

Chapelgreen Community College

**Inspection of FEFC-funded provision
in external institutions**

April 2000

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE**

1999-00

***THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL***

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to ensure that further education in England is properly assessed. Where the arrangements for the assessment of the quality of provision in the external institution are not the legal responsibility of the LEA, the Council reserves the right to inspect the quality of the provision funded by the Council. This condition is set out in the Council's funding agreement with such institutions.

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 institutions 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.

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are set out in the Council Circulars 97/12 and 97/22. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and other aspects 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*

In the first two years of the current four-year cycle of inspections, 26 external institutions were inspected. A single grade was awarded for the overall quality of FEFC-funded provision in each institution. The grade profile is shown below.

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	31%	46%	11%	4%

Source: *Chief inspector's annual reports for 1997-98 and 1998-99. Grades were awarded using guidelines in Council Circular 97/12*

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Summary

External Institution 06/2000 Inspection of FEFC-Funded Provision in External Institutions

Chapelgreen Community College Sheffield

Inspected April 2000

Chapelgreen Community College is an external institution sponsored by The Sheffield College. It is located in north Sheffield and is a company limited by guarantee. The aims of the college are to 'address the needs of the local community, enabling the participants to encourage the development of new and existing skills in a supportive learning atmosphere, and by giving adults the opportunity to have a second chance to learn'. A management committee oversees the college's activities and two 'key workers' co-ordinate the work of the teachers and support staff. The FEFC provides 48% of the college's income. In 1998-99, 191 part-time students were funded by the FEFC at the college. Most students follow courses in information technology. The college produced a self-assessment report for the first time in preparation for the inspection. The process followed was inadequate and the report was incomplete and lacked judgements about important areas of activity. Inspectors agreed with some judgements in the report but identified some significant weaknesses that were not stated in the report.

The inspection included information technology courses and provision for students with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities, together with other aspects of provision. An increasing proportion of students is achieving their learning goals. Students are well-motivated and enthusiastic. The college has good resources for information technology. General facilities and accommodation are of a good standard. The college is successful in widening participation. To improve the quality of FEFC-funded provision the college should: improve standards of teaching and learning; introduce effective planning of lessons for students' individual learning needs; assess and record students' learning and progress; review and reorganise provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; provide adequate curriculum guidance for teachers; widen the range of courses in line with college aims; provide more advice and support for students; evaluate courses and make self-assessment more comprehensive; introduce staff appraisal and performance review; improve aspects of management; and review the role of the management committee and the college constitution.

The FEFC-funded provision at Chapelgreen Community College is less than satisfactory, with weaknesses that clearly outweigh the strengths. It was awarded a grade 4

Context

The Establishment and its Mission

1 Chapelgreen Community College is located in Sheffield. It serves the local communities of Chapeltown and High Green within the Chapelgreen ward of Sheffield. It was established as a project in 1982 and funded by the local authority to encourage local economic and social regeneration. It is a company limited by guarantee. The college aims to 'address the needs of the local community, enabling the participants to encourage the development of new and existing skills in a supportive learning atmosphere, and by giving adults the opportunity to have a second chance to learn.' The premises are used for a number of other community activities in addition to education. The college's activities are overseen by a management committee whose members represent the interests of the local community. Two 'key workers' co-ordinate the work of the seven part-time teachers and the four administrative and support staff.

2 In 1998-99, the college received FEFC funding of £51,312 for 4,400 planned units of activity. The average level of funding per unit was £11.63 compared to the median level for external institutions of £10.72. The college has failed to meet its target for units in all of the last four years. The FEFC provides 48% of the college's income; other income is derived from the Sheffield City Council, fees and room hire. In 1998-99, college data show that 191 part-time students, representing 212 enrolments, were FEFC-funded. At the time of the

inspection, 158 FEFC-funded students were enrolled for 22 classes at the college. Few of the students, 2%, are from minority ethnic communities; 68% are women and 94% are aged over 25. The college currently provides courses in information technology (IT), decoupage, Spanish, sign language and deaf awareness, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These courses are accredited by Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations Board (OCR) and the South Yorkshire Open College Network (SYOCN). In 1998-99, information technology courses amounted to 60% of the FEFC-funded provision and this increased to 77% in 1999-2000.

The inspection

3 The Chapelgreen Community College was inspected during April 2000. Two inspectors held meetings with members of the management committee, key workers, support workers and teachers. Inspectors had discussions with students and examined their work. Relevant course and college documentation was reviewed and the college's self-assessment report was evaluated. The inspection focused on the FEFC-funded provision in information technology and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, together with other general aspects of provision. Inspectors observed a sample of 10 lessons. Of these lessons, two were judged to be good and three were judged to be less than satisfactory or poor. The average level of attendance in the lessons

Context

inspected was 82%, and the average class size was 5.

The Curriculum

Grade profile of sessions observed

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Number of lessons	0	2	5	1	2

4 Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements made by the college in the curriculum section of the self-assessment report but identified some significant weaknesses that were not stated in the report.

Key strengths

- high proportion of students achieving their learning goals
- well motivated and enthusiastic students
- good quality IT resources
- good knowledge and expertise of IT teachers

Weaknesses

- comparatively high proportion of less than satisfactory teaching
- inadequate lesson planning for individual learning needs
- ineffective assessment and recording of students' progress
- inadequate internal verification procedures
- narrowing range of courses
- inadequate curriculum guidance for teachers
- unsatisfactory provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

5 The range of courses at the college has narrowed in recent years, contrary to the objectives stated in the

college strategic plan to 'offer a balanced programme' and to 'develop a broader range of community-based accredited programmes'. Most students follow IT courses and the college acknowledges in its self-assessment report that these courses are too specialised for the requirements of some students. The portfolio of courses is not regularly reviewed, and the college does not carry out sufficient analysis of the full range of local learning needs. Progression opportunities are restricted, even within the IT programme. One of the key workers co-ordinates the IT provision and arranges occasional, informal, teachers' meetings. Teachers work without adequate curriculum guidance or supervision on the other courses. The proportion of students achieving an external award has increased since the time of the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that this was a strength. Information provided by the college indicates that, in 1998-99, 85% of students who completed their courses also achieved an award. About one third of these students achieve only one unit of the SYOCN award at entry level or Level 1. The retention rate across all of the FEFC-funded provision in 1998-99 was 81%. The college acknowledges that targets are not set for students' retention or completion, and that

The Curriculum

performance in these areas is not formally monitored.

6 The IT provision comprises SYOCN courses at Entry level, level 1 and level 2, RSA Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) and RSA Information and Business Technology (IBT) courses. Provision has been extended to include SYOCN level 2 this year in response to feedback from students. Courses are offered part-time, mostly as short courses; some are over 30 weeks in length. Teachers do not have sufficient opportunity to share their experience with other colleagues. They are not encouraged to collaborate in course planning. There is no shared internal moderation of standards, although this is planned for SYOCN courses in the future. Teachers are not advised about appropriate teaching methods, assessment strategies and lesson planning. These weaknesses were not identified in the college's self-assessment report.

7 Teachers in IT give clear instructions to students. Students value the friendly support given by the teachers. Teachers are successful in building students' confidence in using computers and basic software applications. Some teaching is good. In one lesson, students used a well-designed booklet to send e-mail and search the Internet. The teacher gave appropriate and relevant advice that responded to students' individual interests and skills. Teachers do not have satisfactory lesson plans or schemes of work other than accreditation schedules. Inspectors did

not agree with the college's judgement that a good range of teaching methods is used. Teachers do not set objectives for the individual learning needs of their students. They do not mark students' work or give written feedback on students' progress. Students report that they would like this feedback. Records of achievement are kept with students' completed work for verification purposes, but teachers do not keep other records of students' progress. No records are kept of students' individual learning targets, changing aspirations or intended progression routes. Students keep written diaries, but these do not provide useful information about their progress. The diaries rarely contain detailed feedback from teachers. These weaknesses were not identified in the college's self-assessment report.

8 In 1998-99, 85% of students completed their IT courses. Most students, 83% of those completing courses in 1998-99, achieved their learning goals. Many of these students have goals that are not full qualifications. For example, in 1998-99, 55 students achieved only one unit at level 1 of SYOCN. Some courses had low pass rates in 1998-99 and this weakness was not identified in the college's self-assessment report. On one 'exploring computers' course, no SYOCN units were achieved, and on an IBT course, nine students achieved profiles but none achieved the full award. Pass rates in 1998-99 on the CLAIT programme were good. Students, towards the end of their CLAIT and IBT courses, are mainly confident and capable users of

The Curriculum

databases, word processing and spreadsheets. Students value the opportunity to gain practical, relevant information technology qualifications.

9 Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities consists of three courses each week. These courses are accredited by the SYOCN at entry level. In 1998-99, all of the students who completed the courses gained an external award. Students are referred to the college by the local authority, and some attend all three courses. The provision is unsatisfactory. It has continued without review for several years. Course objectives are not matched to students' learning needs. The college makes no assessment of individual learning needs before students begin the courses. Students do not have learning plans and teachers do not make records of students' progress. The content of the craft-based course is not relevant to the students' experience or future needs. For example, in one lesson, students cut and pasted different kinds of paper onto other sheets of paper for two hours. Deficiencies noted by the external verifier in July 1999 have not yet been addressed. The basic skills course does not use vocational or other real-life contexts. Lesson planning and preparation is poor. Teachers do not ensure that tasks promote learning and the development of new skills. They have low expectations of some students and do not plan activities that cover the full range of students' abilities. The work of students is not effectively assessed and insufficient feedback is provided to students about

their progress. These weaknesses identified by inspectors were not stated in the project's self-assessment report.

10 Most teachers have an initial teaching certificate and another relevant qualification; two are graduates. Teachers of IT have good knowledge and expertise. Some teachers lack an appropriate specialist qualification, for example, in teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are insufficient staff development opportunities for part-time teachers. Some take responsibility for their own training by following courses elsewhere. Students have access to appropriate equipment, including computers. All students on courses accredited by the RSA receive a useful textbook and guidance materials designed by tutors. Resources for IT courses are of good quality. Computer rooms are safe, secure and well planned. General teaching accommodation is satisfactory. The college does not have adequate equipment such as overhead projectors, screens and video facilities available in all teaching rooms.

Other Aspects of Provision

Other aspects of provision

11 Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements made by the college in the cross-institutional section of the self-assessment report but identified some significant weaknesses that were not stated in the report.

Key strengths:

- success in widening participation
- good accommodation and general facilities for students

Weaknesses:

- inadequate advice and support for students
- lack of arrangements for review and evaluation of courses
- underdeveloped self-assessment procedures
- lack of staff appraisal and performance review
- lack of annual operating management plan and targets
- ineffective strategic planning
- inaccurate management information
- inappropriate role of members of the management committee
- non-compliance with aspects of the college's constitution

12 Students are recruited, mostly by word of mouth, from the local community. The college is successful in recruiting students who would not usually attend courses in further education. Publicity material is minimal and not widely distributed. Most students are interviewed before

being enrolled on their courses, but the college does not provide sufficient advice to students before they start their courses. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that this was a weakness. The college does not have arrangements for assessing the prior learning and experience of students. Teachers organise an induction for students, but it is not comprehensive. Teachers provide some good, informal, support for students and are committed to the welfare of their students. Students do not receive tutorials and there is no provision of general learning support outside of the timetabled classes. For IT students, there is a 'helpline' telephone service provided by the IT co-ordinator. Teachers do not provide adequate advice about progression opportunities. The arrangements for referring students to guidance and careers agencies are informal and unsystematic. The college has withdrawn its crèche facility for students' children since the time of the last inspection.

13 The college occupies a pleasant site in a northern suburb of Sheffield. The buildings occupied by the college are leased from the local authority. The location of the college encourages access by students from the local community. The accommodation has been renovated and refurbished to a good standard during the last five years. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that this was a strength. There are six teaching rooms, an office, canteen, students' recreational room and other meeting rooms. Some evening courses are

Other Aspects of Provision

oversubscribed, but the teaching rooms and other facilities are underused throughout the day and are not used at weekends. On two days each week, students have access to supervised computer facilities outside of their timetabled classes. Computer hardware and software has been upgraded since the time of the last inspection and is now of a good standard. An 'open learning' room has no resources and is not used. The college does not have a stock of books or other learning materials for students to use.

14 The college produced its first self-assessment report in preparation for the inspection. The report is brief and does not have sufficient evidence to support some judgements. There are no judgements about some important areas of activity, including management. The judgements in the report were not validated within the college by consultation with teachers, support staff or students. The management committee did not approve the report and were not involved in the self-assessment process. The college does not have adequate arrangements for quality assurance. The views of students are sought but not collated or reported. There is no formal complaints procedure. The college does not have a procedure for reviewing and evaluating its FEFC-funded provision. Standards have not been set for academic performance and teachers have not agreed success criteria for their courses. The college does not appraise staff or arrange supervision meetings. A procedure for formal

classroom observations has not yet been introduced. Inspectors agreed with the weakness identified in the self-assessment report with regard to the arrangements for quality assurance.

15 An annual general meeting elects members of the management committee and its officers. The college constitution, adopted in 1994, allows for the election of up to 12 members in addition to co-opted and other representatives. The committee currently has eight members and meets monthly. Attendance at committee meetings is good. The constitution requires the appointment of an executive committee, with a quorum of six members, to meet fortnightly. The executive committee no longer meets, and this arrangement may not fully comply with the constitution. Members of the management committee recognise the need to review and amend the constitution. Members are committed to the aims of the college. They consider updated financial reports at every committee meeting and receive reports from the key workers. Members give insufficient attention to other aspects of the college's activities. The strategic plan for 1998-2001 has 24 objectives, but progress in achieving these objectives has not been monitored by the management committee. The committee does not adequately review its own performance, or that of the college. Inspectors did not agree with the judgement in the college's self-assessment that members' oversight of college activities was a strength. Since the departure of the college manager in

Other Aspects of Provision

1995, members of the management committee have taken responsibility for the strategic management of the college. This management role is not appropriate and results in some ineffective working practices.

16 The college is not managed effectively. Key workers have responsibility for operational management. Their job descriptions are out of date and do not reflect current responsibilities. The relationship between operational and strategic management is in need of review. Some management functions are currently not being carried out. The college does not have an annual operating management plan with objectives and responsibilities. Targets are not set, and no performance criteria have been agreed. There are few staff meetings and supervision of teachers and support staff is inadequate. Basic information for monitoring and planning purposes is not accurate, for example, with regard to students' enrolments, retention and achievements. Market research is insufficient and does not inform planning. Long-term planning is not effective and the college lacks a clear strategic direction. Student numbers have declined during the last four years. These weaknesses were not identified in the college's self-assessment report. Staff are eager to make improvements, but lack adequate leadership. Key workers maintain some good links with other organisations.

Conclusions

Conclusions

17 The process of self-assessment is new to the college and it is in the early stages of development. The college's report used the headings in the *Circular 97/12, Validating Self-assessment*, but it was brief and incomplete. No judgements were made about some important areas of activity. Other judgements were supported by insufficient evidence. Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified some significant weaknesses that were not stated in the report. Inspectors did not agree with the college's judgement that the provision, overall, was satisfactory.

18 The FEFC-funded provision at Chapelgreen Community College was judged to be less than satisfactory with weaknesses that clearly outweigh the strengths. It was awarded a grade 4.