

Southwark College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1997-98**

THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL

***THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL***

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education according to a four-year cycle. It also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum, disseminates good practice and advises the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

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

Southwark College

Greater London Region

Inspected February 1998

Southwark College's first self-assessment report drew on its existing quality assurance procedures which involve all staff and governors reviewing performance in their areas of responsibility. The report identifies most of the college's major strengths and weaknesses but overstates the former and underestimates the latter.

The college offers a wide range of courses in nine of the FEFC's 10 programme areas, provision in six of these was inspected. The college is responsive to the needs of the local community. There are opportunities for students to progress within the college from foundation level to advanced level studies. The provision in art and design and the performing arts is good. The other curriculum areas inspected are satisfactory. Students' achievements vary a great deal from year to year and course to course. Students' attendance and retention are poor on many courses. Good support is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there is an effective range of support services for students. However, the well-thought-out arrangements for learning support in basic skills and tutorial

provision have not yet been fully implemented. The governors have supported the new management team in making substantial changes which include the introduction of a new organisational structure and improved arrangements for quality assurance. It is too early to gauge whether these changes will improve the quality of provision for students. The college has reduced the number of sites from 10 to five since the last inspection and improved the quality of the accommodation. The college should address: students' poor attendance and punctuality; low retention rates and low levels of achievement on some courses; the poor quality of some teaching; inconsistencies in the delivery of the tutorial programme; lack of co-ordination of learning support in basic skills; variability in the implementation of the quality assurance procedures; and the insufficient use of target-setting and performance indicators.

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

| Curriculum area | Grade | Cross-college provision | Grade |
|---|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Science, mathematics and computing | 3 | Support for students | 3 |
| Floristry and horticulture | 3 | General resources | 3 |
| Business | 3 | Quality assurance | 3 |
| Art, design and performing arts | 2 | Governance | 3 |
| English, EFL, modern foreign languages and humanities | 3 | Management | 3 |
| ESOL and basic education | 3 | | |
| Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | 3 | | |

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Southwark College is the only further education college in the London borough of Southwark. It was formed in the early 1990s by the merger of a sixth form centre, a further education college and the borough's adult education service. It is located on five main sites in the centre and north of the borough at Waterloo, Peckham, Camberwell, Surrey Docks and the Grange near Tower Bridge. Since the last inspection a new principal and management team have reorganised the management of the curriculum throughout the college.

2 The college provides courses for students of all ages. At 1 November 1997 there were 6,371 students enrolled at the college, 17 per cent of whom were aged 18 or below. Sixty-four per cent of them were aged 25 years or more and around 62 per cent were female. Almost 50 per cent were from minority ethnic groups who form more than 25 per cent of the local population. The borough has a substantial refugee population. In 1997, there were about 800 enrolments by asylum seekers or refugees at the college. The college's employees represent 312 full-time equivalent posts, of which 173 are teaching posts. The college is organised into five directorates. Courses are managed through five schools supported by a range of cross-college services.

3 The majority of the local authority's schools provide education for pupils aged 11 to 16 years although there is one City Technology College and two voluntary-aided schools which have sixth forms. The local staying-on rate is low at 56 per cent. Southwark has high levels of deprivation. The borough has a high unemployment rate of about 19 per cent compared with 9 per cent for London as a whole. Forty per cent of children in the borough live in non-earning households. A high proportion of residents possess no formal qualifications.

4 Southwark is in the area covered by the Focus Central London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) in which over 100 of Europe's 500 largest companies are based. However, in Southwark itself most of the firms are small or medium sized. A growing proportion of the jobs available locally are in the arts, travel and tourism, information technology (IT) and service industries.

5 The college's strong commitment to its students is reflected in its mission statement: 'putting students first through high-quality educational experiences which are cost effective'.

Context

The Inspection

6 The college was inspected during the week beginning 23 February 1998. In planning and carrying out the inspection, the team used the college's self-assessment report and information about the college held by other divisions of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The college's data on students' achievements for the three years 1995 to 1997 were validated against class registers and results issued by examining bodies. The college was given about two months' notice of the inspection agenda and the sample of provision to be inspected. The inspection was carried out by 14 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 62 days. The team observed 121 lessons and tutorials, examined students' work and a variety of documents, and held meetings with governors, managers, staff and students. Provision in each of the college's five schools was inspected.

7 Of the lessons inspected, 48 per cent were outstanding or good and 14 per cent were less than satisfactory or poor. This profile is significantly weaker than the average for all colleges inspected in 1996-97, according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report*. The average level of attendance in the

lessons inspected was 54 per cent. This compares with a figure for all colleges in 1996-97 of just over 77 per cent recorded in the chief inspector's annual report. The following table shows the grades awarded to the lessons inspected.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

| Programme | Grade | | | | | Totals |
|----------------|-------|----|----|----|---|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| GCE A/AS level | 2 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 19 |
| GCSE | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| GNVQ | 2 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 13 |
| NVQ | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Other* | 13 | 21 | 23 | 9 | 1 | 67 |
| Total | 19 | 39 | 46 | 15 | 2 | 121 |

*includes vocational courses, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, EFL, basic education, ESOL and access to higher education

Curriculum Areas

Science, Mathematics and Computing

Grade 3

8 Inspectors observed 22 lessons covering a wide range of science, mathematics and computing courses held at the Waterloo and Surrey Docks sites. The college's self-assessment report identified some strengths and weaknesses in the provision but did not place sufficient emphasis on teaching and learning and students' achievements.

Key strengths

- the range of effective teaching techniques
- the good balance between theoretical and practical work in science
- good progression rates to higher education or employment by computing and access students
- some good examination pass rates

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and punctuality
- poor retention rates
- poor results in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) modular mathematics course
- unimaginative teaching in some lessons

9 The college identified its wide range of courses in science, mathematics and computing as a strength. Inspectors agreed. General education and vocational courses are provided from foundation to advanced level, catering for full-time and part-time students and for those who cannot attend the college regularly. There are progression routes to further study within the college, and to employment or higher education. A foundation level course in science provides a route into higher level science courses for students with few formal

qualifications. Courses are generally well planned and well managed.

10 A range of effective teaching techniques was observed in most science and some mathematics lessons. The teaching methods used in computing lessons were less effective. In science lessons there was a good balance of theoretical and practical work and students carried out practical exercises safely. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and approachable, and that relationships between students and teachers are good. Attendance by students at the lessons inspected was low. Some lessons were interrupted by the late arrival of students and some teachers failed to deal adequately with poor punctuality.

11 There are sufficient specialist technical staff. A suitable range of equipment and learning resources is used in most lessons, but a few areas of the curriculum are not adequately resourced. For example, students studying biochemistry were unable to carry out electrophoresis experiments because the appropriate equipment was not available. Some of the equipment used in science and computing is out of date. Students have access to a good range of text books in computing and an adequate range in other subjects.

12 Students generally worked diligently during lessons. Those completing vocationally-based assignments were given suitable opportunities to demonstrate the key skills of communication, application of number and IT. However, insufficient use is made of IT in science lessons, or by students in the completion of written work. Teachers set an appropriate range of coursework and homework but a significant number of students do not submit their work for marking. Work which is handed in is marked thoroughly and students receive good feedback to help them improve their performance.

13 Students' achievements in sciences, mathematics and computing courses vary a great deal from year to year and from course to

Curriculum Areas

course. On many GCSE and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses, the numbers sitting the examinations are often small but the pass rates are broadly comparable to the national averages. Many students who complete the access to higher education courses and the BTEC national diploma in computing are successful in obtaining the full award and progress to higher level studies or employment. On the one-year GCE A level human biology course, pass rates are at or above the national average while on the GCSE modular mathematics course, results are significantly below the national average. Low retention is a weakness which was identified by the college in its self-assessment report.

Examples of students' achievements in science, mathematics and computing, 1995 to 1997

| Course grouping | | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
|--|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Access to science | Retention (%) | 91 | 89 | 81 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 88 | 65 | 70 |
| BTEC national diploma computer studies | Retention (%) | + | 56 | 71 |
| | Pass rate (%) | + | 70 | 90 |
| GCSE modular mathematics (students aged 19 or over) | Retention (%) | 100 | 85 | 77 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 22 | 29 | 28 |

*Source: college data
+data not available*

Curriculum Areas

Floristry and Horticulture

Grade 3

14 The inspection covered a range of courses in floristry and horticulture from national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1 to higher level professional qualifications. Twelve lessons were observed. The inspection confirmed the majority of the strengths and weaknesses presented in the college's self-assessment report. However, the report omitted some weaknesses and did not give sufficient weight to others.

Key strengths

- the wide range of courses based on responsive links with industry
- the high standard of practical teaching
- clear links between theory and practice
- good specialist facilities

Weaknesses

- weaknesses in lesson planning and course organisation
- some poor pass and retention rates
- poor punctuality of students

15 The range of courses in floristry and horticulture provides students with the opportunity to progress from level 1 to professional level. Most of the programmes are responsive to local needs. Work placements provide effective links with industry. Most course content is relevant and appropriate to the vocational needs of students. However, schemes of work are sketchy. The self-assessment report claimed that students' handbooks are of good quality, but inspection revealed that this is not always the case.

16 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that teachers use a suitable variety of teaching methods which are well matched to the objectives of the courses

and the nature of the vocational area. In the best lessons, a range of strategies is used to maintain students' interest and ensure that they are learning and making progress. In most lessons, teachers make frequent and effective reference to practical and commercial applications. Much of the practical teaching is of a high standard. Lessons are well structured enabling the progressive development of students' skills. Good use is made of the well-stocked commercial shop, the demonstration gardens and of displays of equipment and machinery used in industry. The theoretical treatment of topics is not always sufficient to support the practical, vocational content. Some staff take too little account of the range of students' experience and ability or check how much they already know and understand. As the self-assessment report notes, the development of key skills, and their integration with other aspects of the curriculum, is weak.

17 Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Their close links with industry enable them to maintain an awareness of commercial developments. There is adequate provision of specialist resources. However, there are insufficient resources in the library to enable students to work effectively on their own.

18 Teachers set assignments which are well matched to the objectives of the courses. Most students research the assignment topics thoroughly and present their findings clearly. In some cases the assignment briefs are weak and the assessment criteria are not clear. The work is marked fairly, but some students are unable to apply the knowledge they have gained or to draw meaningful conclusions from it, and opportunities to help such students by giving detailed written feedback are sometimes missed.

19 Floristry students have won prizes in a number of national competitions, and provide displays for offices on a commercial basis. Those students who enter for vocational examinations are usually successful. However, students' achievements on some part-time

Curriculum Areas

courses have declined over recent years.

Students' punctuality and attendance are poor.

Poor achievement rates were not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

Examples of students' achievements in floristry and horticulture, 1995 to 1997

| Course grouping | | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ level 2 floristry | Retention (%) | 88 | 80 | 53 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 100 | 60 | 53 |
| C&G level 2 horticulture | Retention (%) | + | 88 | 60 |
| | Pass rate (%) | + | 100 | 100 |

Source: college data

+data not available

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 3

20 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering a range of business programmes including NVQs, general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) at foundation and intermediate levels, courses to train medical secretaries, and courses leading to awards in business, accounting and IT. Inspectors were in broad agreement with judgements contained in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good teaching, in particular on skill-based vocational courses
- well-planned IT provision
- courses which meet the training needs of the local community

Weaknesses

- students' poor punctuality and irregular attendance on some courses
- some poorly-prepared, undemanding teaching
- some poor retention and success rates, in particular on GNVQ courses

21 Within the last year, the school of business and technology has been restructured. The courses are generally well managed, and steps are being taken to monitor management information better, to implement a framework for quality assurance, and undertake regular observations of teaching.

22 Many teachers set high standards and expect students to respond accordingly. In a well-planned lesson for medical secretaries, students were learning medical terms. The good rapport between the teacher and the students, the high standards expected and achieved, the regular, brisk testing, the use of

students' experiences and the effective use of humour combined to make the lesson both successful and enjoyable. Practical courses in IT were generally well attended. They were run mainly as workshops which students could attend at times to suit them and use course materials chosen to allow them to work at their own speed. Courses in subjects such as IT and accounting were seen by students as likely to lead to employment and were popular. These courses were well taught, and students worked hard to acquire the skills which would be useful in the workplace. However, on some other courses, teachers had low expectations of their students and their lessons were often not well prepared or delivered. This was particularly the case on GNVQ courses.

23 The accommodation used for the IT courses is of a good standard and that used for other courses is satisfactory. The self-assessment report notes that students benefit from high-quality, up-to-date computers and software. However, they are unable to gain access to these facilities to practise their skills and to complete their assignments outside timetabled lessons. There are no facilities to demonstrate the use of software packages to the whole class.

24 The quality of students' assignment work was largely satisfactory. The best work was produced by students on skill-based vocational courses. The marking was usually detailed and helpful but errors in spelling and grammar were not always corrected. GNVQ students' portfolios contained less work than might have been expected at this stage of their courses. This was occasionally due to delays in returning the work by teachers, but more often resulted from a casual attitude to the meeting of deadlines by students. Efforts by course co-ordinators to remedy the situation are not proving successful.

25 The self-assessment report indicated that students usually succeed in their studies. Inspection confirmed that retention and success rates on many courses are satisfactory or better,

Curriculum Areas

in particular in the skill-based vocational courses. For example, in 1997, 75 per cent of students taking the wordprocessing tests achieved an award. However, there are also some poor retention and achievement rates which are not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. For example, on GNVQ courses, many of the students who were recruited at the beginning of the year withdrew from the courses during the first and second term, or failed to submit sufficient assignments to obtain the full qualification.

Examples of students' achievements in business, 1995 to 1997

| Course grouping | | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ level 2 business administration | Retention (%) | 91 | 99 | 96 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 80 | 86 | 87 |
| GNVQ intermediate business | Retention (%) | 71 | 43 | 43 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 60 | 40 | 29 |

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Art, Design and Performing Arts

Grade 2

26 Inspectors observed 23 lessons covering courses in art and design and performing arts. Although inspectors generally agreed with the college's assessment of the provision, a number of strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors were omitted from the self-assessment report. In particular, the self-assessment report lacked sufficient judgements about teaching, learning and students' achievements.

Key strengths

- lively teaching
- generally good pass rates
- the professional experience of staff
- constructive, thorough feedback on students' work
- external links and study visits which enrich courses
- good specialist resources

Weaknesses

- low attendance levels in some classes
- attendance and punctuality not firmly managed by some teachers
- poor retention rates on a few courses
- some teaching which does not demand enough of the students

27 The recently-enlarged school of creative arts is well managed. Roles are clearly understood and communications are effective. Staff work well in teams to meet the needs of a diverse group of students.

28 The self-assessment report identifies the quality of teaching as a strength and inspectors saw much good teaching. Staff are sensitive to the needs of their students and are successful at

developing productive working relationships with them. Students receive much careful individual support and guidance but are also encouraged to work independently and to develop their own ideas. In some classes, students' punctuality is poor and attendance levels are low. Some teachers are effective at managing these problems but others are not. The best lessons were characterised by lively teaching in a stimulating learning environment. For example, a well-managed key skills lesson for GNVQ intermediate art and design involved students in the design of a survey of students' opinions. After more than two hours of demanding work the students were still fully engaged in presenting numerical information in a visual format. In a dance class, students with widely varying levels of ability were working in small groups on a sequence being videoed for later discussion and analysis. The teacher worked effectively to ensure that each student made progress and the students worked well with each other. In some less successful lessons, students were not well prepared for the work and were not given sufficient guidance on the most appropriate working methods. Productive links with a wide variety of external organisations are used for valuable work experience placements and to enrich the curriculum.

29 Pass rates on most courses are satisfactory or better. For example, pass rates in GCE A level fine art and GNVQ intermediate art and design were above the national averages in the last two years. Students on performing arts courses achieved overall pass rates of 89 per cent and 96 per cent in 1996 and 1997, respectively. Ninety-four per cent of the first group of students to complete the national diploma in popular music achieved the award. Retention rates vary widely. In 1997, over 90 per cent of the students completed the foundation and national diploma courses in general art and design but only 45 per cent of the students who began the national diploma in

Curriculum Areas

popular music completed their studies. Pass and retention rates receive little attention in the self-assessment report. Inspectors judged much of the students' coursework to be satisfactory, with some examples of particularly imaginative and accomplished work. For example, some written project work on the popular music course was thoroughly executed and well presented. Some GCE A level fine art students were producing mature still-life work under tight time constraints. GNVQ intermediate art and design students produced good-quality monoprints of the Thames in a variety of media as the background design for a millennium mug.

30 There are some good specialist resources in art and design which allow students to pursue an appropriate range of work. These include photographic resources, a theatre, design and dance studios, ceramics resources, pattern-cutting for fashion and dyeing facilities for textiles studies. A successful bid for national lottery funding has been used to provide excellent studios and equipment for the study of popular music and for community use, a strength noted in the self-assessment report. Teaching staff draw on their current

professional practice to bring valuable specialist experience to their lessons.

Examples of students' achievements in art, design and performing arts, 1995 to 1997

| Course grouping | | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
|--|---------------|------|------|------|
| GCE A level fine art | Retention (%) | 100 | 82 | 81 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 86 | 86 | 90 |
| Advanced level vocational courses in performing arts | Retention (%) | + | 100 | 49 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 75 | 89 | 96 |
| GNVQ intermediate art and design | Retention (%) | 86 | 64 | 79 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 39 | 56 | 71 |
| National diploma in general art and design | Retention (%) | + | 77 | 90 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 79 | 84 | 81 |
| Foundation art and design | Retention (%) | + | 76 | 95 |
| | Pass rate (%) | + | 69 | 72 |

Source: college data
+data not available

Curriculum Areas

English, EFL, Modern Foreign Languages and Humanities

Grade 3

31 Inspectors observed 23 lessons covering English, English as a foreign language (EFL), modern foreign languages and other humanities subjects. Inspectors concluded that the college's self-assessment report provided a generally accurate evaluation of the provision, but it did not identify some strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and some weaknesses in students' achievements.

Key strengths

- good teaching, particularly in EFL
- effective use of the target language in modern foreign language lessons
- generally high retention rates in language and EFL courses

Weaknesses

- low teachers' expectations of students in some humanities lessons
- poor planning of some long lessons
- low retention rates and pass rates on some courses

32 The college's self-assessment report describes as a strength the wide range of courses in humanities and languages and acknowledges as a weakness the under provision of modern language modules on vocational courses. Inspectors agreed with these judgements. Course management is generally satisfactory and is particularly effective for EFL programmes and courses in English for medical purposes. Schemes of work for humanities courses are underdeveloped except on access to higher education courses. By contrast, schemes of work for EFL are very thorough.

33 The library stock of books and other learning materials is satisfactory. Provision for courses in English for medical purposes is extensive and well chosen. For these courses, teachers have built up a bank of assessed students' work which is useful for current students as reference material.

34 Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In many lessons, a pleasant and purposeful learning environment is created. The best lessons are lively and teachers' expectations are high. The target language is used as the principal medium of communication in foreign language lessons. Teaching was consistently good in EFL where lessons were well planned and the materials used stimulated students' interest. This strength was not recognised in the self-assessment report. In many English and humanities lessons, good written material is given to students to assist their study of particular topics, and effective use is made of video-taped material. In some lessons, lively, well-structured and balanced expositions of complex and contentious topics hold students' interest and stimulate well-informed discussions. However, teachers' expectations of students are too low in some lessons. Some of the lessons observed were more than three hours long and teachers had not planned sufficiently varied and stimulating activities to retain students' interest throughout this period. Insufficient attention is given to meeting the varied learning needs of the students.

35 Students were generally attentive and responsive during lessons. Some lessons were disrupted by students who arrived late. Teachers' responses to latecomers were inconsistent and some lateness passed without comment. Students' attendance was low in the lessons observed. Teachers give clear guidance to students about the requirements of the course but a significant proportion of humanities students find it difficult to establish and maintain sufficiently regular study habits, including the prompt submission of coursework.

Curriculum Areas

The self-assessment report does not refer to the students' poor punctuality and attendance, although these issues are addressed in annual course reviews.

36 Modern foreign language and EFL students are willing and able to communicate in the language being studied. Their written work is generally well presented and returned by teachers with helpful written comments. Standards of oral and written work in humanities varied widely and the quality of teachers' marking of students' work was more varied than in EFL and modern language courses.

37 The self-assessment report recognises that results are good in some courses, and acknowledges that some retention rates are poor. The retention rates are generally good in modern languages and EFL courses but a significant proportion of those who complete their studies do not enter for the qualification. The pass rate in June 1997 for the advanced examination in EFL was 72 per cent. The

results are adversely affected by the substantial number of students who enter, but do not sit the examination. Sixty-nine per cent of students who sat GCSE modern foreign languages examinations in 1997 obtained a grade A* or A but pass rates at grades C or above in GCSE Italian, Spanish and Turkish for those who entered the examination were below national averages. Some humanities results, for example GCSE English language at grades C or above and GCE A level psychology, are above national averages, but others, such as GCE A level sociology, are below.

Examples of students' achievements in English, EFL, modern foreign languages and humanities, 1995 to 1997

| Course grouping | | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
|---|------------------|------|------|------|
| GCE A level psychology (students aged 19 or over) | Retention (%) | 85 | 63 | 64 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 90 | 67 | 64 |
| GCE A level sociology (one year, with students aged 19 or over) | Retention (%) | 103* | 83 | 63 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 47 | 31 | 33 |
| GCE A level Spanish (students aged 19 or over) | Enrolled number | 12 | 17 | 33 |
| | Retention (%) | 100 | 106* | 109* |
| | Entered for exam | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 80 | 60 | 100 |
| GCSE English | Retention (%) | 95 | 81 | 70 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 51 | 55 | 56 |
| GCSE Italian (students aged 19 or over) | Retention (%) | 94 | 129* | 150* |
| | Pass rate (%) | 75 | 36 | 67 |

Source: college data

*students enrolled after the census date

Curriculum Areas

English for Speakers of Other Languages and Basic Education

Grade 3

38 The inspection of the college's provision for adult basic education and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) included the observation of 13 lessons at three sites. Inspectors concluded that some strengths and weaknesses of the provision were identified in the self-assessment report but those relating to teaching and learning and students' achievements were not considered in sufficient detail by the college.

Key strengths

- flexible provision offering progression opportunities for students
- effective development of students' confidence and skills
- some effective teaching
- increasing opportunities for the accreditation of students' achievements

Weaknesses

- low expectations of students by some teachers
- unsystematic approach to the assessment of students
- failure to set the curriculum in a vocational context
- some shortcomings in course management

39 A wide range of courses is offered in basic education and ESOL on three sites. The standard of work is appropriate and students develop useful skills, but the course material does not help them to cope with the problems of day-to-day living and is not set in a vocational context.

40 The ESOL, the pre-GCSE and the foundation GCSE courses are well planned and managed. In contrast, the management of some other basic education provision is less effective. There is a similar variation in quality of course documentation and schemes of work. New managers are addressing such issues with enthusiasm. There is a generally effective initial assessment system in operation. Advice sessions are held at each site in order to place students in an appropriate group but the diagnostic tests used are not always well suited to their purpose. A suitably simplified version of the college's induction handbook is used to introduce new students to their courses.

41 The most effective lessons were lively, well structured and conducted at an appropriate pace. Students were presented with a range of activities which enabled them to develop their skills. For example, students in a foundation level mathematics lesson were enjoying their work on the transformation of formulae and were making good progress helped by the effective illustrations given by the teacher. In an ESOL lesson, students were improving their language skills through working on health and safety in the home, a topic they found to be of great interest. However, a few lessons were unimaginative and dull and ineffective in promoting learning by students. Dated and inappropriate resources, such as worksheets, also contributed to some poor teaching and ineffective learning. Weaknesses in the teaching were understated in the self-assessment report. Some teachers have low expectations of the progress students should make during lessons. In one course, there was exemplary recording of students' attendance which was used effectively in planning students' work programmes but attendance was not always monitored in this systematic manner and lack of punctuality was not always dealt with effectively.

42 In general, students' class work is of an appropriate standard and they progress to higher levels when their teachers consider they

Curriculum Areas

are ready. Some students' written work demonstrates a high level of achievement. Students who attend regularly are highly motivated, gain confidence and develop relevant skills. There is, however, no systematic procedure to assess students' skills or to monitor their progress. A number of qualifications are used to accredit students' achievements but relatively few students enter the examinations. Nevertheless, there are some successful results. In the Pitman's examination for ESOL at basic, elementary and intermediate levels, a good overall pass rate of 62 per cent was achieved in 1997. The college's self-assessment report overstates the extent to which retention rates and students' achievements constitute a strength.

Curriculum Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Grade 3

43 Inspectors observed 16 lessons at a variety of locations on and off site. The college's self-assessment report recognised some of the strengths but overlooked a significant number of the weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Key strengths

- outstanding pre-vocational course for deaf students
- good provision for students with mental health problems
- productive links with a range of external agencies
- a wide range of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- some skilful teaching and good achievements by students

Weaknesses

- the piecemeal structure of the provision
- ineffective initial assessment of students' abilities
- some inappropriate accreditation
- the isolation of adults with learning difficulties from the rest of the college
- the pre-vocational programme for young students with learning difficulties which does not meet their needs

44 The college runs a particularly wide range of courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Productive links, many of them long standing, are maintained with a range of external agencies, including the local education authority (LEA), social services, the

health authority and voluntary organisations. These links support the development of courses and enhance students' opportunities for further education. These strengths are acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

45 An outstanding pre-vocational course for deaf students is run in partnership with the City Lit Centre for Deaf People. It has been developed by a tutor who is deaf. The students are assessed on entry using specialist tests. Their progress is carefully monitored and their achievements are good. Good provision for students with mental health problems is made in acute hospitals, day hospitals and centres, and in the college. In an outstanding lesson in a hospital, students with acute mental health problems learnt a range of pottery skills and techniques which enabled them to produce work in which they rightly took pride.

46 Some skilful and dynamic teaching was observed across the range of provision. In an outstanding catering lesson, the teacher demonstrated to deaf students each step in the process of making chocolate cake decorations. In a practical woodwork lesson, adult students with learning difficulties learned a range of skills as they worked on individual items for use in the kitchen. Younger students with learning difficulties analysed a role-play to develop their understanding of communication.

47 However, the development of the provision for students with learning difficulties, has been piecemeal over many years. The current pattern of provision inhibits the effective use of staff, accommodation and equipment and prevents students from benefiting fully from what the college has to offer. Although adults with learning difficulties are well supported, the use of one college centre for separate provision for them isolates them from the rest of the college and prevents other students from benefiting from the staff and facilities which are available only on that site. The pre-vocational programme for younger students with learning difficulties includes too few practical vocational

Curriculum Areas

activities and some which are inappropriate. This has been identified by the college as a weakness.

48 The lack of effective assessment of students with learning difficulties on entry to most courses makes it difficult for teachers to develop appropriate programmes or use teaching methods suited to their needs. Too often, students who are unable to read are given tasks which require them to do so; they struggle with material which should have been presented in some other way, or copy out items without comprehension. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

49 The achievements of some students with learning difficulties, particularly in art and pottery, are impressive. However, in general, there are insufficient measures of what students are achieving. Some of the accreditation used is unsuitable. Opportunities are missed to prepare students for independent living and to integrate them more fully with the life of the college.

50 Overall, the accommodation and specialist resources are satisfactory although they vary in quality from site to site. Students who would benefit from vocational teaching in specialist accommodation rarely have access to it.

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 3

51 The self-assessment of the cross-college support for students was done by the directorate of student services. Each section of the directorate devised appropriate quality standards and assessed performance against these. Staff have drawn up action plans to address weaknesses and these were being implemented at the time of the inspection. Inspectors agreed with most of the findings in the self-assessment report but felt that insufficient weight was given to weaknesses in tutorial provision.

Key strengths

- effective management of student services
- comprehensive, effective procedures for recruiting students
- effective support for students with learning difficulties, mental health problems and physical disabilities
- good range of welfare, counselling and other support services

Weaknesses

- poor attendance by students at tutorials
- inconsistencies and weaknesses in the delivery of tutorials
- lack of co-ordination of learning support in basic skills and insufficient learning support materials

52 Support for students is well managed by the directorate of student services and enterprise. A guidance policy has been introduced recently which covers all aspects of support. The college has recognised that the implementation of some new policies and procedures is inconsistent.

53 There are clear and comprehensive procedures for recruiting students. An

information centre at Waterloo deals with telephone enquiries and personal callers. The prospectus and course leaflets are informative and attractive. Fact sheets give essential information on courses which is clear to most students but is too complex for students with learning difficulties or speakers of other languages to understand easily. The self-assessment report recognises this and the sheets are being rewritten. There are weekly advice sessions at each site. Open evenings are held at the college and staff liaise extensively with local schools. Specialist teachers usually interview students for their courses. There are clear guidelines for interviews. Despite this, some students said that they were not fully informed about the demands of the course before they started. An education guidance officer interviews applicants who are unsure of what they want to do, those who have applied for an unsuitable course, those who wish to transfer to another course and the increasing number of applicants aged under 16 who are not attending school. Applicants generally appreciate the in-depth and impartial interview. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. Students felt that by the end they had a good understanding of the college and their course.

54 A tutors' handbook gives useful information about college and local services. It describes the role of the tutor and suggests activities to deal with equal opportunities issues. The self-assessment report identifies some weaknesses in the tutorial arrangements, such as poor attendance and irregular reporting on students' progress. A manager has been appointed to take responsibility for co-ordinating the tutorial provision. A college audit has revealed that most full-time courses have timetabled tutorials and that these are used to give extra teaching, review individual students' progress and to provide students with pastoral support. Many students feel that the individual support they receive is helpful. However, there are inconsistencies in the delivery of tutorials which the self-assessment report does not

Cross-college Provision

acknowledge. Timetabled tutorials sometimes do not take place, some tutors do not see the value of them and some group tutorials are unfocused and unplanned. Some tutors do not rigorously implement procedures for following up poor punctuality and attendance amongst students. The college recognises the need to develop its policy on tutorials, monitor the effectiveness of what is done in tutorial sessions and provide further support and training for tutors.

55 Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally good. Fifty-two students with mental health problems or physical disabilities are currently receiving individual support. Inspectors saw examples of blind and deaf students being given effective and sensitive help in lessons. Individual support for students with dyslexia is provided by five qualified teachers. Other students with learning difficulties are supported individually, in small separate groups or in lessons through double-staffing. There is no standard college-wide screening of students to identify their learning support needs. Students are referred for support following their initial interview, by tutors during induction, or later in their course. Tutors are generally aware of the support students can get, but sometimes the referral is too late for the support to be fully effective. Extra help with English or mathematics is provided when required. Often students do not take advantage of the help offered. The self-assessment report acknowledges that there are insufficient learning support materials. The provision across the college is not yet sufficiently well co-ordinated and monitored.

56 The college provides a good range of other services to help students. There are high-quality nurseries at four of the college's sites which provide places for the children of 108 students and some members of staff. The demand for places is heavy. The nurseries also provide work placements for students on childcare courses. Three trained counsellors provide

welfare advice and counselling at four sites. The service is well publicised, well used, and valued by students. An extensive range of optional activities, including sports, enrich the learning experience of students at Waterloo and Surrey Docks. This provision is not easily accessible by students based on other sites.

General Resources

Grade 3

57 The college's self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors, although it places less emphasis on weaknesses in relation to the libraries and IT. A number of facilities have been improved since the college was last inspected in 1993.

Key strengths

- the reduction in the number of sites
- the quality of the improved buildings
- the new library at the Waterloo site
- good sports facilities at Surrey Docks

Weaknesses

- the poor state of repair of some accommodation
- insufficient library resources and study spaces at some sites
- the shortage of IT resources for students

58 Since the last inspection, the college has disposed of half its sites and now occupies five. The two largest are at Surrey Docks and Waterloo, with smaller centres at Camberwell, Peckham, and the Grange, a site used by adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The previous inspection report identified issues relating to the duplication of facilities across so many sites. The reduction in the number of sites has enabled the college to improve its remaining buildings and base specific

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curriculum areas at individual centres. Successful attempts have been made to make some sites more attractive by the skilful use of planting. Nevertheless, inspectors agreed with the college's view that some accommodation is still in a poor state of repair.

59 General teaching accommodation is satisfactory, but many of the rooms are far too large for the groups being taught in them. In some areas, this has been addressed by subdividing rooms. The college's draft accommodation strategy considers further ways of making better use of the accommodation. The standard of classroom equipment varies. Plans to upgrade and standardise the furniture are being implemented.

60 There are libraries at four sites. Inspectors agreed with the college's view that the new library at Waterloo is a valuable resource. On the other sites, the libraries are small and there are insufficient study spaces. The restricted opening hours at most sites means that students attending college in the evenings cannot make use of the library. There are approximately 58,000 books in the four libraries, and the self-assessment report acknowledges that, in the past, the budget has been inadequate. This year it has more than doubled to £103,000. There are still shortages in a number of curriculum areas, including catering, floristry, and child education. The procedures for the library staff to liaise with teachers about improving the provision are not fully effective.

61 The college has 291 computers available for students' use, a ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students of approximately 1:12 which is lower than is often seen in general further education colleges. The college recognises that a number of computers need replacing as they are not capable of running up-to-date software. There are only 31 computers available on open access in the libraries, and at Camberwell there are only two. The self-assessment report recognises these weaknesses. Working parties have been set up

to improve the position. The internet is currently accessible in three of the four libraries.

62 There are few social facilities for students. As a matter of policy, there are no students' common rooms. The canteens have recently been refurbished. Opening hours are limited but students can purchase snacks in the evening from vending machines. Students have access to sports facilities on most sites and the facilities at Surrey Docks, which include a swimming pool, are good. Facilities for staff have improved since the last inspection, and most teaching and support staff have suitable work areas, although some have inadequate access to computers. The self-assessment report acknowledges that, except for the ground floor, access for staff or students with restricted mobility is inadequate on most sites.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

63 There are comprehensive arrangements for quality assurance but they are not rigorously implemented in all areas. There is a lack of detailed information about the quality of teaching and learning and the standard of students' achievements on some courses. The college's self-assessment report identified most of the weaknesses in quality assurance but overstated some of the strengths.

Key strengths

- quality assurance procedures incorporating quality standards covering all aspects of the college's work
- improvements in service areas as a result of the introduction of quality standards
- effective quality assurance arrangements for collaborative provision

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- the systematic collection and analysis of students' views on the college
- effective arrangements for internal verification

Weaknesses

- the new quality assurance arrangements not yet fully effective
- inconsistent application of quality assurance procedures
- slow development of staff appraisal

64 A new quality assurance system has been put in place in the college since the last inspection. It is well designed and has the potential to contribute to continuous improvement. Although there have been some improvements made as a result of the introduction of the new system, it has not yet led to substantial improvements in the quality of provision in the curriculum areas.

65 The college has had a system of course review for some years. There is also a well-developed process for internally validating new courses. In 1996-97, a new 'total quality framework' was introduced, requiring all teams to conduct annual reviews and draw up development plans to improve quality. Review boards receive reports from all areas of the college and report to the academic board. Quality standards for all college services have been drawn up. In service areas, teams of staff formulated the standards and this has assisted team building and contributed to some improvements in delivery. In 1997, staff teams assessed their performance against the standards and graded each aspect of their work using the FEFC inspectorate's five-point scale. These assessments were refined by programme managers and by heads of schools and divisions before the college's overall self-assessment report was produced. The observation of lessons forms part of the self-assessment process. Only those statements for which

managers considered there was reliable evidence were incorporated into the college's self-assessment. Taken overall, the report identified many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, but understated some weaknesses and omitted others.

66 The rigour with which the new quality assurance procedures have been implemented varies, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Some reviews of curriculum areas and college services are thorough, detailed and analytical. Others, particularly those of curriculum areas, do not effectively evaluate strengths and weaknesses. The reviews and self-assessments contained very little comment or independent evidence about teaching and learning. Judgements about students' achievements are generally not sufficiently analytical. School and service review boards receive reports based on the annual reviews and agree necessary action. There are arrangements in place to monitor these actions. A final overview is presented to the academic board but the last report did not present a clear picture of the major quality issues facing the college. This weakness was not identified by the college.

67 For the first time last year the college's information service supplied statistical information on each course to inform the review process. However, the college's self-assessment report acknowledges that not all teams are yet using these data effectively to evaluate their performance. The college-wide system of collecting the views of students each term is effective in obtaining feedback on specific issues and helps the college monitor the degree to which it is meeting the commitments in its charter.

68 The arrangements for monitoring the quality of collaborative provision are effective. Proposals are vetted carefully and, once schemes are in place, there is regular monitoring of teaching and of students' achievements. There is a well co-ordinated

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system for the internal verification on all courses. In 1996 the college was commended by an awarding body for the effectiveness of these arrangements.

69 Staff development priorities are identified from the college's strategic priorities and from the schools' quality development plans, informed by the annual course reviews. Staff development activities designed to improve the quality of provision include training in self-assessment, lesson observation and improving retention rates. The college acknowledges that the development of appraisal has been slow. A new appraisal system is being piloted and about 10 people, mainly senior managers, have been appraised so far. The budget for staff development in the current academic year is £90,000. There is a centrally-organised programme of staff development which is intended to prepare the college for its application for the Investor in People award.

Governance

Grade 3

70 The self-assessment report is generally in accordance with the findings of the inspection. Some of the weaknesses in the report received insufficient emphasis.

Key strengths

- effective contribution of governors to strategic planning
- governors' skills and experience
- thorough analysis of reorganisation proposals
- improved reports from senior managers to governors

Weaknesses

- some reports to governors are not sufficiently analytical
- insufficient monitoring by governors of curriculum quality

- limited contact between governors and staff of the college
- breach of the financial memorandum with the FEFC

71 The governors have played an important role in supporting senior managers during a substantial reorganisation of the college's curriculum and management structure. They have been thorough in their analysis of the proposals for change. They make good use of their skills and experience to support the college and they have provided an effective contribution to strategic planning and self-assessment. They have played a key role in redefining the college's mission. The commitment of the governors to the college and the contribution they have made to its development is viewed as a strength in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with this judgement.

72 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is weak. Although the corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government, it has not fulfilled the requirement under the financial memorandum with the FEFC that the college should clear an accumulated deficit on the income and expenditure account within three years. An extension of three years, to 31 July 2000, of the date by which the accumulated deficit must be cleared is being sought from the FEFC. An appropriate committee structure with clear terms of reference has been established. The corporation met on eight occasions during the 12 months preceding the inspection; the policy and resources committee held four meetings. Amongst the matters considered was the most recent financial management information. A commentary is given orally at meetings but no written report is provided in advance. The audit committee has operated effectively.

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73 The corporation comprises 17 members including the principal, two members of staff and one student. Six governors are women and three are black. Attendance at corporation meetings and committees over the last year has been satisfactory. Members of the corporation have a clear understanding of their roles and are generally well informed about the college. However, they receive insufficiently analytical information on students' retention and achievements. Governors' monitoring of the quality of the curriculum is insufficient. The self-assessment report recognises that governors' knowledge of the curriculum needs to be developed further and that they have had limited contact with staff at the college other than senior managers. Governors have begun to assess their own performance and are aware of the need to set themselves targets.

Management

Grade 3

74 The college's self-assessment of management identifies all the strengths and most of the weaknesses found by inspectors. However, the report overemphasises some strengths and understates some weaknesses.

Key strengths

- improved management structure
- clear line management in schools and cross-college services
- appropriate lines of communication and range of meetings
- well-structured strategic planning process
- effectively-promoted equality of opportunity
- purposeful management to improve the college's financial position

Weaknesses

- aspects of the reorganisation which are not yet fully effective
- some incomplete and unreliable data on students' achievements
- managers not all trained in the use of management information
- insufficient use of targets and performance indicators
- limitations in financial reporting

75 Inspectors agreed with the college's view that the organisation and management structures of the college have improved since the last inspection. The changes made are comprehensive and based on a college-wide review of the curriculum. The result is a clear and well-understood management structure. The appointment of a director of curriculum provides a much needed focus for this aspect of the college's work. The curriculum is managed through five schools. Line management at school and programme level is clearly understood by staff. Cross-college services are well managed. Although good progress has been made, some aspects of the reorganisation are not yet fully effective. Programme managers are still getting used to their new roles and responsibilities and senior managers have recognised in the self-assessment report that the aims and objectives reflected in the reorganisation are not fully supported by all staff. Long-standing issues associated with the terms and conditions which affect staff deployment have yet to be fully resolved. These adversely affect the ability of the college, as a whole, to develop the curriculum and sustain its quality.

76 The principal and senior managers have worked hard to improve communications across the college. The principal and members of the executive visit all sites frequently. Staff are kept informed through a co-ordination forum and monthly newsletter. As the college claims in the

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self-assessment report, liaison with external organisations such as the TEC, local authority, schools and the local health services has improved since the last inspection. Some programme areas such as visual and performing arts, floristry, and business, have a range of productive partnerships with employers. Other curriculum areas have few such links.

77 The college executive team meets weekly. The team comprises the principal and five directors responsible for corporate services, curriculum, enterprise and student services, finance, quality development and personnel. The members work well together. Meetings are clearly minuted; actions to be taken and responsibility for these are identified and followed up. However, they sometimes spend too much of their time on day-to-day operational issues rather than taking a strategic overview of the college's work. The executive, along with middle managers, meet at a monthly co-ordination forum. This group provides an opportunity to review management decisions. For example, discussions at the forum on strategic planning, enrolment procedures, and health and safety have all led to improved procedures. Programme managers meet regularly with course teams. The minutes of these meetings are sometimes of poor quality.

78 The strategic planning process is well structured and involves appropriate consultation. The current strategic plan includes five key priorities covering resources and changes, growth and efficiency, students' achievements, quality assurance and work with employers and external organisations. Schools and services focus on these priorities when they prepare their own development plans. Through its work with the TEC, the college is making increasing use of market information. Targets for student enrolment are set for courses and standards are set for cross-college services. Course teams have begun to set targets for students' retention and achievements but managers do not yet make full use of indicators

to monitor performance against target.

Weaknesses relating to students' achievements are not sufficiently emphasised in the self-assessment report despite their improvement being identified as a key strategic priority.

79 In the last inspection, the overall use of management information throughout the college was found to be poor. This adversely affected the efficiency of many aspects of the college's operation. Inspectors agreed with the college's view that there has been some improvement in the quality of computerised management information and in access to it by staff. However, inspectors found that some managers need training to make full use of management information. Inspectors found that some data made available to them on students' achievements were incomplete or unreliable.

80 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is weak. Over the past two years the college's financial liquidity has improved. The deficit of £3.6 million has been reduced to £824,000 and a surplus of £253,000 is forecast this year. The college's forecast average level of funding for 1996-97 is £22.87, well above the median of £16.20 for general further education colleges. Financial information for managers does not include either a commentary, a balance sheet, or a rolling 12-month cashflow forecast. Financial management information reports prepared monthly are initially scrutinised by the principal and director of finance. Summary reports are circulated each term to members of the corporation and other directors. Budgets for consumable items are delegated to directors who delegate budgets to heads of schools and services. Reports for budget holders do not include sufficient information to enable effective financial monitoring to take place, a weakness identified by the college. Budget holders expressed concern with the limited and sometimes inaccurate information they receive. This results in some managers having to spend

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too much time maintaining their own records. The college plans to address this issue through the introduction of a computerised system.

81 The college has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy and clear procedures for ensuring its effective implementation. An equal opportunities committee has a well-defined remit that includes regular monitoring of statistics about equality.

Conclusions

82 The process of self-assessment at Southwark College builds upon existing quality assurance procedures. The self-assessment report provided inspectors with a useful starting point for planning and carrying out the inspection. The report identified most of the college's major strengths and weaknesses, but inspectors considered that the college had overstated some of the strengths and underestimated some weaknesses. The reports for the cross-college aspects of provision were comprehensive. College managers included only those judgements which they considered could be supported by robust evidence. The curriculum area reports did not always record or analyse strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning or students' achievements. Course reviews identified some strengths and weaknesses in these areas but the reports varied in quality. The plans for action are linked to priorities in the strategic plan and identify timescales and those responsible for carrying out the actions.

83 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 (November 1997)

| Age | % |
|-------------|-----|
| Under 16 | 1 |
| 16-18 years | 16 |
| 19-24 years | 18 |
| 25+ years | 64 |
| Not known | 1 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1997)

| Level of study | % |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Foundation | 50 |
| Intermediate | 22 |
| Advanced | 21 |
| Higher education | 4 |
| Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2) | 3 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (November 1997)

| Programme area | Full time | Part time | Total provision % |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Science | 300 | 876 | 18 |
| Agriculture | 49 | 196 | 4 |
| Engineering | 30 | 134 | 3 |
| Business | 169 | 787 | 15 |
| Hotel and catering | 83 | 115 | 3 |
| Health and community care | 200 | 274 | 7 |
| Art and design | 366 | 300 | 10 |
| Humanities | 320 | 1,051 | 22 |
| Basic education | 346 | 775 | 18 |
| Total | 1,863 | 4,508 | 100 |

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 1997)

| | Perm- anent | Fixed term | Casual | Total |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Direct learning contact | 155 | 18 | 0 | 173 |
| Supporting direct learning contact | 36 | 4 | 0 | 40 |
| Other support | 93 | 6 | 0 | 99 |
| Total | 284 | 28 | 0 | 312 |

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

| | 1994-95 | 1995-96 | 1996-97 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Income | £15,348,000 | £14,680,000 | £14,369,000 |
| Average level of funding (ALF) | | | |
| Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97 | £22.78 | £23.75 | £22.87 |
| Payroll as a proportion of income | 86% | 76% | 71% |
| Achievement of funding target | 107% | 94% | * |
| Diversity of income | 22% | 19% | 23% |
| Operating surplus | -£3,270,000 | -£320,000 | £33,000 |

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

ALF – college (1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97)

Payroll – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

Achievement of funding target – college (1994-95 and 1995-96)

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)

*data not available

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

| Qualifications | | 1994-95 | 1995-96 | 1996-97 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| GCE A level | Number of candidates | 106 | 81 | 104 |
| | Average point score per entry | 3.2 | 3.7 | 3.2 |
| | Position in tables | middle third | middle third | bottom third |
| Advanced vocational | Number in final year | 66 | 38 | 51 |
| | Percentage achieving qualification | 58% | 63% | 88% |
| | Position in tables | bottom third | bottom third | top 10% |
| Intermediate vocational | Number in final year | * | 90 | 82 |
| | Percentage achieving qualification | * | 43% | 51% |
| | Position in tables | * | bottom third | bottom third |

Source: DfEE

Note: the majority of the college's students are 19 years of age or older

The achievements of these students are not covered in published DfEE performance tables

*1994-95 intermediate vocational results not available

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