formal meetings are minuted with points for action. Staff are fully involved in all aspects of the annual performance reviews and course evaluation.

10 Teaching and learning are supported by well-presented and informative student handbooks. Most course documentation and

learning materials are of a high standard and some are imaginatively designed. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a good range of appropriate teaching methods. Opportunities for the development and assessment of students' key skills are stated clearly. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that teaching is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers encourage students to contribute to group discussion and make skilful use of appropriate questions. Handouts are of a good quality and help students to understand the topics they are studying. Learning advisers work closely with teachers and provide students with good individual support in well-resourced learning centres. Most students value the opportunity to develop research and IT skills in the learning centres but for a minority of students this method of learning is ineffective; a point not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. In a minority of lessons, teachers failed to provide work which was sufficiently challenging for the students; tasks were undemanding and there was overuse of work sheets and repetitive copying from reference books. Assignments are checked and internally verified before being issued to students. The assignment briefs include performance criteria which meet the standards set by awarding bodies. Internal verification of assignments is rigorous. Prompt action is taken on issues raised by external verifiers.

11 Most students' portfolios are well presented and demonstrate competent IT skills. Portfolios are carefully reviewed by tutors at individual student performance review meetings. Although some students' written work is of a high standard, much is poorly written with incorrect spelling. Many students have not developed good note-taking skills. Teachers' written comments on students' work are often supportive and help them to make progress. In a few instances, teachers did not provide constructive comments to help students improve their performance.

Curriculum Areas

12 Computers with appropriate industrial standard software are well used by students. There is a good range of bookstock and other paper-based learning materials in the library and the curriculum learning centre. Classrooms are of a high standard. Staff have relevant industrial experience. However, students are given few opportunities to relate their theoretical knowledge to current vocational practice and there are insufficient work experience placements. This shortcoming was not addressed in the self-assessment report. There is no realistic work environment in the college. Students take part in a good range of educational visits to industry which are normally linked to assessment tasks.

13 Monitoring of students' progress is thorough. Staff and students maintain accurate and up-to-date records of achievement.

Inspectors agreed with the college that development and achievement of key skills is effective on all courses. On the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism course many students achieve level 3 IT key skills in addition to level 2 which is required for the award. Many students on the GNVQ advanced course work towards level 4 IT key skills. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate and advanced leisure and tourism courses are good and are above the national average. Pass rates on the GNVQ advanced have improved over the last three years. The majority of GNVQ advanced students progress to employment in the tourism, travel and leisure industry; a few progress to higher education. Most students who achieve the GNVQ intermediate progress to the advanced course.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in leisure and tourism, 1996 to 1998

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| GNVQ intermediate | 2 | Expected completions | 24 | 23 | 11 |
| | | Retention (%) | 59 | 96 | 79 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 83 | 87 | 82 |
| GNVQ advanced | 3 | Expected completions | 40 | 43 | 40 |
| | | Retention (%) | 83 | 68 | 75 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 73 | 79 | 85 |

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

Curriculum Areas

Health and Childhood Studies

Grade 2

14 Eleven lessons across a wide range of courses in health and childhood studies were observed. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Some of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report had been addressed effectively by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- well-organised teaching and learning
- effective use of a variety of learning activities
- most students' work of a high standard
- well-organised work experience
- high pass rates on most courses
- good progression to higher education and to employment
- effective course management

Weaknesses

- low levels of retention on some courses
- insufficient consultation with employers

15 Provision in health and childhood studies comprises mainly full-time courses at intermediate and advanced level. In addition, there are part-time courses in GNVQ intermediate and advanced health and social care and the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education diploma in nursery nursing. In 1998, the GNVQ foundation course failed to attract sufficient applicants. An East Midlands Further Education Council caring for people course has been introduced to provide a bridge for students progressing from level 2 courses who are seeking to develop further their practical care skills before entering employment. Courses are well managed and there are regular team meetings. Course files are comprehensive and well maintained. Individual course

performance indicators and achievement targets have been identified and form a significant aspect of course evaluation. There are good links with work placement providers. All courses include a period of well-planned work experience which is linked to learning activities in college. The appointment of a work placement co-ordinator has strengthened the organisation and monitoring of work experience. There is a weekly timetabled hour for students to meet with the co-ordinator and discuss any issues arising from their work placement. However, there are no formal opportunities for consultation with employers and other representatives of the care professions to evaluate course provision or to assist with the development of new courses.

16 Schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that lessons have clearly identified aims and objectives and are planned effectively. Most teaching is well managed. In the majority of lessons students experienced a variety of appropriate activities which stimulated and encouraged their involvement. Teachers made particularly good use of small group work. Students enjoy this approach to learning and work co-operatively and confidently. In a BTEC national diploma class, students were introduced to the topic of child protection. They were given cards depicting various scenarios and worked together to identify and categorise potential types of child abuse. The session was handled with sensitivity and led to a lively discussion of some of the ambiguities surrounding this topic. A minority of lessons suffered from insufficient time to complete planned activities or to summarise learning.

17 Most staff have relevant experience in the care professions. There is effective team-based staff development. Topics have included a review of GNVQ grading themes, the delivery of key skills and assignment planning. Teaching rooms are of a good standard and most contain

Curriculum Areas

examples of attractive and creative display work. Each course is allocated a well-resourced and equipped base room. Students have access to a good range of current texts and other learning resources. These include two specialist computers which allow students to experiment with the same technology which is being used by children in local primary schools.

18 Assignments are well designed and supported by clear guidelines. Assessment is fair and accurate. Teachers' written feedback on assignments is generally thorough and is designed to help students to improve their work. Appropriate attention is paid to correcting spelling and grammatical errors. The standard of some students' written work is high.

Portfolios and assignments are well presented and show good use of IT skills. Students on higher level courses produce well-researched and evaluative assignments. There are high pass rates for most courses. Pass rates for GNVQ intermediate, BTEC national diploma and Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education courses are well above the national average. Retention on Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education courses in 1998 was below the national average. The course team has effectively addressed the issue of poor retention on the GNVQ advanced course. The self-assessment report recognised there is a good record of progression to higher education and employment.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in health and childhood studies, 1996 to 1998

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|--|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| GNVQ intermediate health and social care | 2 | Expected completions | 19 | 17 | 29 |
| | | Retention (%) | 63 | 76 | 86 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 75 | 67 | 88 |
| Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education certificate in childcare and education | 2 | Expected completions | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| | | Retention (%) | 94 | 89 | 71 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 76 | 94 | 92 |
| GNVQ advanced health and social care | 3 | Expected completions | 14 | 30 | 51 |
| | | Retention (%) | 57 | 67 | 83 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 75 | 45 | 62 |
| Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education diploma in nursery nursing | 3 | Expected completions | 54 | 37 | 35 |
| | | Retention (%) | 78 | 81 | 77 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 67 | 96 | 100 |
| BTEC national diploma childhood studies | 3 | Expected completions | 15 | 19 | 16 |
| | | Retention (%) | 73 | 83 | 100 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 91 | 58 | 94 |

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 2

19 Eleven lessons were observed covering a range of art and design courses including GNVQ, GCE A level and the diploma in foundation studies. Inspectors did not agree with all the college's judgements on the standard of teaching and learning. Inspectors found weaknesses not included in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- the good variety of appropriate learning activities
- thorough assessment of students' work
- good progression to further and higher education
- high pass rates on some courses for students who complete their studies
- the high standard of students' portfolios
- effective course management
- good use of specialist and personal tutorials

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of students' learning
- underdevelopment of some students' research skills
- low retention and pass rates on a minority of courses

20 The college's provision in art and design comprises mainly full-time courses at intermediate and advanced level. Part-time courses include GCE A levels, City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) photography and some recreational courses in general art and design. Courses are well managed. There are regular and productive team meetings where assignments and assessment criteria are

devised. Course reviews are thorough and there is evidence of action taken on the issues identified. For example, assignments have been revised and improved to integrate the development and assessment of key skills. The self-assessment report acknowledged the need for more formal links with employers to provide more opportunities for work experience for students. Action is being taken to address this issue.

21 Schemes of work are detailed and most lessons are well planned to include an appropriate variety of learning activities. Inspectors agreed that helpful guidance is given to enable students to work on their own in well-equipped specialist learning centres. Group critiques and self-evaluation are used effectively to promote learning. There is some good individual teaching but the learning points arising from this are not always shared with the other students in the class. In some group work, teachers give insufficient attention to checking that learning is taking place. The time allocated to some practical lessons did not allow for the full exploration and development of ideas. These issues on teaching and learning were not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment that assignment briefs are vocationally relevant. The tasks to be completed and the criteria for success are identified clearly on the assignment briefs. Assessment of students' work is thorough. Constructive verbal and written feedback is given to help students improve their performance. Most students' portfolios contain work of a high standard and include, for example, painting, photography, illustrations and computer-generated images. Some students have not fully developed their visual research and investigative drawing skills but these shortcomings were not included in the self-assessment report.

22 Staff are well qualified and offer a wide range of art and design specialisms which benefit students. Many staff are exhibiting

Curriculum Areas

artists and designers. The expertise of part-time staff is used appropriately to relate students' college studies to current industrial practice. For example, in a diploma in foundation studies lesson a professional printmaker introduced students to silk screen printing and etching as an extension of their two-dimensional visual studies. There is a good range of general and specialist art and design equipment. A suite of industrial standard computers and software is a valuable resource. Facilities for print making are too small for the number of students in some groups. Overall, the space allocated to the programme area is generous but the college acknowledges that it is not always appropriately used and action is being taken to address this shortcoming.

23 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that students' achievements on the majority of courses are a strength. On most courses, pass rates are above the national average. Over the last three years, retention and pass rates on the diploma in foundation studies have been consistently high. The pass rate for GNVQ advanced students completing the course is excellent. Students' progression to further and higher education is good. In 1998, all students who completed the GNVQ intermediate progressed to the GNVQ advanced course. The majority of advanced level students continue their studies in higher education. The self-assessment report did not acknowledge the decline in retention on the GNVQ advanced course and the erratic retention and poor pass rate on the one-year GCE A level course.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in art and design, 1996 to 1998

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| GNVQ intermediate | 2 | Expected completions | 27 | 18 | 19 |
| | | Retention (%) | 93 | 72 | 74 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 80 | 75 | 77 |
| GNVQ advanced | 3 | Expected completions | 33 | 38 | 36 |
| | | Retention (%) | 82 | 76 | 72 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| GCE A level (one year) | 3 | Expected completions | 12 | 28 | 36 |
| | | Retention (%) | 33 | 75 | 67 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 25 | 10 | 11 |
| GCE A level (two year) | 3 | Expected completions | 27 | 36 | 16 |
| | | Retention (%) | 78 | 69 | 94 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 71 | 96 | 93 |
| Diploma in foundation studies | 3 | Expected completions | 44 | 30 | 36 |
| | | Retention (%) | 95 | 100 | 97 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 93 | 97 | 94 |

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

Curriculum Areas

English, History and Law

Grade 2

24 The inspection covered English, history and law in the humanities programme area. Thirteen lessons were observed on GCE A level and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Inspectors identified additional strengths and attributed greater significance to some of the weaknesses.

Key strengths

- well-prepared teaching
- good GCE A level results
- thorough assessment of students' work
- good teaching accommodation for English and history

Weaknesses

- low achievement of top grades on some GCE A level courses
- the fall in students' retention
- some deficiencies in the library bookstock

25 The courses offered provide students with a wide range of opportunities, particularly at GCE A level in English where three distinct and complementary syllabuses are offered. Inspectors agreed with the college that students are given a wide range of information about courses to help them study effectively. Well-produced course handbooks are available and schemes of work and marking schemes are shared with students. There are also helpful introductory information sheets for new sections of courses.

26 Teaching is well prepared and thorough. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that most students benefit from experiencing a variety of appropriate teaching

methods and learning activities. Staff give effective guidance to individual students on planning assignments. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that sessions in the specialist learning centres enable students to develop research skills. These sessions are well integrated with other teaching to reinforce students' understanding of recent work. In some lessons observed, some students had not developed appropriate study skills; a point not raised in the self-assessment report. There are some examples of teaching and assignments which are insufficiently demanding and do not give students the opportunity to develop their ideas fully.

27 Teachers set work which is appropriate to the level of the course and the stage reached. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment that students' work is thoroughly marked. Mark schemes and criteria published in the syllabuses are used to underpin standards of assessment. Teachers supply full written comments on students' work to indicate successful features, and also to highlight where improvements can be made. These are included both in summarising remarks and also at relevant points during their work. The self-assessment report understated the strength of students' oral and written work. Students make informed and perceptive contributions to class discussions. In a GCE A level history class students collaborated in a series of presentations on the Weimar Republic. Many of these were thorough and confidently presented. The written work of GCE A level students reveals genuine interest in the subject and a range of skills in organising and presenting ideas. GCSE English students often write with assurance and enthusiasm but, in some cases, their writing lacks structure and consistent accuracy of expression.

28 History and English students benefit from specialist accommodation which is used for most lessons. Learning is enhanced by the availability of a wide range of subject resources and also by the ambience created by visual

Curriculum Areas

display materials. The value of this was not recognised in the self-assessment report. There are some deficiencies in the library bookstock for some subject topics.

29 Inspectors agreed that most GCE A level pass rates are close to the national average or above. In GCE A level English language and literature a 100% pass rate was achieved in 1998. Other English courses and GCE A level history have improved over the last three years to above the national average. In law the pass rate is below the national average. In the last

three years in GCE A level English language and literature the proportion of students achieving grades A to C has been consistently high. The college acknowledges that on some of the other GCE A level courses the proportion of A to C grades achieved is below the national average. GCSE English results have exceeded the national average at grades A to C from 1996 to 1998. An issue not acknowledged in the self-assessment report is that the retention rate across the range of courses inspected has fallen, in some cases to below the national average.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in English, history and law, 1996 to 1998

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|---|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| GCSE English language | 2 | Expected completions | 134 | 111 | 122 |
| | | Retention (%) | 57 | 72 | 65 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 70 | 52 | 59 |
| GCE A level English language | 3 | Expected completions | 13 | 37 | 67 |
| | | Retention (%) | 31 | 86 | 63 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 50 | 69 | 87 |
| GCE A level English language and literature | 3 | Expected completions | 46 | 45 | 22 |
| | | Retention (%) | 70 | 73 | 68 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 91 | 91 | 100 |
| GCE A level literature | 3 | Expected completions | 58 | 46 | 41 |
| | | Retention (%) | 74 | 70 | 59 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 81 | 94 | 93 |
| GCE A level history | 3 | Expected completions | 45 | 35 | 35 |
| | | Retention (%) | 78 | 86 | 77 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 63 | 80 | 89 |
| GCE A level law | 3 | Expected completions | 41 | 34 | 36 |
| | | Retention (%) | 63 | 76 | 64 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 58 | 77 | 70 |

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

Curriculum Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and Adult Basic Education

Grade 2

30 Eleven lessons were observed on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and adult basic education.

Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report and identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- meticulous planning of lessons
- the supportive learning environment
- good individual learning plans on basic education courses
- effective individual tutorials
- the high profile celebration of students' achievements
- excellent accommodation and specialist learning resources

Weaknesses

- some learning plans inappropriate to meet students' individual learning needs
- overemphasis on the accreditation framework
- few students progress to appropriate destinations

31 The college makes full-time provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It provides some part-time courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and for adult basic education. There are specialist programmes to meet the needs of adults in the community with severe learning difficulties. Inspectors agreed with the college that there is an extensive school links programme designed to assist students

transferring from school to college. There are effective links with social services training centres and special schools which have resulted in growth and development of the provision. Since the last inspection the college has introduced a pre-foundation studies programme designed to offer a range of learning opportunities to meet individual students' needs. Students are encouraged to sample lessons in vocational areas such as motor vehicle and catering. The learning needs of students are carefully assessed and additional learning support is provided in, for example, communication and numeracy as an integral part of their studies. Students are able to gain credit for achievement as they progress through their programme.

32 Inspectors agreed that schemes of work and lessons are well planned and detailed. Most teaching is of a good standard. Teachers provide a purposeful and supportive learning environment. The most effective teaching and learning on adult basic education courses is where students have individual learning plans with clear targets to work towards. Students' progress and targets are regularly reviewed. On some programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, individual learning plans do not have sufficiently specific objectives and do not meet the students' learning needs. Some teaching is not differentiated so that all students undertake the same activities irrespective of their differing levels of ability. In some instances, teachers fail to provide activities which take account of students' previous learning and are of little relevance to students. The self-assessment report acknowledged that some staff require support and staff development to understand how teaching methods need to match students' learning styles.

33 The tutorial system for full-time students is effective and is valued by students. Individual tutorials are well structured and detailed records are kept by tutors and copied to

Curriculum Areas

students. During individual tutorials students discuss the progress they are making with their coursework, raise personal issues and review their career aims and aspirations. Although part-time students are not timetabled for a formal tutorial session they say that they are satisfied with the level of support they receive from their teachers.

34 Inspectors agreed with the college that students' learning experiences are enhanced by the high standard of accommodation and the general learning environment. Many of the learning materials are of a good quality. Students have good access to specialist vocational areas. For example, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had a successful lesson in the sports hall and received individual support from students on a mainstream sports and leisure course. There is effective management of the curriculum area. Regular team meetings are held and these contribute to the strong team ethos amongst staff working in this area. Course files are carefully maintained. Staff development records

are well documented. Staff are generally experienced in working in this area although few have relevant specialist qualifications.

35 The college recognises and celebrates the wide range of students' achievements including those which are not accredited. Students have access to a range of accreditation schemes. Where these are appropriate for students' learning needs they enable progression. In some lessons, there is too great an emphasis on following the accreditation scheme rather than identifying and meeting the individual students' needs and interests. There are some instances where students have developed appropriate skills and confidence which has enabled them to progress successfully, in some cases, to level 3 courses. Inspectors agreed that some students do not progress to appropriate destinations. Staff recognise that some progression pathways are unclear. Students' progression has also been affected by the lack of effective careers advice. The college is addressing this issue and is reviewing the careers education provided to students on the pre-foundation programme.

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Support for Students

Grade 2

36 Inspectors agreed overall with the college's judgements on the quality of the support for students. However, inspectors placed a greater emphasis on the significance of some of the strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good pre-course guidance and admissions procedures
- effective induction arrangements
- excellent tutorial support for full-time students
- strong links with partner schools

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped procedures for identifying and meeting the additional learning support needs of students
- insufficient evaluation of central admissions and guidance

37 The college's commitment to providing support for students is stated clearly in its mission, strategic objectives, the college charter and the students' learning agreement. Students view the college as having a friendly supportive environment. The college has excellent links with its partner schools. Joint activities routinely involve senior managers and include open evenings and 'taster' days. All year 11 pupils are offered a guidance interview and parents are fully involved. Relationships with other schools are less well developed. Activities in the community include running the family literacy project, guidance sessions in libraries, the staffing of exhibition trailers at local shows and markets, and involvement in adult learners week.

38 Recruitment, enrolment and induction is co-ordinated by student services and central

admissions. There is an effective student monitoring system. Inspectors agreed with the college that these procedures are a strength. There are clear procedures for students who want to transfer to another course. Induction for students is effective. There are clear guidelines which are used consistently across the college. Course specific induction activities effectively complement the college induction. There are full-time and part-time student handbooks and a variety of handbooks for specific programmes, some of which are available on the college intranet. Welfare staff provide information and advice on accommodation, finance and related benefit issues. A counselling service is provided and appropriate arrangements are in place to refer students to specialist counselling agencies.

39 Students are invited to complete a questionnaire at enrolment to identify additional learning support needs. The college makes good use of internal specialists to assess the needs of students with specific learning difficulties and to provide effective specialist support. Screening tests for literacy and numeracy are carried out by personal tutors for full-time students. The screening is offered to part-time students but there is little take-up by them. The lead tutor for learning support contacts students individually to agree learning support plans and these are copied to personal tutors. Support is offered in a variety of ways, including group and individual sessions and support in class. Over half of the students identified as needing learning support declined the offer. The self-assessment report acknowledged that this area needs further development to encourage students to take advantage of the support available.

40 The tutorial framework is fundamental to the successful delivery of student support in the college. The development of a centrally managed cross-college team of senior tutors has raised the profile of student support. Each senior tutor is responsible for a team of personal

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tutors who are located within curriculum areas. Full-time students are assigned a personal tutor at enrolment and parents of students under 18 years of age are notified of the tutor's name. Senior tutors monitor closely the performance of individual tutors against the standard college guidelines. Group tutorials follow an agreed schedule of activities. This scheme has been successfully adapted to meet the needs of students in the different curriculum areas and study levels. There is comprehensive guidance for students progressing to higher education. The monitoring of students' progress is rigorous and they are encouraged to maintain records of achievement. Surveys of students' views indicate high levels of satisfaction with the tutorial arrangements. The self-assessment report understated the significance of this strength.

41 The college has a service level agreement with the Essex Careers and Business Partnership which is reviewed termly. Group careers education sessions are provided as part of the tutorial programme. With the student's permission, action plans from individual careers guidance interviews are copied to personal tutors for continuous review. The college acknowledges the low take-up of careers interviews. Plans are well advanced to address this issue. The self-assessment report also recognised that insufficient careers education and guidance is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is working with the Essex Careers and Business Partnership on a joint action plan.

42 The significance of the developments in the support provided for part-time and adult students has been understated in the self-assessment report. The college appointed an adult student support co-ordinator in 1995 to address this issue which was raised at the last inspection. The adult support co-ordinator acts as personal tutor to the part-time students. A successful appointment system operates but increasingly students are being referred by course tutors. The co-ordinator provides

valuable group sessions within some part-time programmes on issues such as progression opportunities and study skills.

General Resources

Grade 1

43 The college has excellent facilities for staff and students. Inspectors agreed with all of the main judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- well-maintained accommodation set in landscaped grounds
- the pleasant working environment for students and staff
- outstanding new accommodation
- the high priority given to facilities for students with disabilities
- good access to up-to-date IT facilities and the internet

Weaknesses

- insufficient library bookstock for some curriculum areas

44 The college is located in landscaped grounds close to the town centre and provides a pleasant environment in which to study. A small second site, the Courtauld Road annexe situated half a mile away, provides nursery facilities for 26 children. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that accommodation is of a high quality and is well maintained. Reception and foyer areas are spacious and welcoming to visitors. Substantial improvements have been made to the accommodation since the last inspection. These include the construction of a new £1.8 million sports complex containing a sports hall, fitness suite, dance and movement studio, beauty therapy salons, a bistro bar area and five classrooms. Students and staff make good use

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of these facilities when they are not being used for timetabled lessons. The additional studies programme encourages students to participate more in recreational and sports activities.

45 The accommodation strategy contains a 10-year planned maintenance and redecoration programme which is reviewed annually to establish priorities. Since incorporation, the accommodation strategy has addressed issues raised in surveys of students' views. Maintenance and building projects are planned to cause the minimum of disruption to students and staff. For example, the new sports complex was constructed over one academic year. The annual review of the accommodation strategy against college priorities has led to modification of the accommodation. Redundant engineering workshops have been effectively refurbished to provide additional art and design classrooms. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that a strength is the use of a computerised rooming system which matches class size to rooms available. Signposting within the main site buildings is good. Car parking facilities are extensive with 390 spaces available on the main site.

46 Most classrooms are bright, attractive and appropriately furnished to a high standard with displays of students' work. All rooms have whiteboards, overhead projectors and blinds. Audiovisual equipment is effectively managed centrally. The college employs its own caretaking and cleaning staff and standards of cleanliness throughout the buildings are high. Students respect the college environment. During the inspection there was no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. There are designated car parking spaces for wheelchair users and easy access to all buildings and facilities. Speaking lifts with Braille for visually impaired students provide access to all floors. Catering facilities are of a good standard, and there is a bright, modern, central refectory which is open throughout the day. Working areas for administrative and support staff are good.

Most staff workrooms are well equipped with networked computers. All part-time teaching staff are allocated desk space.

47 Inspectors agreed with the college that IT provision is good. There are 357 modern computers which are networked and available to students. Of these, 116 are available to students outside timetabled lessons. Common college standards for hardware and software ensure compatibility across the college. There are 45 access points to the internet throughout the college available to students. Up-to-date software is available to support teaching. The college has 28 large screen computers, and two computers with voice recognition software for blind and visually impaired students. There is a good level of technician support for the computing facilities. A central reprographics and typing service provides a high-quality document production facility.

48 Inspectors agreed that learning resources in the library and learning centres are good. A wide range of resources including videotape recordings, audio cassettes, 45 CD-ROMs, periodicals and over 20,000 books are housed in the library. There are 102 study places in the library but it is crowded at peak periods and some students are unable to gain access to computers. Although book issue statistics are recorded, students' use of the library is not monitored. The library holds a central record of the collections of specialist books, slides and other learning materials held by teaching teams and in the learning centres. The library staff have effective links with course teams. However, up-to-date library bookstock for some curriculum areas is inadequate due to book losses, and delays by some subject team leaders in ordering new bookstock. This weakness was not identified by the college.

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Quality Assurance

Grade 1

49 Significant improvements have been made to the quality assurance arrangements since the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college.

Key strengths

- a strong commitment to continuous quality improvement
- comprehensive quality assurance systems
- rigorous target-setting
- comprehensive self-assessment process
- effective staff appraisal and development

Weaknesses

- the lack of evaluative judgements in some course reviews

50 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that its commitment to continuous quality improvement is a strength. The appointment of a performance review manager to devise and promote the quality systems has been a significant development since the last inspection. Staff have a good understanding of quality assurance procedures. A college-wide calendar specifies when quality reports and reviews should be carried out. There are regular checks to ensure compliance with quality assurance procedures. All quality initiatives are interrelated and are linked to the college's strategic and operational planning cycle.

51 Inspectors agreed that the programme review and evaluation systems are well established and effective. Programme reports are produced and reviewed twice a year. A significant feature of reports is the inclusion of

comprehensive statistical data on students and their achievements. Data are produced centrally and are available to course teams on the college intranet. Action plans resulting from these reviews clearly identify the issues to be addressed, the named personnel who will take action and a timescale for completion. Action plans are monitored regularly to ensure progress is being made. In a minority of reports, staff teams concentrate too much on the collation of data and are insufficiently evaluative. All courses are rigorously reviewed on a three-yearly basis by a panel of senior managers, and representatives of governors and employers. The college acknowledges that surveys of employers' views are not carried out on a regular basis and that, when they are, the response rate is low. There are few opportunities for employers to be involved in curriculum planning or review.

52 The first self-assessment report was produced in 1998 in preparation for inspection. The college self-assessment report is comprehensive and evaluative. There is a good overview of the progress made since the last inspection. Self-assessment reports have been produced by curriculum and support teams to a standard format using the headings of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. Students, staff, managers, governors and employers were involved in the self-assessment process. There is appropriate use of performance indicators and targets to provide supporting evidence for the judgements in the self-assessment report. Realistic action plans are included and these indicate how strengths will be maintained and issues addressed. Managers and staff have a clearer view of the strategic and operational significance of their work as a result of the self-assessment process. A few of the reports for the support areas are too descriptive. Inspectors are in broad agreement with most of the college's judgements in the self-assessment report.

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53 The college sets performance targets which, in some cases, are above the national average. Curriculum teams meet annually with senior managers to set performance targets. The targets set take into account previous years' achievements and national benchmarks. A strategic aim of the college requires that there should be year-on-year improvements. Rigorous target-setting has helped to improve student retention and achievements in some curriculum areas. Support areas of the college were required to set performance targets for the first time in 1997. The college has an internal customer policy designed to ensure provision of efficient services. The college acknowledges that service level agreements for support functions have not yet been established in order to assess the policy's implementation.

54 The college charter is given to all students and is available in reception areas. Inspectors confirmed that students have a good understanding of their responsibilities, rights and entitlements. The standards of service which students can expect to receive are stated clearly against each of the charter commitments. There is a comprehensive procedure for complaints but it is rarely used by students. Students prefer to use the widely publicised suggestion scheme which managers monitor weekly. Suggestions and complaints are dealt with promptly but there is no systematic review of the record of complaints.

55 All college staff have an annual appraisal. Lesson observations are used to inform the appraisal and development of teaching staff. Records of appraisals are maintained centrally but there is no systematic monitoring to ensure records are completed. Staff development needs are identified effectively using the outcomes of appraisal and the reviews from curriculum and support teams. Staff development activities are closely linked to the college's strategic objectives. Staff development activities and the outcomes are evaluated. Inspectors considered that the strength of staff development was understated in

the self-assessment report. The college achieved Investor in People status in 1998.

Governance

Grade 2

56 Inspectors agreed with the judgements made by the college but also found some strengths and weaknesses which were not included in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good working relationships with senior managers
- the involvement of governors in the development of the college
- the high quality of corporation and committee papers
- effective oversight of the college's financial performance

Weaknesses

- insufficient systematic monitoring of academic performance
- the restricted scope and resourcing of internal audit

57 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

58 The corporation has 11 governors, the principal, three co-opted governors including the two vice-principals, a community governor, a nominee from Essex TEC, and five independent governors. There are no staff, student or parent governors. Governors have a wide range of relevant skills and background. There have been no resignations from the corporation over the last two years. A search committee has

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been established but has not needed to formally meet.

59 The commitment of governors and their close involvement with the development of the college is acknowledged by inspectors. The corporation has six scheduled meetings each year. Average attendance at over 90% is high. Governors also attend informal college events, academic board meetings and the three-yearly course reviews. Governors have a keen interest in developments in post-16 education and seek to improve their knowledge by attending external training events. The corporation has adopted a governors' handbook. A register of interests has been completed by all governors and is openly available for scrutiny. The corporation has approved a 'whistleblowing' procedure which enables staff to raise any concerns appropriately whilst protecting their confidentiality. Inspectors agreed that governors have taken steps to adopt a self-critical approach to their performance.

60 Appropriate committee structures are in place supported by clear terms of reference. The business of delegated governance is largely conducted through the audit, employment policy and finance committees. These committees operate within their terms of reference. The finance committee effectively monitors the college's financial position by receiving the college's financial management reports six times each year. The frequency of audit committee meetings has increased in the last year. For the size of college the number of days allocated for the internal audit function is low, and the scope of internal audit does not cover all of the college's key systems, for example, the student records system. There is a buildings and physical assets committee but this has not met for some time as the corporation has overseen important capital projects such as the new sports complex.

61 Corporation meetings are scheduled one year in advance. A set of standing orders is in place. The quality of agendas and minutes of

meetings is high. Detailed committee papers are provided giving both specific and background information. Corporation and committee minutes are available in the college's library and on the college intranet. Items are treated as confidential, when appropriate. The clerk is a recent external appointment and the governors gave detailed consideration to the arrangements for this appointment.

62 Inspectors agreed that there are effective working relations between governors and senior staff. The senior staff, as members of the corporation, play a full part in its activities. Governors make effective use of their expertise in seeking information on specific issues. All governors participate in the approval of the corporate plan, and are well informed by background papers presented by the senior staff. Arrangements for the appraisal of the principal involving the use of an external consultant reflect a desire by the governors to ensure that their close working relationship does not influence their judgement of senior management performance.

63 The corporation takes an active interest in the academic achievements of college students and regularly receives detailed papers on progress towards specific targets in the strategic plan. Governors acknowledge the need for a more systematic approach to the monitoring of the academic performance of the college. It is also recognised that the scheduling of reports could be improved. The corporation has recently agreed a plan to monitor regularly a range of academic performance indicators. A governors curriculum study group has been established to assist them in developing their knowledge of the curriculum.

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Management

Grade 2

64 Inspectors broadly agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good management with clear priorities
- effective course management
- the comprehensive strategic planning process
- the promptness of financial reporting
- effective cash management

Weaknesses

- the failure of the academic board to provide adequate advice to management
- the lack of a systematic review of some college policies
- insufficient information included in financial management reports

65 Inspectors confirmed that the management of the college is good. Senior managers provide firm leadership. The management structure is designed to ensure operational decisions are implemented without delay. Key functions and responsibilities are clearly allocated to teams or groups of staff. There are precise lines of reporting and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff are effectively deployed. The curriculum is well managed. There is a commitment to treating and valuing teaching and support staff equally which has created a single staff ethos. Business support staff and teaching staff work closely together and all staff have a role in delivering or supporting the curriculum.

66 Inspectors agreed with the college that there are clear strategic objectives linked to operational planning. Strategic planning is

comprehensive and objectives are prioritised. Market research is used effectively to inform planning decisions. The strategic plan is evaluative and carefully maps the college's successes and potential challenges. The college sets rigorous targets for improvement in all areas of its work. Inspectors agreed that progress towards the achievement of targets is kept under constant review. A planning spreadsheet enables curriculum team leaders to link recruitment and retention targets with funding.

67 Inspectors agreed that communications within the college are effective and that most staff feel well informed. However, a recent survey of staff views indicates that part-time staff are less satisfied with the quality of communication and the support they receive. The college is taking action to address this issue. Membership of the academic board includes representatives of teaching and support teams and students. The academic board is a valuable forum for internal communications but it does not advise the principal adequately on academic matters. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report.

68 The self-assessment report acknowledged the failure of the college to meet the education and training needs of local industry adequately. A college questionnaire indicated that very few local employers had a positive attitude about using the college to provide training for employees. The college has effective liaison with Essex TEC and this has led to some funded initiatives in the past. There is a co-operative relationship with the local education authority (LEA) and its adult education service but there is no forum to consider the overall planning of post-16 provision.

69 The management information system provides reliable reports for internal and external users. Data on students' achievements produced by the college for inspection were largely accurate. There have been significant improvements in the use, availability and

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accessibility of management information during the past year. Centrally held data on students and timetabling are readily available on the college intranet. Full-time staff use the intranet frequently but the part-time staff rarely access it.

70 There is a comprehensive range of college policies, including one which supports the development of the spiritual life of staff and students. Some policies such as those on quality assurance and human resource are implemented effectively. However, some policies are not systematically reviewed.

71 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. Day-to-day financial management is the responsibility of a vice-principal who is qualified by experience. Monthly financial management reports are produced very quickly; within three days of the month end. The financial management reports do not include all information such as accruals and depreciation. The effect of this is that the college's financial position differs between that shown by the financial management reports and that reported in the annual financial statements. Governors and managers are aware of this difference and do not view this as an issue, given the strong and robust financial position of the college. The financial management reports are actively considered by the management team and distributed to all governors every two months. The information included in the financial management reports is detailed and includes cashflow forecasts for the next two years. Bank balances are monitored daily and the college invests any surplus funds carefully. The college's returns to FEFC are submitted promptly.

Conclusions

72 The college produced its first self-assessment report in 1998. The inspection team found the self-assessment report comprehensive

and a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. The data on students' achievements were robust and provided inspectors with a sound statistical base to make their judgements. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Inspectors identified some additional strengths and weaknesses and considered that a few were understated by the college. One of the grades awarded in the curriculum areas and one of the cross-college grades were lower than those in the self-assessment report. The college has started to take action as a result of its self-assessment.

73 Strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection are listed under each section of this report. The main strengths and weaknesses are identified in the summary.

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (July 1998)

| Age | % |
|-------------|-----|
| Under 16 | 1 |
| 16-18 years | 28 |
| 19-24 years | 18 |
| 25+ years | 53 |
| Not known | 0 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1998)

| Level of study | % |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Foundation | 37 |
| Intermediate | 16 |
| Advanced | 32 |
| Higher education | 4 |
| Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2) | 11 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (July 1998)

| Programme area | Full time | Part time | Total provision % |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Science | 239 | 254 | 12 |
| Engineering | 48 | 37 | 2 |
| Business | 180 | 398 | 15 |
| Hotel and catering | 156 | 172 | 8 |
| Health and community care | 236 | 450 | 17 |
| Art and design | 257 | 143 | 10 |
| Humanities | 314 | 813 | 29 |
| Basic education | 24 | 234 | 7 |
| Total | 1,454 | 2,501 | 100 |

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 1% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (October 1998)

| | Perm- anent | Fixed term | Casual | Total |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Direct learning contact | 84 | 9 | 0 | 93 |
| Supporting direct learning contact | 31 | 3 | 0 | 34 |
| Other support | 46 | 1 | 0 | 47 |
| Total | 161 | 13 | 0 | 174 |

Source: college data, rounded to nearest full-time equivalent

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

| | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Income | £5,702,000 | £5,541,000 | £5,667,000 |
| Average level of funding (ALF) | | | |
| Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998 | £18.41 | £18.34 | £17.89 |
| Payroll as a proportion of income | 72% | 70% | 73% |
| Achievement of funding target | 101% | 99% | 111% |
| Diversity of income | 15% | 13% | 13% |
| Operating surplus | £82,000 | £117,000 | £-211,000 |

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

ALF – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1998)

Payroll – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

Diversity of income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

Operating surplus – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

Students' achievements data

| Level | Retention and pass | Students aged 16 to 18 | | | Students aged 19 or over | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|--------------------------|------|------|
| | | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
| 1 | Expected completions | 47 | 237 | 727 | 525 | 440 | 526 |
| | Retention (%) | 77 | 76 | 88 | 82 | 78 | 80 |
| | Achievement (%) | 74 | 60 | 71 | 75 | 48 | 60 |
| 2 | Expected completions | 707 | 676 | 905 | 465 | 409 | 360 |
| | Retention (%) | 74 | 66 | 80 | 77 | 68 | 71 |
| | Achievement (%) | 68 | 58 | 50 | 67 | 53 | 45 |
| 3 | Expected completions | – | 1,139 | 1,536 | – | 582 | 456 |
| | Retention (%) | – | 73 | 74 | – | 82 | 75 |
| | Achievement (%) | 81 | 74 | 78 | 66 | 60 | 51 |
| 4 or 5 | Expected completions | – | 6 | 6 | – | 160 | 58 |
| | Retention (%) | – | 0 | 83 | – | 89 | 88 |
| | Achievement (%) | n/a | n/a | 80 | 34 | 82 | 24 |
| Short courses | Expected completions | 15 | 223 | 62 | 219 | 668 | 775 |
| | Retention (%) | 87 | 95 | 92 | 99 | 95 | 93 |
| | Achievement (%) | 77 | 74 | 72 | 96 | 83 | 58 |
| Unknown/unclassified | Expected completions | 67 | 1,091 | 1,128 | 135 | 288 | 394 |
| | Retention (%) | 84 | 91 | 87 | 69* | 81 | 86 |
| | Achievement (%) | 100 | 75 | 34 | 95 | 85 | 60 |

Source: ISR

–ISR data not collected

*ISR data may not be reliable

n/a not applicable

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