

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1998-99**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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Grade Descriptors

Inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use a five-point scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- grade 1 – outstanding provision which has many strengths and few weaknesses
- grade 2 – good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses
- grade 3 – satisfactory provision with strengths but also some weaknesses
- grade 4 – less than satisfactory provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths
- grade 5 – poor provision which has few strengths and many weaknesses.

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

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

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

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

Student Achievements

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

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

Summary

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

South West Region

Inspected April 1999

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, formerly known as Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design, is a specialist institute with a significant proportion of its students on higher education courses. Since the last inspection, the profile of further education students has changed, with fewer students from outside Dorset seeking specialised full-time diplomas and more students from the locality pursuing general art and design qualifications. The self-assessment report prepared for the inspection was the first to be produced by the institute. The self-assessment process was thorough. Inspectors agreed with all of the grades awarded by the institute but identified some strengths and weaknesses which were omitted from the self-assessment report.

Most of the teaching in the areas inspected is good and some is outstanding. Students are encouraged to develop concurrently their skills and their own creative ideas. Tutorials strengthen students' critical and expressive abilities. Students are encouraged to work on their own but effective systems to help them to do so are still being developed. In particular, the monitoring of students' attendance needs to be improved. Students benefit from the extensive links which staff have with practitioners and with industry and also from much good specialist equipment. Some

students' work is exceptionally accomplished. The accommodation and general surroundings provide a high-quality environment for art and design studies. There is an outstanding new library and learning resources centre. Students' pass and retention rates are mostly satisfactory or good. There are, however, some poorer retention rates, particularly on part-time courses for older students. A high proportion of students progress to higher education courses at the institute and elsewhere. Learning support is developing well, but support needs are not fully identified or met. Lecturers provide expert specialist careers and higher education advice, but more general careers education is less well developed. Financial management is good. Staff share a strong vision for the institute's future. Governors effectively deploy their valuable specialist expertise, but need to monitor students' achievements more systematically. The institute should: strengthen quality assurance procedures and ensure they are implemented with consistent thoroughness; set retention and achievement targets for each course; improve strategic and operational planning and monitoring; update the governors' code of conduct and register of interests; establish a governors' search committee; define more clearly the tutorial support programme; develop a more explicit curriculum strategy; make arrangements for childcare facilities; monitor more effectively the implementation of the equal opportunities policy, and deal with overcrowding in general art and design studios.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Graphic design	2	Support for students	3
General art and design	2	General resources	1
Photography	1	Quality assurance	3
		Governance	3
		Management	3

The Institute and its Mission

1 The institute, which changed its name from Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design in 1998, has its origins in the 1880s. All its provision is on one site at Wallisdown. The institute's students are recruited locally, nationally and from overseas. Approximately half its students are studying at degree level. The proportion of further education students from within the region has increased in recent years. At the time of the inspection, 81% of them were from Dorset. Over 75% of pupils in Dorset take up places on courses in post-16 education; there is strong competition between schools and colleges in the area to attract 16 to 19 year olds. The nearest college is The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education, which offers some art and design courses. There is no other specialist art and design college in the locality. The institute has extensive links with The Surrey Institute of Art and Design which validates most of its higher education courses. In 1999, the institute won a Queen's Anniversary Prize for its work in education for the film industry.

2 Dorset is predominantly rural, although almost half the population live within the two separate unitary local authorities of Bournemouth and Poole. Leisure and tourism, financial services and new technology manufacturing have grown and have displaced agriculture as the major provider of employment. Average earnings in Dorset are below the national average. Approximately 90% of workplaces in Dorset employ fewer than 25 people. In this small enterprise sector, there has been a growth in the number of design and media studios and related professional services. Throughout the county there is a mix of relatively prosperous areas and pockets of social and economic deprivation. Unemployment rates in Bournemouth and Poole average 3.7% compared with 3.4% in the south-west region and a national rate of 4.7%.

3 In March 1999, the institute had 1,955 students, of which 39% were studying on higher education courses. Measured as full-time equivalent students, approximately half of the institute's work is in higher education. It also provides training under the New Deal. Courses are offered at levels ranging from a junior art school for school children to postgraduate continuing education. There are 127 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 56 are teachers or others directly involved in supporting learning, such as technician tutors.

4 The institute's mission seeks to maintain an effective academic environment in which originality and the acquisition of skills and knowledge are directed towards the production of creative work and the realisation of each student's potential. The senior management team comprises the principal, vice-principal, and six directors, four of curriculum schools and two of cross-college services. Within each school, technician tutors work across different courses, each of which is led by a course director.

The Inspection

5 The institute was inspected in the week beginning 26 April 1999. The inspection team had previously evaluated the self-assessment report and had studied information about the institute held by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors used data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1996 and 1997. The institute submitted its own data for 1998 which were checked by inspectors against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. They were found to be substantially accurate. Seven inspectors and an auditor worked for a total of 34 days. They inspected three curriculum areas within art and design, examined students' work and institute documents and observed 34 lessons. They met institute governors, managers, staff and students.

Context

6 The institute was one of 30 colleges in the current cycle of inspections which agreed to participate in the joint Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and FEFC assessment of careers education and guidance. The joint assessment was guided by the inspection framework, with a careers education assessor contributing to judgements made by inspectors. The emphasis in this report on careers education and guidance will help colleges and careers services to improve the quality of the careers education and guidance

they offer and help the DfEE to disseminate good practice.

7 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the lessons inspected, no lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or poor and 82% were judged to be good or outstanding. This figure compares with 69% of lessons in art, design and the performing arts in all colleges inspected during 1997-98. No specialist art and design colleges were inspected in 1997-98.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	0	2	1	0	0	3
GNVQ	2	2	2	0	0	6
Other vocational	6	16	3	0	0	25
Total (No.)	8	20	6	0	0	34
Total (%)	23	59	18	0	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 (%)	19	46	29	6	0	100

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

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

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth	13.2	75
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98	10.4	77

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

Curriculum Areas

Graphic Design

Grade 2

9 The inspection covered national diploma and higher national certificate courses in graphic design. Whilst being in broad agreement with the findings in the self-assessment report, inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and considered that others had been overstated.

Key strengths

- well-managed courses
- frequent, effective tutorials and group critiques
- imaginative, varied teaching
- students' lively and creative work
- staff development needs well met

Weaknesses

- insufficient supervision of students working on their own
- insufficient contact with working environments
- poor retention rates on the higher national certificate in 1997 and 1998
- poor attendance at some lessons

10 Both the national diploma and the higher national certificate courses recruited strongly for September 1998 after a period of decline. Inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment report that courses are efficiently managed. The course team is well-knit and enthusiastic. It is developing teaching and learning structures to encourage students to work on their own, but they are not yet fully in place. The course team effectively addresses issues raised by students. For example, extra computer graphics teaching was arranged in response to students' requests. Students said that they agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that interviews were effective

and included impartial advice about alternative courses. A thorough induction to the course and the institute is followed by a period of brief 'tasters' in different subjects which also provide students with an opportunity to change programme, if they so wish.

11 Teaching, as the self-assessment report recognised, is thoughtfully planned and varied. For example, in life drawing the model sits under patterned lighting to encourage students to develop their original drawings further into creative prints. Students find the curriculum challenging and stimulating. They are encouraged to bring in projects from real clients in addition to those provided by staff. As the self-assessment made clear, however, no work experience is arranged and there are few visits to work places. Group critiques, often of students' research material and rough designs, allow students to develop evaluation and communication skills. Students have frequent tutorials and in these, they are able to track their progress and discuss their personal ambitions. For example, a New Deal client aiming to become a freelance designer was helped to plan completion of assignments and to design a leaflet for his projected business. Most learning is based around practical assignments which have clear aims and objectives.

Assessment is well organised both as a formative process, helping students to broaden and improve their work, and as a record of attainment. The assessment criteria do not fully cover work designed to be carried out by students on their own. Some students do not fully understand the requirements of the key skills elements in assignments. Diagnostic testing of full-time students has revealed that many of them need additional learning support. Increasingly, this support is provided in studios and in the library. Some students who are in need of a significant amount of support do not choose to take it. Attendance at lessons during the inspection averaged 75% and some classes were disturbed by students coming in late.

Curriculum Areas

The attendance and progress of students working on their own are not monitored rigorously.

12 Much of the students' practical and written work is good. Students carry out much thorough research, which generates a good variety of creative ideas. Critique sessions have taught students to express sound judgements with confidence. Students' work is good in colour, collage and photography, but shows less accomplishment in more applied vocational skills, especially computer graphics.

Achievement rates for students who complete their courses are high. Many students progress to higher education. In 1998, 83% of students who completed the national diploma course entered higher education or related employment, and many on the higher national certificate found new and improved employment. Retention rates on the higher national certificate course dropped from 83% in

1996, to 44% in 1997 and 1998. However, in 1998-99 the course team has succeeded in motivating and guiding students, for example by increasing the frequency and effectiveness of tutorials, and retention near the end of the session was 80%, well above the national average.

13 Graphics studies are based in a large, modern and well-lit studio. This provides a high-quality design environment, but is less well organised for critiques and tutorials. Workshops and studios are, as the self-assessment reports asserted, well equipped for specialist provision. They are also well supported by expert technicians. Staff are experienced and well qualified. Professional designers working as part-time lecturers help to make students aware of the realities of the world of work. Students are well supported by the tutor based in the library to help them with visual research and written assignments.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
National diploma	3	Expected completions	27	27	16
		Retention (%)	59	81	75
		Achievement (%)	75	95	83
Higher national certificate	4	Expected completions	12	32	18
		Retention (%)	83	44	44
		Achievement (%)	90	86	100

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

Curriculum Areas

General Art and Design

Grade 2

14 The inspection covered full-time general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate and advanced courses in art and design, the full-time and part-time pre-degree foundation art and design course and a part-time general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) fine art evening class. Inspectors agreed with the main findings of the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- well-planned teaching and assignments
- much effective teaching
- high standards of students' work
- above average achievement and retention rates
- success of many students in progressing to higher education
- valuable contributions from visiting artists
- good specialist workshop facilities

Weaknesses

- some ineffective classroom management
- lack of robust tracking systems to monitor attendance of students working on their own
- low retention rates on part-time foundation programmes
- the adverse effect of cramped studios on students' work

15 The general art and design courses are managed by the recently formed school of art, comprising the largest further education provision in the college, with 330 full-time and 55 part-time students. The foundation course was moved to the main site in September 1998. The school has yet to exploit fully the advantages of this move. For example, the

part-time foundation course is taught separately and the students are not making full use of the facilities available to them. The school is aware of the potential gain from integrating courses and sharing resources between them. Enrolment on the intermediate course is offered to students who failed to meet the entry requirement for level 3 courses of grade C or above in four general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects.

16 Inspectors agreed with the institute that effective planning of courses and assignments leads to high standards of work. The assignment briefs encourage students to work on their own and take responsibility for organising their learning successfully. Basic skills are taught effectively as an integral part of the course. Learning activities include peer-group critiques of students' work, supplemented by good one-to-one teaching in the studio. Many of these peer-group discussions involve lively debate and comment. Students are developing confidence in their oral skills and use technical terms well. There is regular assessment of students' work. In GNVQ, the grading of assignments is well supported by good written feedback from the teachers and action-planning for improvement. On foundation programmes, the written feedback to students is detailed and designed to direct students toward the specialism best suited to their skills. However, a few lessons were less successful because they were too long, ran over time, or because the teacher failed to involve some students fully in learning activities and left them with little to do.

17 There are high standards of work on all courses. The range of ideas and issues underpinning much of the work is sophisticated. The students are developing good research attitudes. They are exploring processes and imagery in a systematic way. Students are developing their own individual styles of work. Work in textiles is particularly strong in this regard. A GNVQ student had developed

Curriculum Areas

flamboyant costumes for a group of mythical figures he had created. These figures and the related drawings were original and full of vitality. The essays produced for critical and historical studies are often of a high standard but are, at times, not directly related to the students' practical work. Students' achievements on all courses are high and consistently above the national average. The school is successful in helping students to gain places on higher education courses. In 1998, 95% of students on the foundation and 80% of those on the GNVQ advanced courses gained higher education places. Most GNVQ intermediate students successfully progress to higher level courses. Retention is above national averages with the exception of the part-time foundation course on which retention has been low. Attendance at the lessons inspected was low at 72%. Many students are opting to work at home. They are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for organising their

own studies and for working on their own. However, the institute recognises that the system for tracking large numbers of students working on their own is not yet sufficiently robust.

18 The students benefit from the specialist workshops and resources available to them. There are high-quality three-dimensional design, printmaking, computer graphics, photography and library facilities. However, the basic teaching accommodation is overcrowded. There are insufficient work spaces for the foundation and second-year GNVQ students. The institute acknowledged that it is difficult for students to carry out large-scale and three-dimensional work effectively in overcrowded accommodation. It is seeking to remedy this weakness. The small team of full-time staff is well supported by a range of practising artists, designers and photographers who bring up-to-date expertise and knowledge of the current world of work into the classrooms and studios.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	Expected completions	*	27	28
		Retention (%)	*	70	86
		Achievement (%)	*	95	88
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	Expected completions	28	47	59
		Retention (%)	79	87	80
		Achievement (%)	100	88	91
Foundation pre-degree in art and design (full time)	3	Expected completions	140	204	215
		Retention (%)	96	88	90
		Achievement (%)	91	93	95
Foundation pre-degree in art and design (part time and two years)	3	Expected completions	36	41	32
		Retention (%)	47	54	47
		Achievement (%)	94	77	100

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

*course not running

Curriculum Areas

Photography

Grade 1

19 The inspection covered courses leading to the national diploma and higher national certificate, City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) and GCE A level photography. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the findings in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- strong emphasis on the importance of vocational and professional practice
- effective tutorial and technical support
- opportunities for students to develop skills and personal creativity concurrently
- highly effective teaching
- broad range of photographic experiences
- high pass rates
- productive links with the photographic industry
- equipment and specialist resources of high professional standards

Weaknesses

- out-of-date course validation document

20 The institute's self-assessment was thorough. Good records are kept at course level, but until recently the annual review process lacked a standard format to facilitate the evaluation of trends in performance data such as retention rates and examination results. The institute recognised in its self-assessment its oversight in not submitting its course document for validation. Recent changes in the institute have included the appointment of new staff who have effectively maintained the high standards of teaching and learning in photography. Students said they were attracted to these courses because of their long-standing good

reputation. They benefit from their contact with students on higher education courses. First-year students commented positively on the induction programme and particularly on the introduction to photographic practices and principles.

21 Inspectors agreed with the institute's findings that teaching and learning are well managed and that there is an exceptionally effective emphasis on good vocational and professional practice. The curriculum for the national diploma has been revised and has a clear structure. Schemes of work provide students with a wide range of photographic experience. They include, for example, photomicrography, architectural and landscape photography, visual research and digital imaging. In addition, the programme contains cultural and historical studies, a business component and, unusually, life drawing.

22 Inspectors agreed with the institute's self-assessment that there is much good teaching. Students benefit from good tutorial and technical support and the teamwork of academic and technical tutors. Staff are particularly good at developing students' technical skills at the same time as they help them to develop their individual creativity. Teachers introduce students to ways of working on their own early in the course and track their progress through regular tutorials. The teaching and learning methods are varied and there is considerable flexibility in the curriculum, allowing students to go over work again when necessary. Students make good use of their note books for developing visual research to support their assignments. Tutors provide helpful supporting materials. The institute has effective links with the photographic industry and is able to draw extensively on the services of professional practitioners as visiting tutors. For example, professionals from the industry led workshops in high-key lighting for portraiture and in the techniques of monochrome fine print production.

Curriculum Areas

23 The institute regularly enters students for competitions and commissions which give them valuable exposure to professional and commercial practices. For example, some students have been able to exhibit their work in prime locations such as the offices of a London-based photographic imaging company. An exceptional opportunity is afforded to students who are able to join the annual visit to a major manufacturer of camera equipment in Switzerland. At the time of the inspection, students were engaged in a piece of work commissioned by one of the major banking companies. Students also develop a realistic view of professional practice. Most students gain valuable work experience at an assistant level in a photographer's studio. The arranging of such work placements is helped by the institute's affiliated status with an association of professional photographers. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that these opportunities for work experience constitute a major strength.

24 Students achieve high levels of examination passes and their results for the last three years have been well above the national average. Assessment procedures are soundly based and students are fully aware of assessment requirements. Students undertake several assignments concurrently during the first year. The close timing of assessments puts unnecessary pressure on some students. Retention rates for the course have fallen from a high level to close to the national average. The institute acknowledged this declining retention rate in its self-assessment report.

25 Students have easy access to a comprehensive range of professional photographic equipment. The equipment and facilities include large-format and specialist cameras as well as industry standard darkrooms and ancillary equipment. Accommodation is purpose built. It is well maintained and reflects good studio management. Compliance with health and safety regulations is subject to regular monitoring.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
BTEC national diploma in photography	3	Expected completions	34	33	44
		Retention (%)	91	79	77
		Achievement (%)	100	92	97

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

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 3

26 The self-assessment report identified that aspects of student support needed to be improved. Inspectors agreed with many of the institute's judgements. The self-assessment report failed to cover some aspects of student support in sufficient detail.

Key strengths

- effective pre-entry information and events
- good specialist careers advice
- many supportive tutorials
- good provision for students with some specific learning difficulties
- accessible, comprehensive advice and counselling on personal matters
- active students' union

Weaknesses

- lack of guidance for staff on tutorial content and standards
- the failure to identify and meet students' learning support needs fully
- lack of childcare arrangements
- insufficient provision of general careers education
- incomplete implementation of careers policy
- insufficient monitoring and evaluation of student support services

27 Prospectuses are attractive and informative. The institute holds open days regularly. The summer art school for older school pupils fosters their interest and helps them to produce suitable portfolios for use when they apply for courses in the future. Pre-enrolment advice and interview helps students to choose courses which meet their needs. A policy to offer accreditation of prior experience or learning has recently been adopted. There

are comprehensive induction programmes to accustom students to the institute and introduce them to their particular courses. Entitlements for full-time students are summarised in the student handbook and diary issued to all students. Entitlements for part-time students are not stated.

28 Individual students receive academic tutorials and most of these are thoroughly planned and well implemented. The outcomes from, and action agreed, in tutorials are carefully recorded. Students value tutors' helpfulness and professional insight. However, the policy for tutorial support does not give guidance on tutorial standards and content. Tutorial practice varies and some is unsatisfactory. For example, in a minority of instances, tutorial records are sparse. Staff are uncertain to what extent they should offer pastoral support in tutorials. The self-assessment report made no judgements on the tutorial system. The institute has established a working group to provide greater consistency in tutorial practice and it recognises there is a need to develop tutorial provision to improve retention rates.

29 Considerable progress has been made towards providing an effective learning support service, but the self-assessment report recognised that further development of this is necessary. Approximately half the full-time further education students were assessed in autumn 1998 in order to identify their learning support needs. The tests used were selected for their suitability for specialist art and design students who frequently work by themselves. One-quarter of those tested were found to have significant difficulties and to need individual support. Half of this group has received additional support. A further third of those assessed were found to have weaknesses which could be addressed at 'drop-in' facilities or through their course, and learning support staff now regularly attend studio sessions. They inform the teachers concerned of the support they provide for their students. Close

Cross-college Provision

monitoring of the service is at an early stage. The provision of learning support is being extended to cover study skills, time management and information technology (IT). Mathematics and English GCSE classes are offered to those who need to improve their grades. The institute's disability statement gives a clear commitment to supporting students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff readily provide for their needs. The institute has identified that dyslexia presents particular difficulties for some art and design students and priority has been given to helping them. Special equipment has been obtained. For example, three computers with voice-activated software are available in the library. All full-time applicants for the coming academic year are receiving diagnostic tests at interview. A basic skills summer school is being arranged.

30 The institute has strong links with employers which provide students with information about specific careers and lead to work experience placements and employment opportunities for them. The institute has a careers policy but it is not yet fully implemented nor is it consistently applied. Advisers from Dorset Careers conduct career interviews and provide advisory workshops. Students find their services useful. The careers library has well-catalogued information and provides a suitable base for workshop sessions on careers. Tutorial guidance on entry to higher education is well established, but general careers education is not. The partnership agreement with Dorset Careers sets out objectives for careers education and guidance, but does not explain how the institute will monitor and review its progress towards meeting them. The self-assessment report indicated some overall strengths in careers education and guidance, but noted the need for improvements.

31 To meet the need for better co-ordination of advice on personal matters identified in the self-assessment report, a central students' advice centre has been set up, directed by a trained social worker. She provides a

counselling service and is assisted by two staff who deal with welfare, accommodation, finance and personal issues. An international officer assists students from overseas. The team works closely with tutors, learning support staff and local professionals. Students find the new arrangements accessible and helpful. Records are kept of the help given to students, but there is insufficient monitoring of the service in order to identify ways of improving it. The absence of childcare arrangements is a major cause of concern for students, but it was not mentioned in the self-assessment report. The institute is now trying to arrange suitable childcare provision. The students' union is active in the life of the institute.

General Resources

Grade 1

32 Inspectors agreed with the institute's judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of its general resources.

Key strengths

- attractive and well-maintained site
- purpose-built, high-quality accommodation
- students' ease of access to high-quality specialist equipment
- industry standard studios and workshops
- outstanding displays of students', practising artists' and designers' work
- outstanding new library and learning resource centre
- up-to-date and accessible IT equipment
- accessibility of much of the accommodation to students with restricted mobility

Weaknesses

- overcrowded refectory
- some inefficient use of rooms

Cross-college Provision

33 Since the last inspection, the institute has concentrated its provision at the Wallisdown campus near the centre of Bournemouth. The distinctive main buildings were purpose built in the 1980s and early 1990s. A high-quality new library and learning resource centre was completed in 1998. The whole complex of buildings is enhanced by courtyards and gardens which provide attractive outdoor social and work areas for students. The institute site is spacious, clean, well maintained and pleasantly landscaped. Since the last inspection, the institute has made almost all areas accessible to students with restricted mobility. There are ample car parking spaces for staff and students. As the self-assessment report indicated, the quality of the institute's general environment is high.

34 The institute has formulated an accommodation strategy designed to improve the few remaining deficiencies in its building stock and ensure efficient usage of the site. There is an effective planned maintenance programme. Inspectors agreed with the judgement that space utilisation in the institute has improved. However, classes in some subjects are put in rooms which are too big or too small for them. Arrangements for allocating rooms to groups are being reviewed.

35 Decoration and furnishings are good throughout the institute. High-quality displays of students' and other artists' and designers' work makes the learning environment attractive. The institute reception and exhibition area are welcoming to visitors. General teaching rooms are clean and well maintained. Studios and workshops provide a professional environment for learning. Further education students use the same sophisticated equipment as the higher education students. Audiovisual equipment to support learning is readily available. There is an effective system for ensuring that equipment is well maintained, and replaced when necessary. Inspectors agreed with the institute's self-assessment that its facilities are up to good industrial standards.

36 The new library and learning resource centre provides outstanding facilities for students. Qualified staff assist students with enquiries. Students spoke highly of the library services provided. Expenditure is well co-ordinated. Library staff liaise with curriculum areas to ensure that library stock reflects changes in the curriculum. Issues and catalogues are computerised. There is a wide range of learning materials for different subject areas. These include an extensive range of 200 periodicals, a portraits and illustration collection, 120,000 slides, 822 compact discs, 1,736 videos and approximately 44,500 books. Zones are designated for quiet study, group discussion, computer use, careers library and study skills support. Five rooms may be booked for the viewing of videos and five photocopiers are available for students' use. There are enough study places for the number of students in the institute. A design collection provides students with primary research materials ranging from printed ephemera and packaging to plastic, domestic and electrical products. Students' use of the library has increased by 57% since the new building was opened in April 1998. To meet increased demand, library opening times have been extended both during the week and on Saturdays.

37 The institute has invested heavily in computing equipment. Most of the computers are of high specification and have a range of up-to-date and industrial standard software. Students are able to gain access to computers when they need to use them. In addition to the 88 open access computers in the library and learning resource centre, students can use any vacant computer workstation in specialist studios. Overall, there are 159 high-specification computers with up-to-date software for students' use available on an open access basis. All computers are networked. They are well managed and properly serviced by the institute's IT support unit.

38 The institute does not have sports and leisure facilities on site but students are able to

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use local university facilities located on the campus boundary, and a leisure centre in Bournemouth town centre. The institute refectory is barely adequate; long queues of students form at peak times. However, arrangements have been made for students to use the university's canteen and they expressed satisfaction with this arrangement. In its self-assessment report, the institute identified overcrowding of the refectory as a problem. It plans to extend and remodel the refectory in the summer of 1999. Most staff have good office and work room facilities, although some work rooms are cramped. All staff have access to a networked computer.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

39 The self-assessment report did not give a full evaluation of quality assurance in the institute. Inspectors found some key weaknesses which the institute had failed to identify.

Key strengths

- comprehensive self-assessment process
- all self-assessment grades agreed by inspectors
- good opportunities for staff to discuss the quality of provision in committees
- willingness of staff to listen to, and act upon, students' views
- clear focus provided by the standards committee

Weaknesses

- incomplete quality assurance system
- some unsatisfactory course reviews
- lack of monitoring of the effectiveness of the institute charter
- absence of achievement targets for individual courses
- underdeveloped quality assurance of support services

40 The institute is in the process of developing a comprehensive quality assurance system. There is no comprehensive statement of quality assurance policy and procedures. The institute has set targets for students' achievements, but not in relation to individual courses. The institute recognises the need to develop further both its quality assurance framework and the operation of its quality assurance systems. Improvements are planned to the course review process, student perception questionnaires and service standards for support services. A new committee structure provides good opportunities for staff to discuss the quality of provision. After a period during which it did not meet, the standards committee is effectively fulfilling its remit to monitor and evaluate the quality of academic and support services. Other committees, for example the internal course validation committee, deal appropriately with aspects of quality assurance.

41 Course teams are committed to furthering students' interests and often achieve good results. However, inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that some course reviews are not carried out as fully and effectively as others. The specifications for annual course review are clear and comprehensive but many reviews do not meet them fully. For example, many course reviews contain little evaluation of teaching, learning and students' achievements. The review process has led to some improvements. For example, the institute is reviewing its cultural and critical studies programme in the light of students' comments.

42 The self-assessment report did not acknowledge as a weakness the failure to make full use of the arrangements to gather students' views. Full-time students answer questionnaires at the end of their courses, but their responses are not summarised or analysed. Part-time students do not usually answer questionnaires. Students said that their views are listened to and acted upon by staff, but the attendance of student representatives at some school board

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meetings has been poor and some course representatives were unaware of the student council meetings. The student handbook contains a charter. It contains few measurable commitments and its effectiveness is not monitored well. The institute's complaints procedure does not include arrangements for keeping a record of complaints or responses to them.

43 The self-assessment recognised that quality assurance of support services is underdeveloped. There are no service standards and introduction of self-assessment was the first occasion on which support services were called on to review their performance. However, the library and learning resources centre has its own charter, complaints procedure, student survey and user group, and students are frequently consulted about ways to improve student services.

44 There are annual performance reviews for full-time and substantial part-time staff. Staff development is partially determined by the findings of these reviews and by newly-agreed institute priorities. There are clear guidelines for the performance reviews, which are valued by staff and generate appropriate training activities. For example, several support staff have begun customer service national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes. There is no overall evaluation of staff development activities.

45 The institute's first self-assessment report, produced for the inspection, involved all institute staff in a comprehensive assessment of the courses with which they were involved or the support services they provided. A useful update on the report was provided for the inspection week. Comments on the quality of teaching and learning were based on findings from a programme of lesson observations. The grade profile for lessons was very similar to that arrived at by inspectors. Staff found the self-assessment process worthwhile and the resulting action plans have begun to lead to improvements. Inspectors agreed with many of

the judgements and all of the grades in the self-assessment report. They considered that some weaknesses in the self-assessment report were under-emphasised and they found both strengths and weaknesses which the institute had not identified.

Governance

Grade 3

46 Inspectors agreed with the majority of strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. They found some weaknesses, however, which the institute had not identified.

Key strengths

- specialist expertise of governors
- governors' valuable links with curriculum areas
- good procedural standing orders
- regular review and monitoring of financial position

Weaknesses

- recent period of inadequate clerking
- inadequate monitoring of the effectiveness of the strategic plan and academic performance
- no formally constituted standing search committee
- out-of-date code of conduct and register of interests

47 The governors' wealth of experience in a number of fields of art and design is a strength which was noted in the institute's self-assessment report. Governors have good links with curriculum areas and their expertise strengthens the curriculum. For example, one governor is an internationally-known photographer. At the time of the inspection, his photographs were exhibited in the institute and

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he gave a lecture to students about his work. The corporation has 18 members and no current vacancies. Four of the governors are women, including the chair of the corporation. A lack of skills in accounting and finance amongst the members of the board has recently been remedied by the appointment of a chartered accountant as a governor. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the institute is adequate. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. Governors have a good understanding of their roles and there are effective working relationships between governors, managers and other staff. Governors seek students' views informally and through the student governor.

48 The corporation has not established a formal standing search committee with approved procedures and terms of reference. The task of identifying, evaluating and nominating new governors has been delegated to a series of ad-hoc groups of governors which have differing terms of reference. These groups have, however, been effective. Plans to replace current members when their terms of office expire, in keeping with the requirements of the new instruments and articles of governance, are at an early stage of development.

49 During the period from May 1998 to November 1998, the temporary clerking arrangements were unsatisfactory. The conduct of business and minuting of meetings during this period were inadequate. The code of conduct is out of date and there is a lack of rigour in the updating of the register of interests. The corporation does not receive annual reports on the implementation of the institute's policies regarding equal opportunities and health and safety and on the monitoring of their effectiveness. An external professional clerk has now been appointed and is improving the standards of some aspects of the corporation's

work. The quality of the minutes, reports and other information provided for governors is now good. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that governors closely monitor the financial position of the institute. The members of the finance executive committee receive a clear and detailed financial summary each month. They report to the corporation effectively on the state of the institute's finances. The remuneration committee has established a model for the appraisal and evaluation of the principal, which has been carried out by the chair of the corporation.

50 The corporation revised its committee structure in July 1998 to reflect more appropriately the strategic aims and objectives of the institute. The committees cover audit, finance strategy, education strategy and the remuneration of senior staff. There are terms of reference for each committee, although records do not show whether or not they have been approved by the corporation. There are clear and robust procedural standing orders. The audit committee has adopted the requirements of the audit code of practice. However, internal audit annual reports and audit needs assessments are being placed before the corporation without any formal recommendation from the audit committee on whether they should be approved.

51 Governors have a clear strategic vision of the institute's future direction. They receive regular reports from the principal and committees keep them informed of overall progress in implementing the strategic plan for 1997 to 2000. Governors prepared briefing papers for the principal prior to his devising an interim strategic plan. Strategic planning has been appropriately linked with the three-year financial forecasts.

52 Governors have not until recently been provided with performance indicators to enable them to evaluate the institute's performance. This weakness was identified in the self-

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assessment report. They have received details of enrolment targets and actual enrolments, but no aggregated information about students' retention and achievement rates. They have focused mainly on students' progression to higher education, end-of-year shows and the successes of individuals. The new education strategy committee is now providing a means whereby governors monitor the overall quality of provision. The self-assessment report acknowledged the need for governors to monitor their own performance regularly. All governors participated in the self-assessment process, which they found valuable.

Management

Grade 3

53 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They found some weaknesses, however, which had not been identified by the institute.

Key strengths

- the strong support from all staff for the institute's mission
- good communications
- effective collaboration with external organisations
- good financial management

Weaknesses

- lack of curriculum strategy
- no formal monitoring of strategic objectives
- little use of performance indicators to inform policy
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities policy

54 Senior managers have a strong vision for the institute's future direction informed by discussion with governors, staff and students. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the

self-assessment report that staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. The senior management team comprises the principal and vice-principal, who is responsible for academic quality. There are six recently appointed directors, four for the schools of art, media, design and lifelong learning and two for support services, and finance and registry. The directors hold operational discussions and meet regularly with the principal and vice-principal to discuss strategic and policy issues.

55 The institute's strategic plan for 1997 to 2000 was formulated by the previous principal. The present principal produced an interim strategic plan, based upon discussion with governors, after his appointment in 1997. This document states the institute's mission and key principles. It sets out new courses to be offered in keeping with these principles. It says little about the development and delivery of the curriculum. There are no specific operational objectives for the current year, and there has been no review of the first year's implementation of the strategic plan. Most of the first operational plans produced by the newly-appointed directors lack clear objectives, action points or timescales. Those for the academic schools focus mainly on the courses to be offered. An academic plan has recently been produced which gives more details of planned courses. These weaknesses were not mentioned in the self-assessment report.

56 Reorganisation of the senior management structure has led to effective communications throughout the institute. Staff are well informed and positive about the institute's mission and direction. There are regular course team meetings which report to school boards. These in turn report to the academic board. Directors of schools and services meet regularly with course directors and service managers. Staff feel their views are responded to. The institute's committee structure has recently been revised and simplified. The new committees strengthen communication routes. One committee is devoted to teaching, learning and curriculum

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development, and is developing a policy on teaching and learning. Students are represented on appropriate committees and their views are respected and acted upon, where appropriate.

57 The institute sets recruitment targets and carefully monitors enrolments against them. Retention and achievement targets have been set for the first time for 1999-2000 but these are not course specific. The institute has not used performance indicators to identify trends in retention rates and students' achievements nor to inform policy. There is no strategy to improve retention. The system for registering students' attendance at classes is weak. Managers have adequate access to information for their basic operational requirements. However, the institute has recognised that management information needs to be improved, for instance in order to track students' progress more effectively. A working group has been set up which is establishing the information needs of all staff.

58 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the institute's financial management is good. The director of finance has established an effective, experienced team. Budget-setting is sound. Monthly management accounts are produced within 10 working days of the end of the month. They include an income and expenditure statement, balance sheet and a comprehensive commentary explaining variances. Cashflow information is provided. The financial position is monitored monthly by senior managers. Clear, concise financial information is provided to budget holders. The director of finance follows up any significant issues with them. Financial regulations have recently been updated. They incorporate advice from the governors' finance strategy committee and the internal auditors. Financial management is prudent and the institute's finances are strong. Internal and external auditors have not identified any significant weaknesses in internal control systems.

59 The institute has developed a number of effective collaborative partnerships, a strength noted in the self-assessment report. Staff are working with local institutes and schools, for instance, to enable participation in further education by members of rural communities, and to provide secondary school pupils and teachers with access to the institute's library. There are international links enabling students to visit and work in other European countries. The institute's school of lifelong learning seeks to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds into further education. A Saturday school has been set up for young people aged nine to 16. Through liaison with Dorset Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and a trade union, a course was set up for training printworkers who are facing redundancy. Students are informed of the equal opportunities policy and related themes are part of some courses. However, the self-assessment report failed to acknowledge that there is little formal monitoring of the policy. The policy has been revised to give clear guidance on implementation and monitoring. The new committee structure includes an equal opportunities group.

Conclusions

60 The institute produced its first self-assessment report for the inspection. The self-assessment process was thorough and involved staff at all levels of the institute. The final self-assessment was supported by more detailed self-assessments from curriculum and service area teams. The institute, recognising the length of time between drawing up the report and the start of the inspection, submitted a useful self-assessment update just before the inspection week. The update supplied evidence of further improvements and moderated a few of the original judgements. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report and the update. A few weaknesses, for example in quality assurance and in operational and strategic planning were

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not given sufficient weight. Nevertheless, inspectors agreed with all the grades awarded by the institute. There was a high degree of correlation between grades given to lessons by institute staff as part of the self-assessment process, and those awarded by inspectors.

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

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (March 1999)

Age	%
Under 16	4
16-18 years	26
19-24 years	37
25+ years	31
Not known	2
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (March 1999)

Level of study	%
Foundation	14
Intermediate	2
Advanced	36
Higher education	39
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	9
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (March 1999)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	0	115	6
Business	35	0	2
Art and design	1,324	481	92
Total	1,359	596	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 15% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (March 1999)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	47	9	0	56
Supporting direct learning contact	27	1	0	28
Other support	37	6	0	43
Total	111	16	0	127

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£5,640,000	£5,475,000	£5,776,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£24.09	£22.85	£20.90
Payroll as a proportion of income	69%	65%	60%
Achievement of funding target	105%	107%	103%
Diversity of income	53%	53%	57%
Operating surplus	-£139,000	-£114,000	£67,000

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
1	Expected completions	3	6	6	11	190	206
	Retention (%)	100	33	33	64	34	44
	Achievement (%)	67	50	0	100	75	53
2	Expected completions	0	0	49	0	0	4
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	67	n/a	n/a	0
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	70	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	Expected completions	–	244	349	–	204	237
	Retention (%)	–	86	77	–	74	76
	Achievement (%)	94	93	93	98	93	93
4 or 5	Expected completions	–	1	4	–	35	77
	Retention (%)	–	0	50	–	66	64
	Achievement (%)	98	n/a	100	94	87	77
Short courses	Expected completions	0	4	0	65	89	44
	Retention (%)	n/a	50	n/a	100	65	98
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	95	87	80
Unknown/unclassified	Expected completions	0	22	42	34	302	157
	Retention (%)	n/a	18	79	88	30	39
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	100	87	76	92

Source: ISR

–ISR data not collected

n/a not applicable

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