Salisbury College

Contents

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 1999-2000, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Curriculum areas	6	44	44	7	0
Cross-college provision	9	45	38	8	0

Source: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000: Chief inspector's annual report

Sample size: 112 college inspections
Note: percentages subject to rounding

Student Achievements

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

- as number of starters, which is the number of enrolments on qualifications where the student was expecting to complete the qualification that college year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1996, would appear in the results for 1997-98 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification

- as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which students have completed as expected or where they are continuing their studies beyond the expected end date of the qualification. 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 included.

Summary

Salisbury College

South West Region

Inspected October 2000

Salisbury College is a medium-sized general further education college serving the city of Salisbury and the communities of south Wiltshire, west Hampshire and north Dorset. The college offers a wide range of courses in nine of the 10 programme areas funded by the FEFC. Provision in six programme areas and basic skills was inspected, together with cross-college provision. The college's self-assessment process is thorough and involves all staff and governors. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but judged that some strengths had been overstated. They also found that some weaknesses had been omitted or understated. Inspectors awarded lower grades than those in the self-assessment report to three curriculum areas and to two of the five areas of cross-college provision. At the time of the inspection, the college had made good progress in addressing many of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

Managers have an open and consultative style, promote teamwork and maintain good working relationships throughout the college. Governors engage effectively in strategic planning and in monitoring the college's finances. Prospective students are well informed about the range of courses and opportunities available at the college. Since the previous inspection the standards of teaching and of accommodation have improved. Students benefit from good individual support from tutors. There is strong commitment from the staff to the principles and practice of continuous improvement. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive. The college has strong and effective external links. These have led locally to a growth in provision at community centres and centres for army personnel. Much of the college's data on students' achievements are unreliable. The rate of student retention is unsatisfactory in several curriculum areas, but achievement rates for most students who complete their courses are good. The college should further improve: the standard of teaching and learning; students' achievements in some subjects; the rate of student retention; the co-ordination of learning support and of basic skills across the college; the standard of some accommodation; staff access to computers; the use of performance indicators and targets; the monitoring of academic performance by the board; aspects of middle management; the central management information system; and the collection, reliability and use of management information on students.

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

Curriculum area	Grade
Mathematics and information technology	3
Construction	3
Business and management	2
Health and social care	2
Art and design	3
English and social sciences	3
Basic skills	3

Cross-college provision	Grade
Support for students	2
General resources	3
Quality assurance	2
Governance	2
Management	3

The College and its Mission

1 Salisbury College is a medium-sized general further education college serving the city of Salisbury and the communities of south Wiltshire, west Hampshire and north Dorset. The college was formed in 1992 from a merger of the former college of art and design and the college of technology. The main campus is on the outskirts of Salisbury, but there are also sites in the city centre, at Bemerton Heath, Amesbury and Tidworth. The college also runs courses at over 50 community centres and works with three local schools to offer provision for pupils at risk of exclusion from those schools. The population of south Wiltshire is 113,000, of whom 41,000 are residents of Salisbury.

2 The nearest further education colleges, some 20 miles away, are Cricklade College to the north east and Brockenhurst College to the south east and, at a distance of 30 miles, Wiltshire College to the north and Bournemouth and Poole College to the south. Competition for the recruitment of school-leavers is intense. There are 12 secondary schools, including two grammar schools in south Wiltshire, seven of which have sixth forms. Most of the 11 to 16 schools serve their own town or village together with surrounding rural areas. Approximately 78% of school-leavers in Wiltshire proceed to further full-time study after the age of 16. The overall educational achievements of school-leavers in Wiltshire are above the national averages. In 1999, 52% of year 11 pupils achieved five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects at grade C or above compared with 48% nationally.

3 A wide range of programmes is offered in nine of the 10 programme areas funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). In several programme areas, courses range from a pre-GCSE 'choices' introductory programme to degree level. The college offers higher education programmes in conjunction with the universities of Bath, Bournemouth and Greenwich, and a significant range of national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes in management and information technology (IT) for army personnel. The college also provides programmes sponsored through the Swindon and Wiltshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) for personnel at the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes.

4 On 31 July 2000, the college had 19,357 students on roll of whom 1,571 were full-time students and 17,786 were studying part time. The college employs 299 full-time equivalent staff of whom 133 are teachers and a further 49 support learning. The minority ethnic communities in the area represent less than 1% of the total population. Students from minority ethnic communities make up 1.5% of total college enrolments.

5 The local economy is heavily dependent on small and medium-sized businesses, mainly in service industries and the public sector. The army still has a strong presence in the area within and around Salisbury Plain. South Wiltshire is a relatively affluent area. However, there are many localities characterised by social deprivation and by relatively high rates of unemployment. In September 2000, the overall unemployment rate across the area was low at 1.2% compared with the national rate of 3.7%.

6 The college is a member of many well-established local partnerships. There are strong links with employers and community agencies. These have led to a number of partnerships designed to widen participation in further education and attract more people to take courses that will improve their knowledge and skills. The college is also involved in the Salisbury Learning Partnership, the South Wiltshire Economic Partnership and the University of Swindon and Wiltshire project.

7 The college's mission statement identifies six principles and values which guide or influence all the activities in the college. These are:

Context

- support to promote student welfare and provide opportunities for learners to be involved in their own development and progression
- efficiency to ensure value for money for the community and for students
- access to learning through flexible programmes and the promotion of equal opportunities
- responsiveness to meet the needs of business and the community
- opportunity through a full range of programmes widely available to learners
- quality through continuous improvement of the quality of provision.

The Inspection

8   The college was inspected during the week beginning 30 October 2000. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information held about the college by other directorates of the FEFC. The college was notified of the sample of its provision to be inspected approximately two months before the inspection. The sample included an inspection of the scope of basic skills provision below level 2 and the college's response to curriculum 2000. Data on students' achievements drawn from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns for 1998 and 1999 were unreliable. The college was also unable to provide reliable information for these years from registers and the records of examining bodies. As a result, achievement tables in this report are incomplete. Inspectors based their judgements on achievement data relating to students completing their courses in 2000. The college submitted its own data on students' achievements for 2000. These were checked by inspectors and found to be not entirely accurate. However, additional checks made during the inspection provided inspectors with data which

were sufficiently reliable to be used as the basis for forming some of the inspection judgements.

9   The inspection was carried out by 12 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 56 days in the college. Three inspectors spent six days inspecting franchised and direct provision at college centres in the community and at army establishments in Wiltshire and Essex. Inspectors observed 95 lessons, examined students' work and inspected college documents. They met with governors, managers, staff, students and representatives of external groups and organisations.

10   The following table shows the grades awarded to lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. Of the lessons observed, 61% were judged to be good or outstanding. This figure represents an improvement since the previous inspection, but remains just below the national average of 62% recorded for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. The percentage of less than satisfactory lessons matches the average of 6% for all lessons observed during 1999-2000.

Context

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level and GCSE	3	6	7	1	0	17
GNVQ	3	7	8	3	0	21
NVQ	4	9	2	1	0	16
Other vocational	4	14	9	0	0	27
Other	3	5	5	1	0	14
Total (No.)	17	41	31	6	0	95
Total (%)	18	43	33	6	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000 (%)	17	45	31	6	0	100

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000: Chief inspector's annual report

Note: percentages subject to rounding

11   The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Salisbury College	10.1	75
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000	10.3	76

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000: Chief inspector's annual report

Curriculum Areas

Mathematics and Information Technology

Grade 3

12   Inspectors observed 16 lessons in the college, at three centres in the community and under arrangements for franchised provision. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but identified further weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a good range of courses

- effective monitoring of the progress of individual students

- high achievement rates on short introductory IT courses

- good use of resources by students

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching

- poor retention rates on many full-time courses

- no opportunities for work experience on full-time vocational programmes

- inadequate opportunities for skills updating for staff in IT applications

13   Inspectors agreed with the college that the extensive range of courses meets the needs of a wide range of students and reflects the college's commitment to widening participation. Different modes of study for courses are available including distance and on-line learning. There are good induction processes on many courses. Progression routes are explained verbally to students, but not clearly described in publicity material. There are no full-time courses in IT at foundation level and this reduces opportunities for progression. There are also no work experience opportunities

on full-time vocational courses, a weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The college has made appropriate arrangements for students following the general certificate of education advanced subsidiary (GCE AS) programmes that began in September 2000. Key skills training and enrichment activities form part of their timetables.

14   Some lessons are well planned. However, schemes of work do not specify teaching approaches or indicate how the different needs of individual students will be met. Teachers effectively monitor students' progress, both during lessons and by keeping comprehensive records. Many teachers are skilled at teaching within a workshop environment. However, in some lessons the approach to teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers fail to set clear objectives or specify required standards of performance. As a consequence, students do not fully apply themselves to the work or become bored. The use of the college's intranet in IT teaching is at an early stage of development.

15   Staff teams work effectively and most courses are well managed. Communications between teachers are good; they meet regularly to review both students' progress and course developments. Internal verification is effective. New courses are developed in response to local need, for example courses in web authoring and IT courses at the new learning shop in Bemerton Heath. Teachers make sound use of student feedback in course reviews. Some aspects of course monitoring and evaluation are unsatisfactory. Staff make insufficient analytical use of targets and data on students' retention and achievements.

16   Achievement rates are very good on short introductory IT courses. The pass rate for courses on computer literacy and information technology is over 30% above the national average for the sector. Almost every student on the introduction to computing course and 84%

of those on Internet skills courses achieved the qualification. There are many individual successes among army personnel on NVQ level 2 in the use of IT and for students taking City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) IT applications units. The student retention rate is poor on many full-time programmes in both mathematics and computing. In 1999-2000, of the 15 students starting the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate in IT, only six completed and four achieved the award. Retention rates on the national diploma in computer studies have been low for the last three years. Retention on GCSE mathematics is 13% below the national average. These weaknesses were acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

17   Inspectors agreed with the strength noted in the self-assessment report that the three learning shops, the IT learning centre and the mathematics workshop provide attractive environments that help students to study effectively. They are well equipped with up-to-date computers and suitable software which students can use outside timetabled lessons. The learning shops are not yet connected to the extensive college network. Teachers have identified areas where their skills fail to match the demands of some new IT application packages. There are plans in place to rectify this weakness in staff training.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in mathematics and information technology, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
Computer literacy and information technology (short courses)	1	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	681 84 92
NOCN Internet skills (short courses)	1	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	† † †	† † †	104 86 84
NOCN introduction to computing (short courses)	1	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	† † †	† † †	238 92 98
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	10 10 100	14 57 0	15 40 67
GCSE mathematics (grade C or above)	2	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	199 58 50
National diploma computing	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	23 59 100

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)
*data unreliable
†course not running

Construction

Grade 3

18   Inspectors observed 10 lessons and one tutorial. They agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses and noted that some weaknesses in the report had received insufficient emphasis.

Key strengths

- good achievements on many courses

- good provision in glass and glazing subjects

- realistic project work for students on national certificate courses

Weaknesses

- some ineffective teaching

- low retention rates on many courses

- underdeveloped use of course targets for students' achievements and retention

19   The college offers a range of courses in construction for students and employers. In conjunction with local employers it has developed specialist courses in glass and glazing, distribution and warehousing, site inspection and site supervision. It is a centre of excellence for the provision of NVQs in glass and glazing subjects. Declining enrolment on some courses has led to a reduction in the range of courses offered. For example, the national diploma course in building studies did not recruit sufficient students to be viable in 1999-2000. Training at NVQ level 1 is provided for students from Salisbury Industrial Therapy Unit. There are many effective links with local employers which enable teachers and students to keep up to date with developments in the building industry. All full-time students undertake work experience, either in college or with local companies.

20   Teaching has an appropriate emphasis on vocational relevance. In good lessons, teaching is well planned and carefully managed. Students are well motivated and teachers ensure that the different learning needs of individuals are taken into account. They direct questions carefully and encourage students to discuss topics and bring their own experiences into lessons. Skills development is to industry standards and high priority is given to health and safety in practical lessons. Some students undertake realistic practical exercises in industrial contexts to improve their understanding of theory. For example, national certificate students worked with the Environment Agency to survey a local river and plan flood defences in two local villages. In many lessons some teaching is ineffective. In these lessons, teachers fail to arouse the students' interest or enthusiasm or to meet the needs of all students in the class. Some teachers talk too much and their presentations are too complicated. They do not encourage students to ask questions or attempt to find out whether they understand the lesson. Some practical lessons are poorly planned. These weaknesses in teaching and learning were overlooked in the self-assessment report.

21   Most courses are well planned. Team meetings are held regularly, but they do not always address retention and achievement issues. Target-setting is weak. Most portfolios of students' work are satisfactory. Teachers' written feedback is often insufficiently detailed to enable students to address weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that extensive analysis of the curriculum to identify the key skills of literacy and numeracy within courses has been undertaken. However, assessment of a broad range of work-related key skills is underdeveloped.

22   The self-assessment report acknowledges that the student rate of retention on some courses is below national averages for the sector but understates the degree to which this occurs.

Curriculum Areas

Strategies were introduced in September 2000 to address retention issues. Inspectors agreed that the self-assessment report identified the good achievement rates on many courses in 1999-2000. In 2000, pass rates of 91% on NVQ level 1 construction crafts and electrical installation courses and of 90% on level 3 craft courses were significantly above the national averages of 64% and 72%, respectively. Achievement of glass and glazing NVQs at 96% is also high and last year a student achieved a national award in this subject.

23 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced and many have assessor and verifier qualifications. Several teachers have developed IT skills to extend their teaching methods and some had a period of technical updating with local companies in 1999. Classrooms and workshops provide an appropriate training environment. The purpose-built craft centre provides good training facilities. Students have easy access to the Internet and the college intranet in the resource centres. The library provides an adequate range of learning materials to support the courses offered.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in construction, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
NVQ construction crafts	1	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	64 83 91
Foundation certificate	1	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	15 67 80
NVQ construction crafts	2	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	96 74 76
NVQ construction crafts	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	20 100 90
National certificate in building	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	3 33 100
Chartered Institute of Building diploma	4	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	26 50 100

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)
*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Business and Management

Grade 2

24   Inspectors observed 15 lessons. They agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. However, some judgements on students' achievements were not based on reliable data.

Key strengths

- good teaching of management courses

- good rates of retention and achievement on NVQ level 2 accounting courses

- good support for students

- effective liaison with employers

- a well-equipped management teaching centre

Weaknesses

- inappropriate teaching methods on some business courses

- low rates of retention and achievement on GNVQ programmes

- an inadequate range of courses in business subjects

25   The wide range of management and accounting courses gives good opportunities for progression. The management curriculum is very responsive to the needs of industry, and of the public and the armed services. Teachers frequently take note of employers' views when reviewing and modifying courses. The college collaborates with the army education service to deliver NVQs to enhance existing army training programmes. On NVQ provision the management division works closely with the National Health Service Trust and with the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes. The college management centre enjoys centre of excellence status with the Institute of Management. The range of business courses is inadequate. There are no introductory courses in the business curriculum.

26   Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching in management subjects is good. The learning materials used are a major strength. In good lessons the aims and objectives are shared with students and there is an appropriate balance of theory and practical work. In management lessons tasks are well designed and promote lively discussions. Questions are used effectively to encourage students to share their work experiences and previous learning. Teachers use examples of good industrial practice to promote students' understanding of industry. For example, students on the certificate in supervisory management shared and compared examples of their company's job descriptions and skills specifications. On some business courses teaching methods are not always appropriate. Schemes of work generally provide insufficient information and the quality of lesson plans is uneven. Small class sizes on courses for the GCE A level business, GNVQ business and the certificate in project management restrict opportunities for some group activities. In some lessons, teachers talk too much and allow insufficient opportunity for students to raise issues. Some teachers fail to check whether students understand the lesson. The development of key skills is integrated effectively with teaching and assignment work for GNVQ business courses.

27   Teachers establish good working relationships with students. Students speak of the consistently high level of support which they receive. The tutorial and mentoring support for part-time management students is effective. Teachers give further help at students' place of work during weekly workshop sessions. All management students are allocated a work mentor.

28   Student retention and achievement rates are good on accounting courses of the Association of Accounting Technicians. The GNVQ business programmes are performing below national benchmarks for both retention and achievement. Student attendance is high at 89%. The standard of students' work is good and coursework files were well organised and tidy. The standard of management portfolios is good and, in most cases, written feedback from teachers enables students to improve their performance. The poorer portfolios from students in the army receive supportive feedback, but good portfolio work rarely receives comments that could help students to improve even further. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that the portfolio of

NVQ provision mainly concentrates on issues to be found in employment contexts.

29   Management teachers are well qualified and have relevant experience in the subjects which they teach. Business teachers are appropriately qualified, but lack recent industrial experience. Part-time management teachers effectively draw on their up-to-date commercial knowledge and experience to enhance teaching. All rooms within the management centre are well equipped. One larger room contains computers for students to research on the Internet during lessons. The classrooms at army bases are well equipped and there is a good range of good computer and library facilities.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in business and management, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GNVQ business	2	Number of starters	8	†	10
		Retention (%)	0	†	70
		Achievement (%)	0	†	71
NVQ accounting (Association of Accounting Technicians, one-year course)	2	Number of starters	14	28	21
		Retention (%)	93	71	86
		Achievement (%)	100	87	78
NVQ accounting (Association of Accounting Technicians, two-year course)	3	Number of starters	32	37	32
		Retention (%)	88	89	90
		Achievement (%)	60	46	73
GNVQ business	3	Number of starters	*	*	23
		Retention (%)	*	*	65
		Achievement (%)	*	*	73
Certificate in personnel practice	3	Number of starters	†	*	14
		Retention (%)	†	*	100
		Achievement (%)	†	*	100
NVQ accounting technician (Association of Accounting Technicians, two-year course)	4	Number of starters	19	22	25
		Retention (%)	68	91	92
		Achievement (%)	46	47	68

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)
†course not running
*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Health and Social Care

Grade 2

30   Inspectors observed 13 lessons. They agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses recorded in the self-assessment report and identified an additional strength and additional weakness.

Key strengths

- good teaching

- effective integration of work experience on all courses

- high achievement rate on GNVQ advanced health and social care programme

- appropriately demanding and vocationally relevant assignments

- good resources

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities to develop key skills in lessons

- some unsatisfactory use of open-plan areas for group work

- the failure of some students to complete NVQ programmes within the timescale established

31   The college offers a range of provision in childcare, health and social care, dental nursing, first aid, health and safety and counselling. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the provision is responsive to the requirements of the market. Enrolments on courses for GNVQ intermediate health and social care have declined sharply over the last three years. The course failed to recruit in 1999-2000; the first diploma in care was successfully introduced to provide a broad-based intermediate level course to replace GNVQ provision. There are clear progression routes on courses in childcare, health and social care and counselling. As the self-assessment report notes, the college has strong links with employers. A sound work experience programme enables students to relate college lessons with the world of work effectively.

32   Inspectors agreed with the college that teaching in health and social care is good. In the best lessons, clear aims and objectives are shared with the students. Students are well motivated and encouraged to draw on personal experiences from their own lives and from the workplace. For example, in a counselling lesson the activities enabled students to analyse different theoretical approaches. Students were encouraged to draw on previous learning to identify the potential of each approach. A short extract from a video was effectively used to stimulate discussion and consolidate learning. The teacher sensitively challenged assumptions, highlighted ethical considerations and effectively checked in a variety of ways throughout the lesson that students were understanding the work. In some less satisfactory lessons, teachers failed to make such checks.

33   Students' achievements on most courses are at or above the national average for the sector. Achievement rates on courses for GNVQ advanced health and social care and for the certificate in counselling are consistently above the national averages. Over the same period achievements on courses for the NVQ level 2 and 3 in child education and care have been erratic. A significant number of students fail to complete their studies by the last day of the course. Retention rates on most courses have shown steady improvement over the last three years and have reached the national average. There is good progression to employment by students on childcare courses. Assignments are vocationally relevant, appropriately demanding and pitched at an appropriate level for the course and year of study. Teachers assess assignments fairly and give clear written feedback which helps students to improve their work. There is an effective internal verification system for all courses.

Curriculum Areas

34 Courses are well managed. Staff take responsibility for the quality of the students' learning experience. Teams of staff meet each week to discuss concerns and to set and monitor action plans for improvement of their teaching. Management of learning is sometimes less effective in open-plan areas. For example, teachers and students engaged in group discussions can be distracted while another group watches a video. Well-planned informative handbooks for students and effective induction opportunities are provided for all courses. These features of the courses were identified as strengths in the self-assessment report. Careful records are kept of the supportive individual tutorial sessions in which tutors monitor progress and set targets for each student.

35 Staff come from a range of vocationally relevant professions. All are qualified teachers and have gained training and development lead body assessor awards. In the open-plan learning centre, students make sound use of an extensive range of good resources including computers and the Internet.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in health and social care, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
C&G 7321 certificate in learning support	2	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	39 100 85
First diploma care	2	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	† † †	† † †	11 73 100
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	25 46 82
National diploma in childhod studies	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	18 78 86

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)
†course not running
*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 3

36   Inspectors observed 16 lessons. They agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report, but identified additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- much good and some outstanding teaching

- the integration of work on key skills with practical assignments

- thorough assessment schemes

- good tutor support on all programmes

- good progression opportunities

Weaknesses

- low and declining rates of student retention on many courses

- low achievement rates on the GNVQ media and graphic design courses

- insufficient research into topics by general art and design students

- poor accommodation and facilities for general art and design

37   There is a wide range of opportunities for full-time students in art, design and media studies which includes: a course at GCE A level; GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses; a pre-degree foundation course in art and design; a GNVQ media communication and production course; and national diploma courses in graphic design and fashion and textiles. There are few part-time courses. A high proportion of students progress to higher level courses within the college or at university. Students' experience of contemporary art and design is enriched through an extensive programme of visits and a number of community projects such as the Salisbury Festival.

38   There is much good and some outstanding teaching. Most lessons are well planned. Teachers use their considerable subject knowledge to stimulate students' interest in their studies. They use their professional contacts to ensure the industrial relevance of their teaching. In one good lesson, students arrived having prepared the work which they had been set. The teacher built on their preparation by making a lively, humorous presentation, showing a stimulating set of slides, and ensuring through effective questioning that students were understanding the work. The lesson contained sufficient detail and was thought-provoking. Weaker teaching often resulted from poor planning and inadequate classroom management. In one lesson at intermediate level, the teacher spent an hour talking on a technical subject without any discussion or visual or other learning aids which might have helped students to understand the topic. These weaknesses in teaching were overlooked in the self-assessment report.

39   Inspectors agreed that students' practical work is delivered through well-designed assignments. Most assignment briefs and assessment criteria are good. Inspectors agreed with the college that the development of key skills is fully integrated with the practical work. The standard of written and verbal feedback to students is good. There is effective use of peer assessment and group critiques to develop students' understanding of assessment criteria. Students' progress and action plans are well monitored and recorded through group and individual tutorials which are held each week.

40   Achievements on GCE A level and pre-degree foundation courses are very good. Much student work, which is well presented and of a high standard, demonstrates good technical and IT presentation skills and appropriate use of the Internet. Students' work in general art and design is often unsatisfactory due to a lack of research and exploration of media and processes. Student retention rates on many

Curriculum Areas

courses are low and declining. The rate for GCE A level art has been consistently below national averages for the sector for three years. In 1999-2000, the retention rate declined on national diplomas in graphic design and fashion and textiles to 64% and 67%, respectively, compared with the national averages of 77% and 73%. In 1999-2000, achievement on the GNVQ media and the national diploma in graphic design courses declined to 10% below national average.

41   Staff are well qualified and many have recent industrial and professional experience in the media and as artists and designers. Staff have benefited from development opportunities

to improve their IT skills and to prepare for curriculum 2000. The graphic and fashion students benefit from the good industrial standard resources developed for the college's higher level work. The resources for media are adequate. However, the small, well-equipped ceramics studio is some distance from the main art and design facilities. General art and design facilities are poor and the rooms are cramped. There is no three-dimensional construction studio. Students do not have a base room which reduces their opportunities to work outside timetabled lessons. These weaknesses in specialist resources were overlooked in the self-assessment report.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in art and design, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GNVQ art and design	2	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	12 67 88
GNVQ A level art	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	11 55 100
GNVQ advanced (art and design and media production)	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	35 74 77
National diplomas in design (fashion and textiles and graphic design)	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	26 66 88
Pre-degree foundation art and design studies (full-time and part-time courses)	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	28 86 100

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)
*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

English and Social Sciences

Grade 3

42   Inspectors observed 13 lessons. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but concluded that some strengths were overstated.

Key strengths

- good teaching

- well-organised and effective tutorials

- flexible arrangements for the access to higher education course

- good achievement on access and some GCE A level courses

Weaknesses

- a poor student retention rate on GCE A level and GCSE English language courses

- the inadequate assessment and accreditation of key skills in coursework

- insufficient development and use of IT

- a low attendance rate on many courses

43   The college offers a wide choice of humanities GCE A level subjects as full-time, part-time, day or evening courses. Students can study on the access to higher education course over one or two years, and during the day or evening. To suit their individual circumstances they can change their pattern of attendance during the course. GCSE English language is offered to all students in the college who will benefit from the qualification. Full-time GCE A level courses continue to recruit well. Following the introduction of curriculum 2000, a reorganised curriculum at GCE A level has been successfully introduced which allows an increased number of GNVQ students to study GCE AS. Effective staff development has supported the move to curriculum 2000.

44   The self-assessment report judged humanities teaching as good and inspectors agreed. Much teaching is well planned. Lessons are well managed and activities are purposeful. There are examples of outstanding teaching in GCE A level English and GCSE English language. Most teachers make the aims and objectives of lessons clear. In good lessons, students are challenged by the use of appropriately varied teaching methods which are complemented by well-produced learning materials. In one lesson, students used a tape describing Shakespearean theatre to appreciate Elizabethan conditions and learn the origins of theatrical expressions. The students were amused, interested and highly responsive. They were making significant progress in their understanding of Shakespearean drama. Some lessons are less demanding and teachers' methods less well judged.

45   There is no systematic monitoring of course documents. There are some poorly produced schemes of work and lesson plans. GCE A levels and access programmes are regularly reviewed by quality assurance teams. There is no thorough review of individual GCE A level subjects. There is insufficient appreciation of the importance of analysing data when assessing performance. Many teachers are not clear how the use of targets might apply to their subjects.

46   The competence of students in developing key skills has been effectively analysed. The overall results of the analysis and the individual student profiles are fed back promptly and used by personal tutors when they are deciding what learning support their own tutorial students require. However, student essays and assignments do not have key skills identified, assessed or accredited. The self-assessment report recognises this as a significant weakness. Tutorials are effective and well organised. Both group and individual tutorials are well recorded. Individual tutorials are sometimes less effective where the required subject specialist knowledge is outside the tutor's own subject area.

Curriculum Areas

47   Students' achievements are good on GCE A level communication and English literature programmes. Achievement on access to higher education courses is good and the retention rate above the national average for the sector. Students' written work is often of a high standard and frequently shows a mature understanding and a fluent use of subject-specialist vocabulary. Most students' work is thoroughly assessed at an appropriate level. Significant weaknesses in retention rates were overlooked in the self-assessment report. All GCE A level courses have poor rates. Several subjects, including sociology, psychology, English language and literature and GCSE English language have retention rates substantially below national averages. Attendance rates at lessons, at 62%, were well below the average for the sector and latecomers often disrupted lessons. Student destinations are carefully monitored and progress to higher education from the access course is good.

48   Staff are well qualified and show extensive subject specialist knowledge in their teaching and in the learning materials which they prepare. Most teaching takes place in specialist rooms and a resource centre has been recently established. Some rooms are overcrowded and unsuitable for the groups using them. The resource centre is well equipped. Networked IT facilities and the college intranet are available. However, the centre is underused, and the use both of IT and other resources available is underdeveloped.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in English and social sciences, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE English laguage	2	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	111 52 45
GCE A level English laguage and literature (one-year and two-year courses)	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	74 61 84
GCE A level communications (one-year and two-year) courses)	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	24 63 100
GCE A level psychology (one-year and two-year courses)	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	63 37 70
GCE A level sociology (one-year and two-year courses)	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	48 44 71
Access to higher education	3	Number of starters Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	37 73 100

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)
*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Basic Skills

Grade 3

49   Inspectors observed 11 lessons. They agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but considered that many of the strengths were overstated and identified additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good teaching on adult basic education programmes

- responsive and flexible arrangements for adult basic education provision

- effective communication between staff

- a highly motivated and effective team of voluntary tutors

Weaknesses

- insufficiently demanding achievement targets and learning goals

- inadequate co-ordination of basic skills provision across the college

- underdeveloped provision of basic skills training through learning support arrangements

- poor attendance on adult basic education programmes

50   Inspectors observed basic skills provision for adults at the college and in the community. In addition, they observed the literacy and numeracy elements of the 'choices' pre-GCSE courses and of the basic skills provision which was organised through the college's learning support arrangements. The college offers discrete basic skills provision at four centres in the community. Teachers contribute effectively to the development of partnerships with local organisations. A work-based project, run in conjunction with four other Wiltshire colleges, provides basic skills courses for employees in the workplace. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is inadequate co-ordination of basic skills across the college. The current range of basic skills courses does not meet the projected local need that has been identified by the college. Basic skills provision organised through the college's learning support arrangements is underdeveloped. A basic skills co-ordinator has recently been appointed and senior managers have discussed plans to integrate learning support with basic skills provision. The achievement targets and learning goals which are set are insufficiently demanding.

51   There is much good and some outstanding teaching on adult basic education programmes. Teachers are committed to the success of their students, establish effective working relationships with them and offer a wide range of support. In good lessons, teachers carefully plan an appropriate range of activities, encourage group work and have clear objectives for individual students. An atmosphere of hard work is quickly established on programmes. Students are enthusiastic and well motivated. Teachers effectively organise students' work, provide clear explanations and ensure that tasks are sufficiently demanding. In less satisfactory lessons, students steadily work through textbook exercises but have too little contact with staff or other students. Feedback to students on their progress during lessons is good, but some students receive insufficient helpful written feedback on assignment work. Most lessons have a volunteer tutor in attendance. All these tutors are trained and make a significant contribution to students' progress. The volunteer tutors were not identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Attendance is poor at 62%.

Curriculum Areas

52   Most tutors for adult basic education are part-time teachers. Communication between the basic skills co-ordinator and part-time staff is effective. Good communication between the team members is strengthened by regular newsletters and meetings, and by access to the divisional database of student records and sets of clear notes on all students.

53   The student retention rate on basic skills courses is good. Students have clearly benefited from their studies and improved their skills, understanding and confidence. However, the proportion of students who achieve accreditation is low and the college has yet to devise effective methods of assessing and recording achievements on non-accredited programmes. These weaknesses were identified in the self-assessment report. A table of students' achievements has been omitted from this section of the report as the data available do not give a true representation of achievements.

54   Resources in the college are satisfactory. The curriculum area is well equipped with a range of IT and paper-based resources. Community-based provision lacks IT resources. The qualifications of most staff are good and relevant to teaching basic skills.

Support for Students

Grade 2

55   Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They found that the weaknesses in the organisation of learning support had been given insufficient emphasis. Some weaknesses had already been successfully addressed by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- comprehensive pre-entry guidance for students

- effective induction

- good tutorial support

- good careers education and guidance

- good support for students working at a distance from the college

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory arrangements for learning support

- unclear aims for the enrichment programme

56   Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the student services provision is a strength. The services are located in a central position in the college and are very accessible to students, staff and the public. Throughout the year students are offered a comprehensive service on course information, finance, accommodation, and travel, and the opportunity to make appointments for careers guidance and personal counselling with qualified staff. Students speak highly of the expertise and friendliness of the staff.

57   Inspectors agreed with the college's identification of impartial pre-entry advice and guidance as a strength. The college provides extensive information and comprehensive advice and guidance for all potential students, whether they are planning to study at the college or at one of the centres in the community. Through links with local schools, the college's staff can meet, and give impartial advice to year 10 and 11 pupils. These pupils can also attend college to improve their understanding of the opportunities available by sampling a range of courses. The college holds regular open days and runs events such as a family learning week to promote the benefits of learning for all age groups. Enquiries are handled promptly. Most students agreed that they received good advice and guidance when they were considering making an application to the college.

58   Students are equally positive about their induction to their course and the college. The college has set standards for induction programmes throughout the college. Teaching divisions are required to produce detailed induction programmes which cover all the important aspects of their courses and the college services and facilities.

59   A comprehensive handbook for tutors is a sound source of reference. It provides the guidance which helps tutors to support their students successfully. Students receive good tutorial support through weekly group tutorials and at least two individual tutorials a term. Tutorials are effective and well organised. Thorough records, based upon individual student development plans and action plans, are kept of both group and individual tutorials. Individual tutorials are sometimes less effective where the required subject specialist knowledge is outside the tutor's own subject area. The college has successfully addressed weakness identified in the self-assessment report by improving tutorial support for part-time students and for students based at centres in the community. The college ensures that its franchised students are also well supported by a programme of visits from appropriate college staff, a mentoring system, and by staff based at

the college who have the prime responsibility of responding to their queries.

60   Additional learning support needs of full-time students are identified during induction. Students can be referred to the learning support team through a number of routes, including self-referral. However, these referral systems are not well co-ordinated. The provision of learning support is not linked to the results of initial assessment and the take-up by students is low. Most students who have used the learning support service say that it has helped them. They are well taught and their attendance and progress are reviewed regularly. However, liaison between personal tutors and learning support tutors is not always effective. Many other students who have been identified as in need of learning support receive help from their personal tutor. There are no procedures for monitoring this support or for tracking the progress of these students.

61   Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is good provision of careers education and guidance which is well publicised and easy to obtain. There are sound working relationships between careers staff and vocational tutors to ensure that students receive appropriate advice and support when making applications to university and employers. College-wide events such as education and careers fairs supplement the tutorial programme.

62   Students with specific learning needs and/or disabilities are well served through a number of college services. Although most of these students receive a good service, the complexity of the procedures and the range of staff involved can occasionally cause delay in meeting the needs of some students. The self-assessment report identified some shortcomings in the implementation of support systems.

63   The college is responding to curriculum 2000 by modifying arrangements for keeping records of tutorials, extending tutorial provision, and offering an enrichment programme to most students. There is a stimulating enrichment programme with a wide range of sporting and education opportunities, but students and staff are unclear about its purpose. Student attendance is low at around 30%. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

General Resources

Grade 3

64   Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They found additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- significant improvements to accommodation since the last inspection
- well-equipped resource centres
- good library and open learning facilities
- good access for students to computers

  good learning shops in the local community

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory access to IT facilities for staff
- inadequate social, sporting and recreational facilities for students
- a small overcrowded refectory
- some inadequate accommodation for staff
- poor nursery buildings

65   Since the last inspection the college has made good progress in upgrading its accommodation and general resources. Buildings are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Many areas of the college have undergone refurbishment including the library

and open learning area. There are a several well-equipped resource centres in curriculum areas, a new construction craft centre, and an IT centre to support business and IT programmes. Most classrooms are of a satisfactory or good standard. However, there is still some poor and cramped accommodation. The reception area is large, bright and welcoming and has attractive displays of students' artwork. At the time of the inspection, student support services were being brought together in a central location. The college has three good learning shops in the local community which offer a range of courses. Inspectors agreed that the college has improved access for students with restricted mobility since the last inspection. There is now good access to the accommodation.

66   There is good access to IT facilities for students in the library and open learning area, the curriculum resource areas and various workshops such as the mathematics workshop. The student network allows access to the Internet through the college's intranet but, the speed of the service is slow. Access to IT facilities for staff is often unsatisfactory. In many staff rooms provision is poor with only one computer to five or more staff. Part-time staff have considerable difficulty in gaining access to computers. Staff and student networks are not linked. These various shortcomings prevent staff fully achieving the college's aims and targets for the use and development of IT for teaching and other purposes. Weaknesses in access to IT facilities for staff were overlooked in the self-assessment report.

67   Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment judgement that the library and open learning centre is a strength. The accommodation is located centrally, within the college adjacent to student services and the refectory. The centre houses a collection of 20,000 books and other items and makes extensive use of electronic and Internet-based information sources. A colour coding system links library stock with

information on the college's intranet. The shelves are all at a low level, enabling students in wheelchairs to use the resources independently. During the inspection the centre was well used by students. Full-time and many part-time students receive a comprehensive induction to the library and open learning centre. All library staff are well qualified; students appreciate the help given to them in their studies by the staff.

68   Social, sporting and recreational facilities for students are inadequate on the main campus. There is a small common room for students attached to the refectory and an outdoor courtyard with picnic benches. There are no other areas where students can relax. There are no sporting or other recreational facilities on the college campus. The college uses the local sports centre for enrichment programmes. The refectory provides a good range of food, but is too small and becomes crowded at peak times. The college nursery accommodates 42 children from the age of six months to five years. The staff work hard to provide a warm and welcoming environment for the children, but some of the accommodation is poor.

69   Although since the previous inspection the system for the allocation of accommodation including teaching rooms has improved, some lessons take place in rooms too small for the number of students. Staff accommodation is inadequate in some areas. Signposting around the college has improved since the last inspection, but some work remains to be done.

Cross-college Provision

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

70   Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. Some weaknesses had already been addressed by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- effective linkage of good quality assurance arrangements to strategic planning

- effective procedures for gathering and responding to customers' views

- well-organised appraisal and staff development procedures

- achievement of improvements through quality assurance systems

- well-developed self-assessment processes

Weaknesses

- some imprecise team reviews and action plans

- underdeveloped use of targets and performance indicators

- disabling impact on judgements of unreliable data

71   The college has a strong commitment to quality assurance and to arrangements for continuous improvement. Senior managers promote a culture of improvement throughout the college. Quality assurance procedures are linked to strategic planning and cover every aspect of the college's work including its off-site and franchised operations. The college's quality assurance arrangements have led to improvements in the quality of provision and cross-college services. For example, standards of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection.

72   Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the college's well-planned quality assurance system is a strength. The annual quality assurance cycle brings together course and functional area reviews, self-assessment reports, internal inspections, staff development, appraisal and strategic planning. Appropriately detailed manuals identify the extent of quality assurance activities and set out clear procedures for use across the college. Staff understand the system and the role which they have individually in the processes. The well-defined schedule enables senior managers to check compliance with procedures.

73   Well-structured course and cross-college review procedures are the basis of the self-assessment process and are central to the college's quality assurance system. Staff involvement in quality assurance activity is promoted through their membership of teams that are connected with their responsibilities. Review procedures embrace all aspects of the college's work. Curriculum quality assurance teams conduct reviews against six set themes, including students' achievements. Other teams conduct reviews against four set themes including delivery of service to customers. The same procedures with appropriate modifications are adopted for community centres and franchised work.

74   The quality assurance teams' reviews are compiled to a standard format and lead to action plans and a self-assessment report. A substantial amount of evidence is used to support the teams' evaluations. Lesson observations contribute to judgements about the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Inspectors agreed with the college that the quality of the reviews has improved since the system was introduced in 1996. Most reviews are completed fully and concisely. However, some are incomplete or cursory, and lack critical analysis and evaluation. Targets and performance indicators are used with varying

degrees of effectiveness. College-wide targets for students' achievements and retention are set out in the strategic plan. Teams responsible for courses which do not achieve these targets are required to produce an action plan to improve performance. There is a lack of course-specific targets which might enable teams to assess effectively both their own and their students' performance. Much of the data relating to students' achievements produced by the college are insufficiently reliable to enable teams to make accurate judgements about performance. This weakness has been recognised in the self-assessment report.

75   Self-assessment is thorough and involves all staff and governors. Comprehensive checklists assist quality assurance teams to produce draft reports and action plans. These are scrutinised by the heads of teaching divisions and cross-college areas. The college quality assurance council and academic board review the self-assessment report before it is considered and approved by governors.

76   The college systematically collects and analyses the views of students, staff and other customers through regular surveys. Staff teams take customers' views into account when evaluating provision and establishing action plans. There are appropriate arrangements to monitor charter commitments. The complaints procedure is clear and well understood by students. Students' comments are carefully analysed and complaints investigated. Actions taken are recorded and reported to the academic board and governors. Students are able to give clear examples of developments and action taken as a result of issues which they have raised. Due regard is paid to the reports of external verifiers. Effective arrangements exist for internal verification.

77   Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that arrangements for staff appraisal and staff development are a strength. The staff development programme is effectively linked to both strategic planning and the appraisal system. All staff receive an annual appraisal. Staff development needs arising from appraisal are included in the college's staff development plan. There are effective arrangements for evaluating the results of staff development. The staff development and appraisal process is viewed positively by most staff.

Governance

Grade 2

78   Inspectors confirmed the strengths in the self-assessment report, but identified some weaknesses not acknowledged in the report.

Key strengths

- good involvement in strategic planning

- effective and appropriate working relationship with senior managers

- well-planned corporation and committee meetings

- well-established self-assessment process

- good financial monitoring

Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements to monitor academic performance

- insufficient use of performance indicators

- underdeveloped arrangements for induction and training

79   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.

80   The corporation has taken positive steps to ensure that its membership covers a good range of experience and skills. There are currently four vacancies, including two student governors. The search committee has been proactive in seeking new members to fill these vacancies. The finance and general purposes committee comprises all corporation members apart from members of the audit committee. A review committee has advised on general governance issues including the adoption of the revised instrument and articles of governance. Governors are well informed about financial matters and carefully monitor progress against planned commitments. Capital projects have been subject to close scrutiny. In 1999-2000, governors closely monitored action to adjust the budget in the light of a shortfall in student enrolment. Amendments were followed through to ensure the revised budget was achieved. The audit committee effectively monitors the implementation of recommendations made by the internal auditors.

81   The corporation makes appropriate arrangements for its clerking which is undertaken by a college manager. There is a clear job description relating to the clerking role. Corporation and committee meetings are well planned and there is an annual calendar of meetings listing specific agenda items for each meeting to ensure all business is dealt with appropriately and promptly. Papers are well written and informative and their status is clearly identified. Action required is noted in the papers and agenda. Decisions are recorded clearly in the minutes. Governors have agreed a code of conduct and standing orders. The content of the register of interests accords with current guidance.

82   Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the corporation plays a key role in setting and monitoring the strategic plan. Governors take a keen interest in the college mission statement, reviewing it annually. When necessary they make adjustments to reflect, for example, the college's increasing commitment to widening participation in further education. All governors have the opportunity to contribute their individual ideas to the preparation of the plan and to participate in discussion with senior managers to produce the final draft for corporation approval. Progress against plan objectives is monitored regularly at corporation meetings.

83   Inspectors agreed with the college that the corporation ensures that its relationship with college managers reflects their differing responsibilities. Members have regular discussions about principles of governance to guide their approach to a working partnership. There are sound arrangements for the appraisal of the principal and senior postholders who are set targets closely linked to the strategic plan's objectives. The corporation challenges and questions managers on their proposals. Two governors have worked closely with the principal on a partnership agreement with a local training provider. Heads of division are invited to meetings of the corporation to brief governors on the work in their area and to be questioned on curriculum issues.

84   The corporation has conducted self-assessment since 1996. The process has led them to take action to review standing orders and college policies and to hold a public meeting every year. It has also made them aware of the need to review all aspects of college performance covering business growth, quality, learning development, efficiency and the corporation culture. Progress is reviewed every year, but is made difficult in some areas by the poor definition of performance indicators and targets.

85   The self-assessment report fails to acknowledge that the corporation has not established satisfactory procedures to monitor academic performance. A governor has been appointed to the quality assurance council, but

has not attended meetings. Governors ensure that they receive reports on students' achievements, but these reports have not been subject to rigorous challenge or resulted in significant action. Governors have not agreed appropriate performance indicators to assist them in making judgements on achievement and retention. Governors have, however, considered carefully the analysis of complaints and the outcome of student satisfaction surveys.

86   Inspectors agreed that governors have underdeveloped arrangements for induction and training. Training needs are not systematically identified and there is no planned training programme. These issues are now being addressed. Some governors have attended external courses and provided feedback to the whole corporation. Induction procedures for governors are now being formalised.

Management
Grade 3

87   Inspectors agreed with most strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. A few strengths were omitted and some weaknesses were understated, in particular the unreliability of data on students' achievements.

Key strengths

- the clear sense of purpose of senior managers

- effective staff involvement in strategic and operational planning

- good working relationships throughout the college

- effective promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- an underdeveloped management information system

- unreliable data on students' achievements

- underdeveloped use of targets

- some ineffective management in curriculum and support areas

88   Management is characterised by an open and consultative style, which promotes effective teamwork and a friendly atmosphere in the college. There are good working relationships. Communication within the college is good.

89   There are comprehensive arrangements for strategic planning which involve staff at all levels. The resulting plan clearly sets out the college's main aims. The objectives in the annual operating statement and the team plans reflect these aims. Twice-yearly monitoring reports submitted by each team are scrutinised by senior managers. Most of these reports are comprehensive, but a few lack sufficient detail. The introduction of new styles of learning, focused more closely on the needs of individual students, is central to the college's strategy. These new styles have been effectively pursued through the development of well-equipped, open-plan learning centres in several curriculum areas. Some staff remain sceptical about the benefits of these new developments.

90   Staff understand the management structure and their own individual responsibilities. Twelve divisions manage curriculum delivery. Significant autonomy is delegated to divisional heads. Appropriate checks ensure that managers are accountable for their actions. A wide range of working groups involves many staff in management decisions, but some staff do not understand the role of key committees. The self-assessment report recognises some unevenness in the effectiveness of middle managers in both curriculum and support areas.

Cross-college Provision

Whilst most of the college's curriculum areas are well managed, there is unsatisfactory practice in the planning, teaching and provision of additional support on some programmes. Inspectors concluded that the management and committee structures, and some very demanding college procedures produce a complex working environment for managers.

91   The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The finance team includes appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Management accounts are produced within 10 working days of the end of the month and are closely monitored. The format of management accounts is good, but the inclusion of a 12-month rolling cashflow forecast and further developed financial performance indicators would improve them further. In 1999-2000, the college fell well short of its enrolment target due to under-recruitment of 16 to 19 year olds. The shortfall was recognised early in the year. Prompt and effective action was taken to make savings. As a consequence, the college remains in a strong financial position.

92   The self-assessment report understates weaknesses in the management information system. Most of the student achievement information generated from ISR returns for 1998 and 1999 was too unreliable to use as a basis for inspectors' judgements. Some college data for students completing in 2000 were also unreliable and had to be amended during the inspection. Enrolment data are reliable, but curriculum managers still prefer to use their own records of students' achievements. There is little use of central management information to assist analysis and planning. Unit costing procedures have not yet been developed. The importance of accurate data are not yet embedded in the college management culture.

93   Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment judgement that the college has effective links with external bodies. The college's new centre in Bemerton Heath is the result of effective collaboration with the local authority and the Salisbury Learning Partnership. Good links between the divisions and local organisations help the college to generate income from commercial courses. There are well-established links with the army for the provision of NVQ training and assessment for several thousand army personnel at centres across the United Kingdom.

94   The self-assessment report recognises that targets and performance indicators are not used effectively. In several curriculum areas staff are unaware of the process for target-setting and the targets that have been set for key courses. However, careful attention is paid to retention and achievement rates and remedial action is taken where poor performance is identified. The college also takes prompt action when students are absent. The college holds information and analysis on the destinations of 94% of full-time students completing in summer 1999.

95   The college has an extensive range of policies that are regularly reviewed and publicised on the college intranet. The equal opportunities policy is a strong statement of the college's intention to pursue best practice. Its implementation is closely monitored. Central data on gender, ethnicity, disability, age and location are collected, analysed and disseminated. The college's equal opportunities group monitors the compliance by divisions with the equal opportunities action plan that each division is required to implement.

Cross-college Provision

Conclusions

96   The college produced its third self-assessment report for the inspection. The self-assessment report provided sufficient information to form a useful basis from which to plan the inspection but did not reflect the good working assessment undertaken at team level. Strengths and weaknesses were listed but the sources of evidence were not clearly stated. Action plans were insufficiently detailed. Franchised and direct off-site provision was not clearly identified. Before the inspection, the college provided inspectors with appropriately detailed action plans including information on progress achieved in the plans. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the report. However, they also identified further strengths and weaknesses and placed greater significance on some of the weaknesses than had the college in its report, particularly in relation to standards of teaching and learning in some curriculum areas. Inspectors also considered that the college had overestimated some of the strengths relating to rates of student retention and achievement. Inspectors agreed with four of the grades for the curriculum areas. They awarded three curriculum areas a lower grade than had been given by the college itself. They agreed with three of the college's grades for cross-college provision, but awarded the remaining two areas a lower grade than had been given in the self-assessment report.

97   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 2000)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	9
19-24 years	9
25+ years	80
Not known	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 2000)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation) and entry level	9
Level 2 (intermediate)	17
Level 3 (advanced)	39
Level 4/5 (higher)	20
Level not specified	8
Non-schedule 2	7
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (July 2000)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision (%)
Science	175	2,654	15
Agriculture	4	43	0
Construction	87	677	4
Engineering	133	663	4
Business	119	9,009	47
Hotel and catering	148	1,065	6
Health and community care	188	584	4
Art and design	448	866	7
Humanities	189	1,849	11
Basic education	80	286	2
Total	1,571	17,786	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1998-99 ISR data, the college recruited 5% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 2000)

	Perm-anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	111	3	19	133
Supporting direct learning contact	39	3	7	49
Other support	83	7	27	117
Total	233	13	53	299

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1998	*1999*	*2000*
Income	£10,052,000	£10,987,000	£10,777,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£15.84	£16.20	£16.84
Payroll as a proportion of income	64%	63%	67%
Achievement of funding target	101%	104%	91%
Diversity of income	28%	30%	33%
Operating surplus	£129,000	£173,000	–£85,000

Sources: Income – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

ALF – Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1998), Funding Allocations 1998-99 (1999), college (2000)
Payroll – college (1999 and 2000)
Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1997-98 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)
Diversity of income – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)
Operating surplus – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

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