John Leggott Sixth Form College

REPORT FROM THE INSPECTORATE **1997-98**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

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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.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision, curriculum areas and lesson observations, for colleges inspected during 1996-97, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum					
areas	9	59	30	2	-
Cross-college					
provision	18	51	27	4	-
Lesson					
observations	19	42	31	7	1

Source: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report. Grades were awarded using the guidelines in Council Circular 93/28, Assessing Achievement. Sample size: 122 college inspections

Retention and Pass Rates

Where data on students' achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in two ways:

- as a retention rate, which is the proportion of students who completed a course in relation to the number enrolled on 1 November in the first year of the course
- as a pass rate, which is the proportion of students which passed examinations in relation to the number entered. Pass rates for GCE A level are quoted for grades A to E unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for GCSE courses are quoted for grade C or above unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for vocational and professional awards are for successful completion of the full award.

Summary

John Leggott Sixth Form College

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

March 1998

John Leggott Sixth Form College is located in Scunthorpe. The college produced a thorough self-assessment report, which in most respects was well supported by evidence. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the report's conclusions.

The college's provision is well managed. Standards of teaching and learning are good and often outstanding. Students achieve high levels of success in their external examinations and benefit from a range of enrichment activities which contribute significantly to their personal development. The support for students is outstanding. Governors are highly committed to the college and fully involved in strategic planning. The college benefits from effective leadership and open management. Communications between managers and staff are good. Effective links have been established with local schools, colleges and external agencies. The accommodation strategy has led to improvements in accommodation since the last inspection. Staff are self-critical and committed to the continuous improvement of the provision. Quality assurance arrangements are well established. To improve its provision, the college should: clarify its management committee structure, improve retention and

achievements on some courses, address students' dissatisfaction with tutorials, and continue to improve its accommodation.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science	1	Support for students	1
Mathematics	1	General resources	2
Business studies	1	Quality assurance	1
English Sociology and psychology	1 2	Governance	1
boolology and psychology	2	Management	1

John Leggott Sixth Form College

Context

The College and its Mission

1 John Leggott Sixth Form College is located to the west of Scunthorpe town centre. The college was established in 1968 following post-16 education reorganisation in North Lincolnshire. This created eleven 11 to 16 schools, two special schools and the college as a sixth form centre. The college serves a wide catchment area, and a high proportion of its students live in rural areas up to 15 miles from the college. The college has developed part-time courses for adults 10 miles away in the villages of Winterton and Kirton in Lindsey.

2 The economy of North Lincolnshire is dominated by employment in manufacturing, specifically metal products, furniture, chemicals, electronics and food. Jobs in the area have been created following the reduction of staff in the steel industry. Unemployment has fallen to just over 6 per cent. Forty per cent of pupils in North Lincolnshire aged 16 achieved five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects at grade C or above, compared with 44.5 per cent for England as a whole.

The college provides courses in eight of the 3 Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC's) 10 programme areas. It offers 34 subjects at general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), 16 GCSE subjects and general national vocational gualification (GNVQ) courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in four curriculum areas. Full-time students have the opportunity to obtain a computer qualification in their first year and GCE A level general studies in their second year, as well as choosing from a wide range of extension studies courses. The college has diversified and in 1993 it introduced a programme of continuing education and training in response to the community. Most students on this programme are adults attending part-time evening courses such as Urdu for health professionals, French for primary children and their parents, and computer skills for primary teachers. In 1997,

the college introduced a higher education programme in English which it has developed with the University of Hull. The college has exchanges with a number of European countries and a thriving relationship with a high school in Virginia, United States of America.

4 In 1997-98, the college enrolled 1,476 fulltime students, of whom 23 were recruited from outside the European Union. In November 1997, there were over 1,000 adults on the continuing education and training programme. Eight per cent of college students are from minority ethnic groups, in line with the proportion in the local population. The curriculum is taught through 27 subject departments, of which eight were inspected. The executive group comprises the principal, the vice-principal (students), the vice-principal (curriculum and quality) and the deputy principal (resources).

5 The college mission statement commits the college to be:

- a centre of excellence providing many highquality educational opportunities in a supportive and caring environment
- entrepreneurial and innovative in encouraging more people to pursue further education
- responsive to the community in the provision of continuing education and training.

Context

The Inspection

6 The inspection took place during a single week in March 1998. The college submitted data relating to students' achievements for the three years 1995 to 1997. A sample of these data was checked against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. These data proved to be reliable when checked against these sources.

7 Eight inspectors spent a total of 29 days in the college. An auditor also contributed to the inspection and its findings, working for five days. Inspectors observed lessons, assessed students' work and examined college documentation. They met managers, governors, staff, students, parents and representatives of external bodies.

8 Of the 59 lessons observed, 51 per cent were judged to be outstanding, 37 per cent were good and 12 per cent were satisfactory. No lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory. This profile is significantly better than that for colleges inspected in 1996-97 according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report.* Lessons judged to be outstanding were evenly distributed across the programme areas inspected. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was 81 per cent. This is just below the average of 84 per cent for sixth form colleges in 1996-97 as recorded in the

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

chief inspector's annual report. The average class size was 13 compared with an average of 14.4 for sixth form colleges as recorded in the same report. During the inspection, a number of students were absent from lessons for authorised reasons such as fieldwork and study visits. The following table shows the grades awarded to the lessons observed.

Programme	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE A/AS level	26	17	4	0	0	47
GCSE	3	3	3	0	0	9
Vocational, including GNVQ	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total	30	22	7	0	0	59

Science

Grade 1

9 Fifteen lessons were observed covering GCE A level biology, chemistry, human biology, physics and GCSE biology. Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the subject selfassessment report which was extremely thorough.

Key strengths

- the high standard of teaching
- well-motivated students
- pass rates consistently above national averages for most subjects
- well-organised curriculum area
- strong and effective links with external agencies
- good access to well-managed resources

Weaknesses

• GCE A level human biology and GCSE chemistry pass rates below national averages

10 The biology, chemistry and physics departments teach full-time courses to full-time students at GCE A and GCSE levels. The departments are effectively managed, and students' performance well monitored. To inform teaching and planning, staff make good use of data on students' achievements, retention rates, pass rates, destinations and the predictions of GCE A level results based on students' entry qualifications. Enrolments in science subjects are buoyant and increasing.

11 The science departments have effective links with a wide range of external agencies. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that links with schools are good. For example, the departments offer a short course to help primary school teachers with science, and a science day for primary school pupils. Good links are maintained with science teachers in secondary schools. Some pupils from these schools come for half a day at a time to sample science courses. Teachers use their close links with industry to arrange visits for students to power stations and chemical industries locally. British Steel has particularly close links with science students; it pays selected individuals during college summer vacations to carry out research projects. Inspectors agreed with the college's view that this is a major strength.

Teaching in all science subjects is good and 12 often outstanding. Introductory modules help students make the transition from school to college. Students value teachers' enthusiasm. Schemes of work are generally good, and lessons contain a wide variety of activities. Teachers questioned students frequently to check on their understanding of the work. Departments have developed self-study packages to enable students to learn at a rate appropriate to their understanding and to provide support for students who are deemed to be underperforming. Practical and theory work are carefully interrelated; for example, in chemistry laboratories an area at the front of the room has been set aside for theory work. Inspectors agreed with the college's view that teachers set homework frequently, and mark it with detailed comments, which are valued by the students. Teachers help students to develop study skills, mathematical, written communication and practical project skills. Progress reviews result in effective student action plans.

13 Students are well motivated, attentive in class and show enthusiasm for practical work. Their files are well organised. A few courses have declining retention rates. As the college's self-assessment report recognises, pass rates for most science subjects are above the national average for sixth form colleges. GCE A level chemistry and physics have been consistently above this average. Biology was also above the average for 1997, a considerably better result than the previous two years. GCE A level

human biology has been at or below the national average for the last two years. GCSE results in chemistry are in decline and remain below the national average. Results in 1997 for GCSE biology and physics were good.

The level of technician support is good; 14 each science subject has a dedicated technician who has appropriate experience and qualifications. Laboratories are well managed and clean. Students have good access to computers which are frequently available in laboratories or in adjacent areas. The science area is visually stimulating, with displays of biological and chemical models and wall posters. Resources available to students are comprehensive and include extensive video recordings, CD-ROMs, periodicals and reference texts, as indicated in the college's selfassessment report. All students are issued with text books for their subjects.

Examples of students' achievements in science, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level biology	Retention (%)	65	80	72
	Pass rate (%)	76	75	93
GCE A level chemistry	Retention (%)	82	89	93
	Pass rate (%)	99	93	90
GCE A level human biology	Retention (%)	74	76	74
	Pass rate (%)	79	61	73
GCE A level physics	Retention (%)	78	67	65
	Pass rate (%)	70	96	93
GCSE biology, chemistry and physics	Retention (%)	92	80	75
	Pass rate (%)	32	31	42

Source: college data

Mathematics

Grade 1

15 The inspection covered the provision of mathematics at GCE A level and GCSE. Twelve lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the judgements made in the selfassessment report.

Key strengths

- the high proportion of college students enrolling on mathematics courses
- the breadth of mathematical provision
- effective curriculum management by highly motivated staff
- high-quality schemes of work and learning materials
- excellent teaching and learning activities
- the enjoyment and satisfaction of students
- high pass and retention rates in GCSE mathematics
- students' achievements well above national averages on most GCE A level courses
- good access to information technology (IT) facilities and the mathematics resource centre

Weaknesses

- insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching
- some accommodation too small for the groups using it

16 GCE A level mathematics is a highly popular subject choice at this college, attracting increasing numbers annually against the national trend of declining enrolments. Currently, about 27 per cent of full-time students take GCE A level mathematics. They have the choice of a more theoretical course assessed

purely by examination, a course with a coursework element or a double GCE A level course in further mathematics. There is a large GCSE programme for students who have not previously achieved a grade C or above, and a pre-GCSE foundation course. A GCSE evening course attracts increasing numbers. Mathematics staff assist with mathematics elements in vocational courses. There is a wellused mathematics resource room where students of mathematics and other subjects can obtain extra help throughout the day. The department runs mathematics competitions and conferences for pupils from local schools. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's recognition of unusually high recruitment and breadth of provision as strengths.

17 The inspection team agreed with the college's judgement that mathematics courses are well planned and managed. There are detailed schemes of work and teaching is planned according to schedules which incorporate regular reviews of students' progress. The schemes are linked with well-developed learning materials incorporating student workbooks, mathematical investigations, practical work and tests. Staff keep accurate records of students' progress. There is a clear policy for the setting and marking of homework. It is effectively implemented. These features provide a clear framework for the teaching.

18 Inspectors considered that virtually all the teaching was good or outstanding, supporting a strength identified in the college's self-assessment. Students encounter an unusually broad range of teaching methods which provide variety of activity and sustain their interest. The range includes the use of videos, mathematical software, practical apparatus in mechanics and group work. All lecturers encourage students to play an active part in lessons and it was clear from this that students were gaining in understanding. In one lesson, students had prepared a presentation of their solution of a

mathematics problem to the whole class for subsequent discussion, a process they found both challenging and valuable in deepening their knowledge. However, good practice in teaching could be shared more effectively.

19 Students' achievements at GCSE are outstanding. About 90 per cent complete the course. Pass rates at grades A to C have improved steadily and are now substantially in excess of national averages for sixth form colleges. Pass rates for the more theoretical GCE A level syllabus reflect the national average but 60 per cent of students choose the more practical scheme for which last year the pass rate was 96 per cent at grades A to E, and 70 per cent at grades A to C, well above the national average. Last year all the further mathematics entrants achieved at least grade C. College comparison of GCE A level performance against predicted grades based on GCSE achievements on entry show that many students exceed expectations. Last year the further mathematics candidates came first out of 55 colleges on this value-added measure. Surveys of students' opinions show that they enjoy their mathematics and last year 38 progressed to mathematics degrees or degrees with a strong mathematical component. Students enter and have won prizes in national mathematics competitions and there is a regular mathematics newsletter. The self-assessment report recognised students' achievements as a strength.

Examples of students' achievements in mathematics, 1995 to 1997

20 The department is well resourced. Students are issued with course texts, they have good access to computers and most buy graphical calculators. Adequate supplies of apparatus support the practical work. A group of dedicated classrooms with some attractive posters provides a subject base. However, some classrooms are uncomfortably small and access routes through them to other rooms cause disruption.

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level further mathematics	Retention (%)	75	90	69
	Pass rate (%)	83	100	100
GCE A level mathematics	Retention (%)	82	82	82
	Pass rate (%)	84	83	92
GCSE mathematics	Retention (%)	91	87	89
	Pass rate (%)	44	54	65

Source: college data

Business Studies

Grade 1

21 The inspection covered GCE A level business studies, GNVQ advanced and intermediate programmes in business. Nine lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

Key strengths

- outstanding achievements in GCE A level business studies
- high value-added scores for GCE A level
- recent industrial experience of teachers
- good use of industrial links
- consistently high standards of teaching
- effective curriculum management

Weaknesses

- less satisfactory retention on the GCE A level and GNVQ advanced programme 1995 to 1997
- GCSE business studies results below national averages

22 The college is particularly successful in attracting students to study GCE A level business studies; for example, 154 students were enrolled in September 1997. By comparison, there are much smaller numbers of students undertaking GNVQ business programmes. The department also offers GCE A level economics and GCSE business studies; it has recently introduced a GCE advanced supplementary (AS) accounts option.

23 In contrast to the last inspection, consistently high standards of teaching were a feature of most of the lessons observed; 80 per cent of lessons were graded as good or outstanding. Teachers used effectively a variety of teaching methods, including case studies, group work, and question and answer sessions which involved all the students. Comprehensive study packs support each module in the GCE A level programme. In one lesson, students were engaged in an activity which made use of coloured cards to allow students in groups to link particular business objectives to specific strategies. A productive debate resulted and the subsequent debriefing by the teacher consolidated understanding of the principles of corporate planning.

24 Inspectors agreed with the college that there is an extensive industry links programme. Students on the GNVQ advanced programme take part annually in the young enterprise scheme, supported by a number of business advisers. Most schemes of work make reference to content and homework but for GCSE business studies only a brief list of topics is provided. The quality of marking for the assessed work examined was usually detailed, and teachers gave constructive advice as to how students might improve their performance, where appropriate. Curriculum management is effective; for example, teaching teams meet regularly to review course organisation and students' attainment. Additional classes are timetabled to help GCE A level students with revision.

25Inspectors agreed with the college's selfassessment of examination results. In GCE A level business studies results are outstanding. The pass rate has averaged 97 per cent over the last three years, and in 1997 it was 99 per cent. Pass rates at grades A to C have significantly exceeded the average for sixth form colleges over the last three years; in 1997 the figure was 78 per cent compared to the national average of 51 per cent. The figures produced by a system used by the college to calculate added value are also high, showing that in 1997 students achieved on average 0.75 of a grade higher than that predicted by their GCSE results. Pass rates for GNVQ programmes exceed national averages. At intermediate level in 1997, the pass rate was 100 per cent and retention was

91 per cent. The pass rate for the advanced programme has averaged over 80 per cent during the last two years. Retention on the advanced programme at 56 per cent was poor for the 1995-97 cohort, although the current figure of 96 per cent for the 1996 to 1998 group demonstrates a significant improvement. Achievements on the GCSE business studies programme are more modest, the pass rate at grades A to C being close to 40 per cent over the last two years, although only small numbers of students are entered. Results in GCE A level economics regularly exceed the national average but again the number of entries is small.

26 In addition to their academic and teaching qualifications most teachers hold relevant teacher training and assessor awards. The majority of the teaching staff have recent and relevant industrial experience. In all teaching rooms, the extensive display work produced by students is of a good standard. Whilst the mobile classrooms offer adequate space for the size of groups using them, the self-assessment report recognises that in the permanent teaching block the accommodation is too small for some groups. All students are provided with basic textbooks. Twelve modern computers with business software are housed in a room in the permanent teaching block, and multiple copies of popular texts are available in the library.

Examples of students' achievements in business studies, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level	Retention (%)	80	86	73
	Pass rate (%)	98	94	99
GNVQ advanced	Retention (%)	*	77	56
business	Pass rate (%)		83	79
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	74	90	91
business	Pass rate (%)	71	84	100

Source: college data *course not running

English

Grade 1

27 The inspectors observed 11 lessons covering GCE A level, GCSE and City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) Wordpower. Inspectors concluded that the self-assessment report underestimated the strengths of the English provision. Inspectors found additional strengths and concluded that most of the weaknesses identified had been remedied.

Key strengths

- good and frequently outstanding teaching
- consistently high pass rates at GCE A level
- students' high achievements and skills in written and oral work
- effective management and strong leadership
- valuable enrichment activities for all students
- effective systems for the guidance of individual students at all levels
- good specialist accommodation and resources

Weaknesses

• poor GCSE results in 1995 and 1996 and low attendance at GCSE lessons

28 The English department is well managed and benefits from clear and supportive leadership. The quality of teaching and learning on English courses is high. As the college recognised in its self-assessment report, teachers employ a wide and appropriate range of methods. Students on all courses regularly use IT in lessons and are encouraged to use it in their independent study. In a GCE A level English language lesson, students used a set of

laptop computers to design and produce an authentic magazine advertisement for a 'product or service for our society in fifty years time'. Students were making choices about language use, audience and purpose to inform their decisions, as well as developing their presentation skills. Students of GCE A level English literature conducted a lively dialogue about a Shakespeare text through an internet link, and students frequently use CD-ROMs when researching topics. Lessons are well structured. Teachers devise imaginative activities which allow students to develop their skills and knowledge. Students work purposefully and interact confidently, at all levels, with staff. Oral work is used extensively and is extremely well handled by teachers. In two outstanding lessons based on difficult texts, students' responses were of a very high standard. Students are thoroughly prepared for examinations, and teachers offer a planned programme of extra revision sessions.

Students' written work is generally of good 29 quality. They are encouraged to redraft as a matter of course. Other study skills specific to English courses, such as note-taking and the skills required in producing coursework assignments, are developed systematically and contribute to the high level of students' achievements. As the self-assessment report asserts, teachers provide prompt, detailed and personalised comment on students' work, with clear reference to marking criteria and suggestions for improvement. Termly reviews with students identify targets for improvement. Students do not value these formal reviews as highly as the informal support they receive. Students on all courses have opportunities to take part in extra activities to support their learning. Literature students have regular visits to the theatre and lectures and GCSE students have gone to a nearby seaside resort to make their own soap opera on video. Placements in industry which are focused on language and communication tasks within the work environment, are available to all students.

30 Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. The majority of full-time staff are examiners or moderators on national boards for the courses taught in the department. They make good use of regular training and development activities specific to their subjects. This judgement is reflected in the college's self-assessment report. Teaching materials are imaginative, up to date and well presented. The department is building a collection of source materials from minority cultures and this is reflected in the department's library provision. The department is based in a separate building which also houses the theatre and the internet centre. There is a strong subject identity in the building and plenty of good-quality students' work on display. Specialist rooms are well equipped.

31 GCE A level achievements over the last three years have consistently exceeded national averages for sixth form colleges, with the exception of the result for the language and literature course in 1996 which had only six candidates. When this course expanded considerably in 1995 the results were good, and 64 per cent of candidates achieved grades A to C. The GCSE courses had poor results in 1995 and 1996 and attendance at GCSE lessons was identified as an issue by the department's

Examples of students' achievements in English, 1995 to 1997

annual review. However, the pass rate for 1997 in GCSE was well above the national average and attendance has been demonstrably improved as a result of strategies put in place by the course team. Retention rates on most courses are high.

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level English	Retention (%)	84	87	75
language	Pass rate (%)	90	91	92
GCE A level English	Retention (%)	83	84	85
literature	Pass rate (%)	99	89	94
GCE A level English	Retention (%)	100	83	85
literature	Pass rate (%)	82	40	88
GCSE courses	Retention (%)	86	89	87
	Pass rate (%)	30	34	64

Source: college data

Sociology and Psychology

Grade 2

32 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in sociology and psychology, including GCE A level, GCE AS and GCSE classes. Inspection evidence supported the college's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of provision in this area.

Key strengths

- good and often outstanding teaching
- well-planned and effectively-managed courses
- students' high level of motivation and enjoyment in class
- consistently outstanding pass rates in GCE A level psychology
- the high standard of coursework

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in GCE AS and GCSE examinations
- poor retention on some courses

33 Teaching is good and often outstanding as noted in the self-assessment report. In both psychology and sociology its good features include effective planning, thorough preparation and clear exposition. Most lessons are carefully structured to allow sufficient changes of activity to sustain students' interest. Teachers generate relaxed, good-humoured and purposeful relationships with students. They work hard in and out of class to create a supportive environment and are particularly concerned to ensure that less able students understand the work and achieve success. Students' views and contributions are respected and acted upon.

34 Students demonstrate a good level of subject knowledge, respond well to their learning opportunities and have high levels of motivation. They work well in groups and participate readily in class, though some of their responses show that some find their course difficult. The self-assessment report notes the high degree of students' satisfaction with the provision made for them but understates these positive aspects of students' performance. In the best lessons, teachers had high expectations of their students and conveyed their enthusiasm for the subject, sustained students' interest and stimulated them to seek high standards of work.

The best students' work is outstanding. In 35 both 1996 and 1997, a GCE A level sociology student of the college gained the Associated Examining Board medal for social sciences. Students make good use of IT by wordprocessing their coursework and staff ensure that this improves both the presentation and the quality of their projects. The selfassessment report acknowledges that other opportunities to extend IT skills are missed. Most of the comments written by teachers on students' work gave an accurate evaluation of the quality of the work and useful guidance to help students to improve. Coursework for GCE A level psychology and GCSE sociology showed at the top of the range first rate achievement and at the lower end commitment and effort.

36 As the self-assessment report recognises, pass rates at GCE A level are excellent in psychology. The pass rate in 1997 was 94 per cent, and 60 per cent of entrants gained grades C or above. Over the last three years, most pass rates have significantly exceeded the average for sixth form colleges, while achievement of grades A to C has been broadly in line with sector averages. The proportion of GCSE candidates achieving grades A to C, whilst in line with the national average, is declining. For example, the pass rate at grades A to C fell from 61 per cent in 1996 to 43 per cent in 1997. Some examination results show considerable fluctuations from year to year. For example, the pass rates in GCE AS sociology were 46 per cent, 44 per cent and 65 per cent in 1997, 1996 and 1995, respectively. In GCSE psychology the

pass rates were 43 per cent, 61 per cent and 65 per cent in 1997, 1996 and 1995, respectively. Retention rates for GCE A level and GCSE psychology and sociology were particularly poor in 1996, and are generally below 80 per cent. The self-assessment report recognises this inconsistent pattern in retention and pass rates.

37 In both subjects staff work closely as a team under effective leadership. Planning is done jointly and tasks are shared. The teaching of most groups is shared, to the benefit of staff and students. All teachers have some role in the planning and review process and all are involved in marketing their courses. Specialist accommodation is adequate and other resources are good. For example, students use a good range of basic texts and paper-based learning materials.

Examples of students' achievements in sociology and psychology, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level sociology	Retention (%)	75	67	79
and psychology	Pass rate (%)	84	89	86
GCE AS sociology	Retention (%)	85	91	86
	Pass rate (%)	65	44	46
GCSE psychology	Retention (%)	76	57	81
and sociology	Pass rate (%)	63	40	46

 $Source:\ college\ data$

Support for Students

Grade 1

38 The college is successful in achieving its aim to provide a supportive and caring environment for students. Inspectors agreed with the college's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

Key strengths

- successful liaison with schools
- comprehensive pre-course guidance
- excellent support from personal tutors
- effective provision of additional learning support
- the emphasis on students' selfassessment and action-planning
- good communications between all staff involved
- effective careers and higher education guidance
- good opportunities for personal development through the extension studies programme

Weaknesses

• student dissatisfaction with the group tutorial programme

39 The college has strong relationships with its associated schools. A liaison tutor is attached to each school, and visits it weekly to conduct informal discussions with pupils. An extensive programme of information and guidance events includes visits by subject teachers to schools and visits by pupils to the college. In July of each year, the college holds an induction day at which prospective students meet their personal tutor, who also interviews them in September and continues with them throughout their course. Prospective students from two special schools attend college for a sixweek course which familiarises them with the college. Liaison tutors work closely with these pupils and their parents to establish their needs for additional support. Part-time students receive extensive pre-enrolment guidance. Ten advice and enrolment evenings are held each year, at which specialist teachers are available for consultation.

40 Surveys of students' views indicate a high level of satisfaction with their transition to college. Students receive an informative college handbook and useful information about their subjects. The college charter is effectively used to inform students of their rights and responsibilities. The college holds a parents evening in late September to enable parents of new students to meet personal tutors and discuss students' transition to the college. Tutors maintain close links with parents throughout students' courses. Students on parttime evening classes receive an induction session, and a handbook outlining the facilities and support available to them.

Inspectors agreed with the college's 41 assessment that additional learning support is a strength. Students' needs are identified, and support is provided in a variety of suitable ways. Through their links with schools, tutors identify many of these needs before enrolment. During induction, all students are assessed for their learning support needs in literacy. Learning support staff have liaised with curriculum areas to devise tests which are subject-specific and at an appropriate level. GCE A level students receive support in additional classes run by their subject teachers, or by learning support staff. Students on foundation and pre-foundation courses receive high-quality support in the college's learning support centre. Bilingual tutors attend classes to assist those for whom English is not their first language. Good links with external agencies enable the college to provide for the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good communications between all staff involved ensure effective feedback on students' progress.

A high proportion of those identified as requiring additional support receive it.

42 The self-assessment report identifies that personal tutors provide excellent first-line support which is valued by students and inspectors agreed with this. The tutors work in four teams, which are well led and supported by four senior tutors. Frequent meetings result in a consistency of approach, and ensure that concerns are dealt with promptly. Tutors have daily informal contact with subject teachers, which helps them to keep a close eye on students' progress and welfare. Students meet their tutors daily for 10 minutes. Once a week, a 50-minute group tutorial provides opportunities for personal and social education. The programme includes health education, consumer rights, stress management, study skills and equal opportunities. Tutors are provided with helpful materials and guidance for their use. As noted in the self-assessment report, there is some student dissatisfaction with the delivery of the programme. Some activities are perceived as lacking variety, interest and purpose, and staff find it difficult to retain students' motivation. The college is considering alternative ways of delivering elements of the programme through a revised college timetable next year. Personal tutors have received training in basic counselling skills and careers guidance, and attended workshops on learning support, bereavement, reference writing, multicultural issues, and students' welfare.

43 The college encourages students to evaluate their progress and plan actions for improvement. Students set themselves targets in conjunction with teachers and personal tutors, and record the progress they make towards meeting them. This work forms part of the tutorial programme and is accredited through a national scheme. Students are also encouraged to complete a record of achievement.

44 A particular strength, noted in the selfassessment report and confirmed by inspection, is the extensive programme of careers and higher education guidance. Students value highly the programme of tutorial activities, talks and visits, and accessible individual guidance. Careers advisers from Humberside Careers and Guidance Service attend college for four days a week, and a high proportion of students consult them for individual interviews. The advisers contribute effectively to tutorials, parents evenings, induction, and information events. The careers suite is well resourced. The college holds an annual parents meeting to inform parents of matters relating to higher education. Evening class students are offered careers interviews and information on progression at times which are convenient to them.

45 Personal and senior tutors liaise effectively with external agencies to provide personal counselling. These agencies are well publicised in the student handbook and include counselling on drugs and sexual health. The college chaplain, who is a qualified counsellor, plays a full part in the life of the college and offers a confidential service to students. The student support office provides welfare and financial advice. The college ensures that students from overseas are well supported.

46 As the college's self-assessment report indicates, managers seek students' opinions and take them seriously. The student council receives encouragement and support from the college, and the principal meets its officers every month. It effectively promotes students' concerns and arranges social and fund-raising events.

47 The college's accredited programme of extension studies gives students good opportunities for personal and social development. This year's programme comprises 50 options. Over 200 students are involved in music-related activities such as choirs and orchestras, and over 300 students participate in sport. Some 175 students undertake community service. The extension studies activities bring together students from different courses and help to foster a sense of community.

General Resources

Grade 2

48 The self-assessment report appropriately summarises the considerable improvements which have been made to general resources since the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with the analysis of strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- significant investment in improvements to the estate
- mostly good quality of accommodation in permanent buildings
- wide-ranging display work providing a welcoming learning environment
- extensive sporting and recreational facilities
- a good ratio of computers to students

Weaknesses

- poor-quality accommodation in some mobile classrooms
- overcrowding in the cafeteria and social areas at peak times

49 Significant improvements to the accommodation have been made since the last inspection. These include the re-roofing of the main teaching blocks and the creation of additional office space and a larger reprographic centre, a new media studies base, and an open access internet centre. In conjunction with a number of industrial partners, a new £500,000 building programme is due to start at Easter 1998, which will allow the removal of all of the current mobile classrooms on the west side of the campus. The buildings are clean, well maintained and substantially carpeted. Sufficient car parking spaces are available for both staff and students. The site as a whole is kept under surveillance by security officers. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment

report that corridors and classrooms have a wide range of display work, helping to create a welcoming learning environment. A gymnasium, swimming pool, and extensive playing fields contribute to the many sporting and recreational facilities available for students and the wider community.

50 The accommodation strategy is summarised in the strategic plan and supported by more detailed targets in a one-year implementation strategy. The college has substantially achieved these targets, including the redecoration of a number of staff rooms and offices and the execution of the planned maintenance programme. Some deficiencies in the accommodation are recognised in the selfassessment report. For example, there is pressure on student social areas at peak times and students with restricted mobility have difficulty in gaining access to the upper floors of the site. Utilisation surveys demonstrate generally efficient use of the accommodation.

Following the last inspection, the library 51 has introduced a computerised cataloguing system providing students with access to a range of search facilities. To supplement book and periodical resources, library project folders have been produced which contain newspaper cuttings and articles of current interest. The library also has a growing collection of videos, CD-ROMs, compact disks and audio cassettes. The current annual spending allocation on the library is modest at £9.28 per full-time equivalent student. The ratio of stock items per student is also relatively low, although figures produced by the librarian demonstrate that the volume of book issues is particularly high. The self-assessment report acknowledges the need to increase study spaces for students. The current ratio is one space for 13 full-time equivalent students. More flexible library opening hours have been introduced since the last inspection, which currently extend into the early evening. The inaugural meeting of the library users' group was held in July 1997; it now meets termly with student representation.

52 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that there is good provision of IT. The college has 200 computers for students, giving a ratio of workstations to full-time equivalent students of 1:7. At present, the college is revising its software and hardware to create a more uniform networked system. The new building programme will provide a centralised IT centre. At present, resources are dispersed and comprise a number of computer rooms, including the internet centre which was financed through the TEC for both college and community use. An information learning technology committee has helped to shape current strategy, including the intention to originate more computer-based resource materials. The enlarged reprographic centre has a high volume copier and an additional copier for staff; it has enabled subject departments to develop an extensive range of learning resources.

Quality Assurance

Grade 1

53 The self-assessment report on quality assurance identified a number of strengths. Inspectors agreed with these judgements and also agreed with the small number of weaknesses identified. The college placed more importance on the weaknesses when assessing quality assurance than did the inspectors.

Key strengths

- the consistency of the college's academic performance
- rigorous course quality assurance procedures
- the well-established self-assessment process
- a well-devised scheme for the observation of teaching

• effective arrangements to induct, appraise and develop staff

Weaknesses

• arrangements to assure the quality of cross-college functions not fully established

54 The college's commitment to continuous improvement is underpinned by a quality framework. Substantial progress has been made in developing quality assurance systems since the last inspection. The effectiveness of the present arrangements for quality assurance is demonstrated by the consistently good performance achieved by the college in externally assessed examinations, the significantly improved grades awarded by inspectors to the curriculum areas and to lesson observations since the last inspection, and by the substantial level of agreement between inspectors' judgements and those of the college.

55 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that quality assurance arrangements for course provision are well established, rigorous and clearly documented. Annual subject reports are written to the format detailed in Council Circular 97/12, Validating Self-assessment and demonstrate a mature approach to self-assessment. They draw their evidence from a wide range of well-analysed supporting data. Judgements about the quality of teaching draw on the results of students' perception questionnaires. These results are compared with benchmark responses for each question. A concise summary of the strengths and weaknesses leading to the grade awarded is included in each report. Heads of subject are required to discuss their reports with their line manager and a senior college manager. The grades awarded were moderated by the quality assurance committee. The course quality procedures lead to improvement. For example, new revision guides have been introduced in some subjects.

56 A comprehensive framework to ensure the quality of the college's continuing education and training programme has been established, including detailed statistical monitoring of students' applications, attendance, retention and achievements. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement in its self-assessment report that the arrangements are outstanding. A teaching quality index for each class is established from the results of questionnaires to students and this is linked to retention rates. Teachers who are considered to be underperforming are interviewed and helped to improve. New teachers are observed teaching. The provision is reviewed in the same way as other college provision through an annual selfassessment review.

57 The observation of teaching is in the first year of a two-year cycle. The practice has been well received by teachers. A small team of senior managers has been formed to conduct the process. Two people from this team observe all the teachers in a subject department. Individual teachers receive feedback. The main strengths and weaknesses are fed back to the head of department and then to the whole department at a meeting attended by the two observers.

58 The college is establishing formal quality assurance cycles for the college's key crosscollege functions. It recognises in its selfassessment report that these developments are not yet fully operational. Performance indicators have been established for each function and a reporting cycle established. When fully established, these developments will replace on a more formal basis the good practice which already takes place. For example, the library has benchmarks against which they report and the tutorial process is reviewed through a set of student questionnaires. The college's charter has been reviewed and amended.

59 The college achieved the Investor in People award in 1994 and has recently had this award

reconfirmed. Arrangements to induct, appraise and develop staff are strong. Staff are appraised by their managers; appraisal includes review of performance and consideration of developmental needs. The college's staff development activity is linked to the college's business aims and also reflects the needs identified through induction, appraisal and quality assurance processes. A member of the college's staff is the regional staff development co-ordinator for nine of the sixth form colleges in the region. Joint training days are arranged between these colleges.

60 The college has produced a self-assessment report for each of the last three years. Selfassessment was built upon the college's normal quality assurance processes and used evidence from lesson observations. Detailed documentation guided subject leaders in the production of their reports. A wide range of evidence was used to support judgements, and strengths and weaknesses were clearly stated. The process of grading was rigorous, and it took as its starting point grades and judgements awarded in the previous inspection. The process was conducted with integrity. A wide range of statistical data was included as an appendix to the report. Action plans were provided to address the weaknesses identified and led to action.

Governance

Grade 1

61 Inspectors agreed substantially with the college's assessment of the strengths of governance.

Key strengths

- governors' full involvement in strategic planning
- strong commitment to the college
- effective financial planning and monitoring

- appropriate arrangements to ensure the effective conduct of corporation business
- exceptionally high attendance at meetings
- the good balance of skills and experience possessed by governors

Weaknesses

• there are no significant weaknesses

62 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.

63 Governors demonstrate strong commitment to the college and its mission. The board meets at least termly, with additional meetings as required, and attendance at meetings is exceptionally high. There are 20 governors, of whom six are women. There are no vacancies and the membership is stable. As the selfassessment report states, their skills and experience are used effectively to conduct the college's business and to strengthen the links with the local community. Between them, the governors have a range of relevant skills and professional expertise including law, finance, medicine, management and local politics. Through its search committee, the corporation has extensive and thorough arrangements for identifying suitable candidates for governorship; for example, local companies and the local authority are specifically targeted through a newsletter.

64 Governors effectively oversee the strategic direction of the college. In addition to discussing and agreeing the targets in the strategic plan they monitor the progress made towards the achievement of objectives throughout the year. Governors are well informed and brought up to date on the progress of the operational plan every six months with a review of progress against agreed performance targets. They review their own performance and relevant and systematic arrangements are employed for appraising senior staff, including the principal.

65 Governors pay close and effective attention to financial matters. They are clear about their financial responsibilities and devote a considerable amount of time to them at corporation meetings. At each board meeting governors receive an accurate and clear financial report which allows governors to fulfil their responsibilities. They also receive other indicators of college performance, for example on the recruitment, achievements and retention of students.

The corporation has an open style; 66 corporation and committee agendas, minutes and papers, and the governors' register of interests are all available for public scrutiny. The circulation of agendas and papers and the minuting of meetings are effective and efficient. Clerking services are purchased from the local authority. However, only the full board meetings and the remuneration committee can be clerked within the time restraints of the service agreement. Meetings of other corporation committees are clerked by college staff. The register of interests is updated annually and includes members of the college staff with significant financial responsibilities as well as governors.

67 The corporation is supported by a comprehensive committee structure which enables it to discharge its statutory responsibilities effectively. The committees have appropriate terms of reference, although the corporation would benefit from a set of standing orders which determine how board and committee meetings are conducted. The finance and general purposes committee considers the college's management accounts at each of its

monthly meetings and also receives the minutes of the college management's financial operations group. The committee is closely involved in the budget-setting process.

68 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement in the self-assessment report that the corporation has good links with staff and students. For example, a corporation curriculum committee brings together both corporation and staff members. Governors frequently attend events to celebrate students' achievements, provide advice to students in preparing for future employment and attend musical and dramatic productions. One of the governors is a student, and another regularly attends student council meetings.

69 The corporation is committed to continuous self-improvement. In 1997, for the first time it assessed its own effectiveness against an agreed list of performance indicators. The clerk to the corporation drew up the governance selfassessment report in consultation with the chair and the brief report was then put to the full corporation for consideration leading to approval. Inspectors agreed with the selfassessment report that induction and training of governors is effective. There is an active and systematic programme of training involving both internal and external providers. In the last year this has included sessions on finance and course costings, the FEFC funding methodology and the legal responsibilities of the corporation and inspection; items are planned for the remainder of the present session. The corporation's selfassessment report identifies the need for more training in personnel and premises issues. One governor takes responsibility for the corporation's training.

70 The corporation was involved in approving the 1997 self-assessment report. Draft documentation, which had been subject to consultation with staff, was presented to governors for detailed consideration. In the two years before this, governors had received annual quality reports covering the full range of the college's work. Governors are well informed about the commitments and the conclusions expressed in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed that members of the corporation are highly supportive of the college; they take pride in its work, its ethos and its achievements.

Management

Grade 1

71 The inspection team agreed with the college's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of its management.

Key strengths

- outstanding and effective leadership
- systematic arrangements for setting operational targets and success in achieving them
- systematic monitoring procedures
- a rigorous strategic planning process
- robust financial management
- effective communication between management and staff at all levels
- strong links with a range of local community, commercial and public organisations

Weaknesses

• the lack of clarity in the committee structure

72 As the college's self-assessment report noted, senior managers provide strong leadership, vision and direction to the operation of the college. The management structure is clearly defined and the frameworks and procedures for decision-making are effective. Managers are very accessible to both staff and students and employ an open and consultative style. Course management and delivery are

thoroughly effected through subject departments which are grouped into three curriculum areas. The heads of curriculum areas have responsibility for monitoring performance and achievements in the subject departments for which they are responsible.

73 The college management structure is complemented by an elaborate committee structure. Meetings are well documented and minutes are rigorously communicated between committees. The role and function of committees within the college's management structure are insufficiently precise. In consequence, the contribution made by some committees to the range and scope of decisionmaking in the college is small.

74 Managers have developed systematic procedures for planning, monitoring and for evaluating college operations. Staff participate extensively in setting targets for their work. The college commissioned an external consultant in 1996 to investigate its operations against benchmarks which had been validated for the further education sector. The college's operations were considered to compare favourably with best practice across a wide range of indicators. The college planning which followed this exercise has incorporated the outcomes of the investigation, particularly in relation to decisions on resource utilisation.

75 Arrangements for developing the college's annual strategic plan are comprehensive and rigorous. The plan is drafted by senior management and is subject to open consultation with staff before being presented to the corporation for consideration. The college consults closely with its associated schools over the progression intentions of year 11 pupils and, in consequence, is able to base its strategic plan on relevant and accurate market research information. The preparation of the 1997-98 plan allowed full consideration to be given by both staff and corporation to the income projections for 1998 to 2001 and to the management's proposals on staff utilisation and timetabling presented in response to the projections. An open approach was employed in consideration of these issues, enabling all staff to contribute to the decisions which were ultimately taken by the corporation.

76 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good, and this is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. The finance department is led by an experienced finance manager, who reports to the deputy principal (resources). Detailed management accounts are produced every month, in accordance with required deadlines, although not directly from the accounting system. The college's financial position is strong and is formally monitored by management's financial operations group, which reviews the management accounts prior to their submission to the finance and general purposes committee. Budget holders receive timely reports of actual and committed expenditure against budget. The college's financial regulations are comprehensive and are frequently updated. The reports of the internal and external auditors do not indicate any serious internal control weaknesses within the college. Returns to the FEFC are made within specified time limits.

77 Internal communications between management and staff at all levels are effective. The formal communication systems in the college are extensive. The college 'Bulletin' is published weekly and circulated to each member of staff. It is used by managers to disseminate news and information covering a wide range of relevant information. Included in the circulation list are members of the corporation. There is a full staff meeting each morning. Staff find these meetings valuable. The staff handbook contains a complete portfolio of college policy statements and general information about college procedures and facilities.

78 The self-assessment report identifies good links with other education institutions, public

bodies and the community as a strength and inspectors agreed with this. Both primary and secondary schools receive information from the college about the progression, achievement and destination of their former pupils. Close working arrangements allow the schools to participate in college activities and to make use of college facilities. Links with the local TEC are excellent and the college consults the TEC fully in its strategic planning. Links with North Lincolnshire Council are close and are evidenced by the attendance of a council officer at meetings of the corporation, as an observer. The college satisfies the requirements of sections 44 and 45 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 by making provision for collective acts of worship.

79 In the self-assessment report the college identified the need for further developments in its management information systems, and it has made considerable improvements in this area since the report was written. The computerised management information system now provides a good range of information for managers including finance, enrolments, predicted enrolments, course timetables, registers, examination and achievement data. These data are effectively used to inform college management practice and decisions.

Conclusions

80 The inspection team found the selfassessment report provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. The report was realistic, comprehensive and well presented. In most respects, inspectors agreed with the judgements reached by the college. Overall, the college's grades for curriculum and cross-college closely matched those awarded by inspectors.

81 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 (March 1998)

Age	%
Under 16	0
16-18 years	66
19-24 years	7
25+ years	24
Not known	3
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (March 1998)

Level of study	%
Foundation	10
Intermediate	23
Advanced	67
Higher education	0
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	0
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	356	117	23
Engineering	23	0	1
Business	93	164	12
Hotel and catering	39	6	2
Health and community care	25	51	4
Art and design	98	38	7
Humanities	754	287	50
Basic education	12	5	1
Total	1,400	668	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (March 1998)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning				
contact	82	17	0	99
Supporting direct				
learning contact	11	1	1	13
Other support	29	2	0	31
Total	122	20	1	143

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£4,292,000	£4,750,000	£4,879,000
Average level of funding (ALF) Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£19.56	£18.90	£18.97
Payroll as a proportion of income	72%	69%	66%
Achievement of funding target	97%	100%	100%
Diversity of income	6%	9%	9%
Operating surplus	£51,000	£129,000	£266,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97) ALF – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), Funding Allocations 1996-97 (1996-97) Payroll – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97) Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), college (1996-97) Diversity of income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97) Operating surplus – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	582	592	683
	Average point score			
	per entry	5.1	5.2	5.2
	Position in tables	top third	top 10%	top 10%
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	+	+	29
	Percentage achieving			0.20/
	qualification	+	+	83%
	Position in tables	+	+	top third
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	38	36
	Percentage achieving			
	qualification	*	87%	94%
	Position in tables	*	top 10%	top 10%

Source: DfEE

+course not running

*1994-95 intermediate vocational results not available

College Statistics

Three-year Trends continued

Students' achievements

		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Advanced academic	Pass (%)	88	86	95
	Retention (%)	76	88	81
Intermediate academic	Pass (%)	44	42	54
	Retention (%)	78	80	69
Advanced vocational	Pass (%)	*	81	79
	Retention (%)	*	84	60
Intermediate vocational	Pass (%)	91	90	83
	Retention (%)	74	77	85

Source: college data *course not running **FEFC Inspection Report 83/98**

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