

Bury College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1997-98**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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

Bury College

North West Region

Inspected February 1998

Bury College is a tertiary college situated in the borough of Bury, in Greater Manchester. Production of the college's first self-assessment report involved governors, managers, college staff and the Bolton Bury TEC. The process drew on established quality assurance procedures which are aligned with the college's planning cycle. Inspectors found that the college's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses in aspects of cross-college provision, and in some curriculum areas, was thorough and accurate. In three curriculum areas, the college was insufficiently critical in assessing weaknesses. Nevertheless, inspectors concurred with all the grades awarded by the college.

The college makes provision in nine of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. Inspectors chose a sample of this provision on which to base their validation of the self-assessment report. The sample included six curriculum areas from five of the FEFC's programme areas. The college's provision in engineering, hotel and catering, and basic education was not inspected. Governors, managers and staff work successfully together with a sense of common purpose, and all are appropriately involved in the college's planning processes. Inspectors found no significant weaknesses in management. The learner is recognised as the focus of all college activities.

The support provided for prospective students, students on courses, and students completing courses is exemplary. Standards of teaching, and students' achievements on most courses are good. The quality of provision in art and design is outstanding. An emphasis is placed on managing performance through target-setting and review at all levels from governors to course teams. Quality assurance procedures are good, though some course reviews are superficial. The procedures now embrace cross-college functions and lesson observations. All staff benefit from an extensive individual development programme which relates to the college's needs. The college's collaborative provision is integrated with the management, support and quality systems. General learning resources are well managed and students have good access to IT. One of the college's three sites has benefited from a recent major refurbishment and an accommodation strategy addresses other shortcomings. Staff work constructively in teams across the college. The college plays an important role in partnerships with external business and community organisations. The college should: continue to rationalise and improve its accommodation; seek greater consistency in the quality of course reviews; ensure that the lesson observation programme appropriately informs the quality assurance processes; improve retention rates and the proportion of students who pass at the first attempt on some courses.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Mathematics and science	2	Support for students	1
Business	2	General resources	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2	Quality assurance	2
Health and social care	2	Governance	1
Art and design	1	Management	1
English and modern foreign languages	2		

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Bury College is a tertiary college which was established in 1987. It operates from three sites, two of which, Bury and Peel, are located close to each other in the town centre and a third, Stand, is four miles to the south. Bury is seven miles from the centre of Manchester. Employment patterns in the area are changing rapidly. The service sector now accounts for 73 per cent of jobs compared with 36 per cent in 1987; 88 per cent of businesses employ fewer than 25 people. Bury is relatively affluent compared with other areas in the region; in December 1997, the unemployment rate was 2.7 per cent. Three wards in the area have unemployment rates above regional and national levels. The minority ethnic communities represent 3.6 per cent of the population.

2 Overall, the educational achievements of school-leavers in Bury are above national averages. In 1997, 48 per cent of year 11 pupils achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSE) at grade C or above compared with 45 per cent nationally. The post-16 rate of participation in full-time education is high at 72 per cent. In the borough, there are also a sixth form college and two independent grammar schools and one high school with sixth forms. Within seven miles of Bury there is another sixth form college, two general further education colleges and another tertiary college. Significant numbers of students, for example 20 per cent of those on full-time courses, travel to Bury College from outside the borough.

3 On 1 November 1997, 7,084 students were enrolled at the college. Of these, 3,067 were full-time students of whom 32 per cent were on programmes leading to general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), 43 per cent were on courses leading to general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) and 17 per cent on schemes leading to national vocational

qualifications (NVQs). Almost 7 per cent of part-time students and 14 per cent of full-time students are from minority ethnic groups. In December 1997, the college employed the equivalent of 362 full-time staff, including an equivalent of 172 in direct learning contact with students and 57 supporting direct learning. The college works with 10 partners in collaborative provision, four of which provide Prince's Trust volunteer programmes. Collaborative provision currently accounts for around 14 per cent of the college's activity.

4 The college mission states: 'in the belief that learning pays, Bury College will promote and provide high-quality lifetime learning focused on the unique needs of the individual'. The college's major objectives are:

- raising educational attainment and skill levels
- increasing access and participation by all sectors of the community
- developing the work force of Bury
- supporting businesses and small and medium enterprises
- developing the use of technology.

Context

The Inspection

5 The college was inspected during the week beginning 2 February 1998. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and reviewed the information about the college held by other divisions of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The college submitted data on students' achievements for the three years 1995 to 1997. These were checked before the inspection against primary sources, such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. The college was notified of the sample of its provision to be inspected approximately two months before the inspection. The inspection was carried out by 13 inspectors working for a total of 49 days and an auditor working for five days. They observed 110 lessons and they examined students' work and college documents. Meetings were held with governors, managers, college staff, students, and a representative from the Bolton Bury Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The college's arrangements for its collaborative provision were inspected by the college inspector before the inspection and through visits to four partner organisations during the inspection.

6 Of the lessons observed, 68 per cent were judged good or outstanding and 4 per cent were less than satisfactory. This compares with 61 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, for all colleges inspected during 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 lessons inspected was 80 per cent. This compares with 77 per cent for all colleges given 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 AS/A level	7	11	13	2	0	33
GCSE	0	7	2	1	0	10
GNVQ	5	11	9	0	0	25
NVQ	5	9	2	0	0	16
Other vocational	9	11	5	1	0	26
Total	26	49	31	4	0	110

Curriculum Areas

Mathematics and Science

Grade 2

7 Inspectors concluded that the college's self-assessment report accurately reflects the area's strengths but that weaknesses in some aspects of the provision were omitted.

Key strengths

- courses offering wide choices of subjects and attendance modes
- well-structured and documented advanced level courses
- a strong emphasis on the logical development of solutions to mathematical problems
- an effective variety of approaches to teaching and learning in science
- good advanced level examination results
- effective teamwork among teachers of advanced level courses

Weaknesses

- a narrow range of teaching and learning strategies in mathematics
- poor use of time in some science lessons
- lack of coherence in the GCSE mathematics provision
- lack of computer hardware and software for students to use in lessons

8 As the self-assessment report states, the college offers a wide range of courses to meet the needs of adults and school-leavers. Students have a choice of pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics modules which they can combine to gain GCE A level or GCE advanced supplementary (AS) qualifications in mathematics or further mathematics. Some modules are available as evening studies, or through supported self-study in the resource centres. The science provision includes GCE

A level environmental science and GNVQ advanced and intermediate courses in science.

9 GCE A level mathematics courses are well planned and staff work effectively as a team to ensure that students move smoothly through each topic. Teachers emphasise the use of correct notation and the development of logical solutions to problems to help students to understand basic mathematical principles, but they use a narrow range of teaching methods. For example, there is little practical and investigative work in lessons. By contrast, science students experience a broad range of activities including an appropriate mix of individual and group work. The GNVQ advanced science courses are well managed. A variety of teaching methods are being introduced in order to improve efficiency whilst maintaining the level of provision for students. Lectures are given to large groups and students are supported by workshops or by the use of facilitators in some practical classes. Teaching aids are used effectively. Science staff sometimes failed to use time wisely. For example in one lesson, some students completed their practical work well in advance of the time allocated but did not undertake the supplementary work available.

10 The self-assessment reports for mathematics and science do not include much information about the quality of the GCSE provision. Mathematics teachers on GCSE courses do not pay enough attention to the needs of individual students, particularly those who are resitting the examination to improve their grades. The coherence of the GCSE courses is weak and there are few occasions where all GCSE mathematics teachers meet to set common standards, share good practice and resolve issues. Often GCSE classes are housed in general teaching rooms which do not contain any mathematical resources. Many GCSE students are not handing in work regularly to be marked.

Curriculum Areas

11 Students work purposefully in lessons. In science, their practical skills are well developed and they pay due attention to safety. The self-assessment report emphasises high levels of achievement in GCE A level examinations. For the last three years, GCE A level pass rates in mathematics, biology, physics and environmental science have been at or above the national average for those aged 16 to 18 in general further education colleges. The proportion of GCE A level mathematics students achieving grades A to C in examinations also exceeded the national average. Against national trends, the college has attracted a considerable number of students on to its GNVQ advanced course in science in 1997. This course has also achieved results above the national average for the last two years. In 1997, for the first time, mathematics results in GCSE examinations exceeded the national average for students of all ages. GCSE human physiology and health is the most popular GCSE science course, but has had poor pass rates and low retention.

12 Technical support staff contribute to the students' experience through their role as facilitators of practical work. Many teachers serve as examiners on national examining

boards. Teachers prepare a wide range of notes and worksheets for GCSE mathematics students but these are not collated to form a central resource. This weakness is included in the self-assessment report. The use of information technology (IT) as a mathematical and scientific tool is hampered by the lack of computing facilities in teaching rooms.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level mathematics and further mathematics	Retention (%)	94	91	83
	Pass rate (%)	98	90	84
GCE A level biology, chemistry, physics and environmental science	Retention (%)	90	80	82
	Pass rate (%)	80	91	82
GNVQ advanced science	Retention (%)	73	67	80
	Pass rate (%)	18	67	63
GCSE mathematics (all ages)	Retention (%)	82	71	80
	Pass rate (%)	30	31	46

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 2

13 The inspection covered courses in administration, management and business. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report, but considered that several weaknesses were not included.

Key strengths

- the broad range of courses
- high pass rates on several courses
- frequent opportunities for students to relate theory to business practice
- high rates of student progression to employment or higher level courses
- increased staff development through the use of funds from commercial activities
- the refurbished specialist teaching accommodation at the Bury site

Weaknesses

- some poor course documentation
- some less effective teaching
- examples of poor pass rates on a minority of vocational courses

14 As the self-assessment report claims, the college has responded well to changes in market demand. Some long-established courses in business have been withdrawn to be replaced by a wider range of both short and full-year specialist courses to meet identified needs.

15 Much of the teaching and learning, in particular on business administration courses, is good. Adult students in employment are encouraged to relate their experience of work to the topic being covered. Some lesson plans and course documentation are poor and a few of the course reviews are superficial. The self-assessment report claims that course

teams have developed flexible delivery systems and there are examples to support this, such as the revised course structure for GNVQ intermediate business and the changed timetabling for adult courses. Weaknesses in teaching and learning were not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. In a minority of observed lessons teachers failed to take account of the different needs of students. The relocation of the GNVQ advanced business course to the same site as the GCE A level business course has provided an opportunity for some joint teaching, but attendance at some combined lessons has been low.

16 The self-assessment report emphasised the strengths of students' achievements across the programme. Some poorer retention and pass rates were not acknowledged. Students' achievements in GCE A level business studies have improved and compare favourably with the national average. GNVQ advanced results were good in 1996; the lower rate for 1997 is partly because some students are still waiting to retake tests. Retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate course are good, but pass rates are lower than the national average. Overall, retention and pass rates on administration courses are good with the exception of the NVQ level 2 course for adults. Progression rates to higher education for students on advanced courses increased from 50 per cent in 1995 to 67 per cent in 1996. Most intermediate business students progress to advanced courses and all foundation level business students progressed to higher level courses or obtained jobs. Some students following NVQ courses have difficulty in obtaining sufficient work-based evidence to demonstrate their achievement.

17 Over 30 full-time and 26 part-time staff are involved in teaching courses across all three college sites. As the self-assessment report recognises, they operate effectively in course teams. The devolved staff development budget has been increased by income from commercial activities. The Bury site has high-quality

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specialist accommodation. The role of the multi-skills office is still at the developmental stage; it takes in work from across the college but not yet from outside agencies. The business research centre at the Stand site is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report, but its role as a reference centre in relation to the resource centres needs to be further clarified.

Examples of students' achievements in business, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level business	Retention (%)	83	84	73
	Pass rate (%)	77	87	98
GNVQ advanced business	Retention (%)	81	56	80
	Pass rate (%)	66	84	46
GNVQ intermediate business	Retention (%)	75	90	78
	Pass rate (%)	53	56	50
NVQ level 3 business administration (full time)	Retention (%)	95	87	94
	Pass rate (%)	58	95	65
NVQ levels 1 and 2 business administration (full time)	Retention (%)	88	96	85
	Pass rate (%)	45	80	93

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

Grade 2

18 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report on this provision.

Key strengths

- the extensive range of courses
- carefully-planned and managed lessons
- real working environments for learning and assessments
- much effective teaching
- good standards achieved by students in class work and coursework
- the professional image promoted by the students
- some good pass rates, particularly in beauty therapy

Weaknesses

- lack of integration of IT with the majority of courses
- some accommodation which is not matched to current industry practices
- some low and declining retention rates

19 The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses. Part-time provision in beauty therapy includes a popular course for aromatherapy and body massage. The self-assessment report correctly claims the innovative developments in short course provision, such as baby massage and Indian head massage, as a strength. Provision is offered at NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3. Recruitment is good. Part-time hairdressing programmes take account of the needs of local industry. The majority of the courses are planned to take into consideration the other commitments of adult students. Local industry is involved by

providing work experience and this results in employment for some students. Course team meetings are effective in ensuring that emerging issues are addressed. The progress of students is well documented and students are kept well informed.

20 Overall the quality of teaching is good. Course teams have developed schemes of work and lessons are well planned. Teachers use effectively an appropriate variety of teaching methods. Students are provided with well-designed learning materials and are often able to work at their own pace. In a beauty therapy theory lesson, the teaching was well organised, clearly linked theory to practice and made references to commercial practices. The teacher used effective question and answer techniques, relevant handouts and student presentations to maintain students' motivation. The good relationships between teachers and students, and sound class management, strengthened the learning. In practical lessons, students use a wide range of good professional products, and are able to work with an appropriate range of clients, partly through attracting members of the public for 'pampering days' in aid of local charities. Teachers did not always adequately summarise the learning that had been covered in the lesson. The development of IT in the teaching is underdeveloped. This issue was recognised by the college in its self-assessment report.

21 Most students are attentive and interested in their lessons. They show good levels of knowledge and understanding. Students work well and enthusiastically in the salons. They develop relevant professional skills and the salons provide a good environment for both assessment and learning. Practical work is of a good standard and most students complete their course portfolios. However, in some cases, the presentation of written work is poor. Teachers' written feedback to students on their assignment work is systematic and helps them to improve their performance. These strengths were

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reflected in the self-assessment report.

There are some good pass rates in beauty therapy and hairdressing. For example, in 1997, all students completing courses leading to NVQ level 3 beauty therapy, body massage, manicure and hairdressing were successful. Retention rates are sometimes poor, and this is acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

22 The hairdressing salons include a wide range of mostly up-to-date equipment which is up to professional standards. However, the beauty therapy salons are dated in layout and appearance. The self-assessment report does not include any evaluation of the physical resources supporting the hairdressing or beauty therapy provision.

Examples of students' achievements in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
NVQ level 2 hairdressing (part time)	Retention (%)	75	67	62
	Pass rate (%)	69	77	77
NVQ level 2 hairdressing (full time)	Retention (%)	65	68	71
	Pass rate (%)	87	75	100
NVQ beauty therapy (full time)	Retention (%)	78	54	64
	Pass rate (%)	67	100	100
Body massage (part time)	Retention (%)	86	100	66
	Pass rate (%)	89	94	100

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Health and Social Care

Grade 2

23 The inspection covered the college's work in health, social and childcare, and counselling. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report but considered that some strengths have been overlooked whilst in the area of achievement some had been overstated. Some weaknesses were not identified.

Key strengths

- a learning environment which encourages students' participation
- good teaching
- the wide range of the staff's vocational experience
- good integration of key skills with GNVQ courses
- work experience which extends students' learning
- good achievements in the major areas of work

Weaknesses

- failure of too many students to achieve their qualification in the target time
- poor NVQ achievements

24 Course teams meet regularly both formally and informally, and members support each other well. The development of new delivery methods to embrace changes in staffing have been well managed; enthusiasm and motivation are high.

25 The majority of lessons observed were well planned and managed. Teachers used varied methods which aided students' understanding and maintained their interest. Workshops for nursery nursing students operated well,

enabling students to study on their own or in small groups and also have individual tuition from the tutor. Teachers have good working relationships with students which encourage them to contribute freely in discussions and in question and answer sessions. There were some good aspects of key skills development on GNVQ courses, with an emphasis on their integration with the specialist subjects. The out-of-college residential experience for full-time students is particularly effective in helping students to develop their key skills. This good practice is recognised in the self-assessment report, but the report does not acknowledge that key skills development is not as good on other courses. Work experience enhances students' learning. It has clear objectives and participants are closely monitored.

26 Teachers have a wide range of vocational experience which they use effectively to link theory with practice. They are enthusiastic, caring and have high expectations of their students.

27 There are some good results in the area of childcare and education, for example, in 1995-97, the diploma in nursery nursing had an 83 per cent retention rate and an 83 per cent pass rate. There were excellent results in intermediate counselling: all students passed the course in 1995-96 and 1996-97. Some areas of poorer achievement are not identified in the college's self-assessment report. Several courses, for example, GNVQ advanced health and social care, one-year GNVQ programmes, NVQ in care and childcare and access to higher education programmes have appreciable numbers of students who do not succeed within the target time for the course. The developing NVQ provision in care and childcare shows pass rates below published national averages. Students were seen to be generally well motivated and enjoying their studies, sometimes having real fun whilst learning. Some students' work was of high quality, especially in GNVQ

Curriculum Areas

advanced health and social care. Some students' work showed competence in IT and numerical skills but only the GNVQ course was accredited for this work. Standards of literacy were sound and teachers, in marking work, encouraged students to correct grammar and spelling. Teams and managers were aware of some retention issues and had planned and implemented strategies aimed to resolve these.

Examples of students' achievements in health and social care, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GNVQ advanced courses	Retention (%)	73	73	54
	Pass rate (%)	70	71	64
GNVQ courses (one-year)	Retention (%)	70	70	70
	Pass rate (%)	81	55	46
Childcare courses, excluding NVQ (two year)	Retention (%)	98	71	74
	Pass rate (%)	76	67	87
NVQ care courses	Retention (%)	+	85	71
	Pass rate (%)	+	37	24

*Source: college data
+course not running*

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 1

28 The inspection included both visual and performing arts. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the art and design provision.

Key strengths

- well-planned and detailed teaching programmes
- many examples of outstanding teaching
- the high standards achieved in GCE A level work
- the improvement in the retention rate for GCE A level
- high pass rates in GNVQ art and design
- significant examples of good achievement and retention in performing arts
- good specialist IT resources

Weaknesses

- the declining retention rate on the GNVQ advanced course

29 An extensive range of courses is offered in art and design. It includes: GCSE and GCE A level, and a pre-degree diploma in foundation studies; GNVQ intermediate and advanced; and two national diplomas in performing arts. This core of full-time courses is complemented by a broad part-time programme. Mature students are well integrated, particularly those on the diploma in foundation studies. Student enrolments in art, design, and performing arts have increased considerably over the past three years and there has been a significant growth in adult recruitment to part-time evening courses. The area is well managed and there is good documentation and record-keeping. GNVQ advanced course students undertake work placements which also provide good external links for staff. The teaching of numeracy skills

is not fully effective in the GNVQ programmes. The art sector also provides activities for the college's student development programme which include a theatre workshop, an art workshop, a photography workshop, a rock school, a college choir, and a college orchestra.

30 Teaching is well planned with detailed learning schemes. In art, design, drama and dance the specialist teaching observed was often outstanding and almost always good. Students of art and design follow clearly-structured programmes. There is particularly good teaching in fine art, photography, graphics, textile design and IT. In the performing arts, students develop self-confidence in dance, drama and public performance. In the national diploma in popular music, teachers provide sound guidance and support for students. However, music rehearsals sometimes lack rigour and there are few opportunities for instrumental or vocal tuition. Some art and design teachers fail to develop students' basic professional skills in sufficient depth. The considerable strengths in teaching are recognised in the self-assessment report.

31 Students' portfolios of work in all areas demonstrate their conscientious completion of course requirements and there is some exemplary work in performing arts. GCE A level students in art and design achieve high standards, particularly in textile design. Results in all the main courses are above the national average. In 1995-97, all 51 students who entered for GCE A level art and design were successful, as were all of the 44 students who entered the examination for GCE A level media studies and the 31 students who completed their GNVQ advanced course. Students of art and design have the opportunity to undertake external commissions and are able to work with an artist in residence. The standard of students' drawing does not match other areas of their achievement. Students of performing arts are active in public performance, and have made a valuable

Curriculum Areas

contribution to an overseas charity initiative.

There are examples of good achievements in performing arts. For example, there were 100 per cent pass rates on the national diplomas in 1996 and 1997 for students aged 16 to 18.

Low retention rates of older students in music is an identified weakness in the self-assessment report. Retention rates on GCE A level courses have improved over three years.

32 Rooms at the Bury centre have been extensively refurbished to provide new art and design studios and a public gallery space.

The college has taken action on a weakness identified through the self-assessment process and provided a high-quality computer suite for art and design. The workshop space for three-dimensional work is poor. The college's two theatres provide good-quality environments in which students of performing arts are able to rehearse and perform, though inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's view that overall there is a shortage of rehearsal space.

The good range of specialist resources for music includes a high-quality music technology suite.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A levels	Retention (%)	81	83	89
	Pass rate (%)	92	91	97
GNVQ advanced and national diplomas	Retention (%)	70	61	62
	Pass rate (%)	83	98	94
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	71	81	75
	Pass rate (%)	82	81	83

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

English and Modern Foreign Languages

Grade 2

33 The self-assessment report does not address all areas of the provision and overstates some strengths in achievement rates. Inspectors agreed in most cases with the college's identification of strengths and weaknesses but found additional examples of both.

Key strengths

- good teaching overall
- good use of the languages being learned
- flexible approaches to encourage learning
- effective management of staff
- purposeful and confident students
- good pass rates in GCE A level and GCSE English courses
- high retention rates in daytime courses

Weaknesses

- little use of technology in teaching and learning
- failure to meet some students' needs
- poor results in GCE A level communication studies
- some poor presentation of students' work

34 The quality of teaching in English and modern foreign languages is good overall. Inspectors saw some exemplary lessons which showed evidence of thoughtful planning and resourcing and which clearly excited students. Teachers employ a range of teaching methods but the use of technology and teaching aids in lessons is underdeveloped. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. In September 1997, the college changed the way in which GCE

A levels are taught. Classes are now combined for part of their teaching time, for lectures and workshop-based activities. One teacher handled a combined class particularly well by taking a creative approach to exploring a literature text and simultaneously highlighting language issues. Students were organised into small groups to represent a section of the text in different genres and to analyse their work. Oral work is well handled by teachers and there is good use of the languages being learned in modern foreign language lessons. Insufficient attention is given to the differing needs of individual students, both in planning and teaching lessons. Schemes of work exist for all courses but action-planning for improvement at course level is less effective. Lesson objectives were not always clear to students.

35 Students work purposefully and interact confidently with teachers. Much of their work is of a high standard though some students of modern foreign languages display poor presentation skills in their written work. Staff correct work thoroughly and detailed comments on assessed work help students to improve. Two English teachers are examiners on national boards. Pass rates in examinations in English are good, as the self-assessment report asserts. Over the last three years, results in GCE A level English literature, GCE A level English language and GCSE English have been at or above the national average, with the proportion of students achieving A to C grades at GCE A level outstripping the national average consistently. Staff have attempted to address a diminishing pass rate for English language and literature at GCE A level by changing the syllabus. Results for the one-year GCE A level course in communication studies are poor. The college will not be offering this course in 1998-99. Students' coursework in communication studies reaches an appropriate standard. Retention rates in English courses are largely good, with the exception of GCE A level English language and literature in 1997.

Curriculum Areas

Achievements in modern foreign languages are mixed. With the exception of French, evening group sizes are often small; achievement statistics are confused by the high proportion of evening students who stay to the end of some courses but do not enter for the examination.

36 The staff review system is particularly rigorous in this curriculum area. It includes twice-termly formal interviews for members of staff with their sector manager, identifies training and development needs and generates individual action plans. This good practice was not included as a strength in the self-assessment report. Part-time and new staff are well supported within the curriculum area and communication with them is good. The results of lesson observations by managers are helping staff to improve the quality of their teaching. The well-equipped language laboratory is underused. The area is beginning to increase its stock of CD-ROMs for use by students and staff.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level English courses	Retention (%)	91	90	87
	Pass rate (%)	88	80	78
GCSE English courses	Retention (%)	94	78	83
	Pass rate (%)	53	55	55

Source: college data

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Support for Students

Grade 1

37 Inspectors confirmed the college's judgements in its self-assessment report on the quality of its support for students in almost every detail. Some strengths are understated; minor weaknesses identified when the report was drawn up have been addressed.

Key strengths

- good management arrangements for providing support for students
- extensive and productive school links
- effective induction procedures
- a successful tutorial system
- a growing and popular student development programme
- learning support provision for a wide range of students
- good practical support for students with disabilities
- well-planned arrangements for higher education and careers guidance

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

38 The college's strong commitment to supporting individual students is clearly stated in its mission and strategic objectives and permeates all of its work. Students are well aware of the college's values and speak approvingly of its disciplined and co-operative atmosphere. Much progress has been made in developing the already extensive arrangements that existed for the recruitment, guidance and support of students when the college was inspected in 1994.

39 Guidance and support functions have been drawn together into a single structure. The head of curriculum and quality is now responsible for bringing together support for

students and curriculum arrangements, and for ensuring that the quality of support is maintained and developed. The college has also appointed four 'student quality managers', one working on each site and the fourth working with students in centres outside the college and on collaborative provision. They have a key role in ensuring that all students receive the support to which they are entitled, for monitoring closely the quality of the support and for providing individual pastoral support to all students who seek it. The self-assessment report does not fully reflect the extent to which staff and students alike value their work. Various working groups make an effective contribution to developing support; the inclusive learning development group has produced a helpful booklet which has been circulated to all staff. The booklet gives examples from across the college of good practice in matching provision to needs.

40 Pre-course guidance is well organised, impartial and effective. It is supported by well-designed publicity materials. Prospective students may telephone the college free of charge for advice on courses. The college has strong and diverse links with 20 schools in Bury and other boroughs. Each school works with one of the 14 members of the school liaison team. Open days and other events are organised specifically for adults. Standards for interviews are clearly defined and well documented. Systems for assessing students' prior learning are well established for business administration courses. Guidance and admissions procedures are regularly reviewed in the light of feedback from students and others. The programme of induction activities for both full-time and part-time students is centrally co-ordinated and effective. The quality of the programme is carefully monitored; induction lessons are observed as part of the programme of classroom observations. Questionnaires show that 96 per cent of students in 1996-97 found the activities worthwhile.

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41 As the self-assessment report acknowledges, the college has a strong and well-organised tutorial system. All students have a personal tutor. Full-time students have a weekly tutorial lasting a minimum of one hour and these are well attended. Students seen during the inspection spoke warmly of the personal and academic support they receive. Over the past two years, student services' staff have developed a comprehensive manual of guidance for personal tutors and a bank of interesting and professionally-produced learning materials, and database of guest speakers, on which tutors can draw.

42 Students of all ages extend their studies through a student development programme. Activities include community service, sports, and the production of a college magazine. Student councils are active on each site. In one tutorial observed, a report from a member of the student council led to an interesting and reasoned debate on censorship. The student services team includes two 'student liaison officers', who have qualifications in youth and community work. They support the student councils and act as a first point of contact for all students needing help. Students respect and trust them and draw heavily on their services. Two counsellors work across the three sites and a team of five religious leaders contributes to tutorials and an additional counselling facility.

43 The college provides comprehensive support for students' learning. Students interviewed by inspectors expressed great satisfaction with the provision; most students take advantage of the support which is offered and the proportion doing so is increasing. Full-time students are screened to assess their support needs. Part-time students may opt for screening. Much emphasis is placed on helping students to acquire study skills and the skills needed in specific vocational areas. Good practical help is provided for students with physical disabilities.

44 The local careers service provides eight careers advisers who work across all three sites and liaise with the college's own staff. Their advice is supplemented by a well co-ordinated programme of talks from guest speakers, by careers events, and by visits to universities and employers. The easily accessible careers centres on all sites are well stocked. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's recognition that not all students are taking advantage of their entitlement to a careers appointment. The college has instituted an incentive scheme to improve attendance at such interviews.

General Resources

Grade 2

45 Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report relating to the college's resources. The weaknesses are addressed by the accommodation strategy and other college plans.

Key strengths

- a comprehensive accommodation strategy
- modern, refurbished accommodation at Bury
- unobtrusive but effective security systems
- theatres and sports facilities
- close links between the resource centres and the curriculum
- good access for students to high-quality IT resources
- close monitoring of the use of resource centres and users' views
- well-developed and rigorous procedures for purchasing capital items
- generally good access for those with restricted mobility

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Weaknesses

- inherited duplicate facilities across sites
- limitations of some older accommodation
- the stock of temporary buildings

46 The college has a comprehensive accommodation strategy based on independent professional advice. It is closely linked to the college's strategic plan. The strategy recognises that there is more accommodation than student numbers warrant and that some facilities are inefficiently duplicated across the sites. It allows for the development of new learning methods, and for the need to improve opportunities for the accommodation to be used more flexibly. The plans laid out in the strategy aim to remedy the main accommodation-related weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. The first phase, at the Bury site, has been recently completed.

47 The Bury site, close to the town centre, consists of a handsome and well-proportioned 1930s building. Major internal and some external refurbishment has produced a high-quality, modern learning environment, with good facilities for staff and students, which retains much of the ambience of the building's original design. All parts of the building are accessible to wheelchair users. Unobtrusive security systems have been installed and the number of entrances has been reduced. Classrooms are clean and well equipped. Students comment favourably on the site's facilities and its proximity to the town's major public transport interchange.

48 Both the Peel site and the Stand site are based in old secondary school buildings which have had permanent extensions or buildings added. The many temporary buildings on the sites are now past their design life, though essential repairs are done. On the Peel site, one houses the students' refectory. Each site has a

purpose-built theatre, and the sports facilities are good. The provision of many internal and external ramps means that most of the Peel site, and all teaching areas, except art and design, at Stand, are accessible to wheelchair users.

49 Each of the three sites has a resource centre which includes a library, IT facilities and other learning materials. High-quality computers and multimedia resources are readily available, and access to the internet is widespread but carefully monitored. As the self-assessment report recognises, the learning resource centres are a strength of the provision. Separate computer-based systems on each site enable the staff to analyse the use of library resources, and this information is used to encourage higher usage by some groups. In most subject areas, programme leaders notify the centres of the likely demand arising from students' schedules of assignments. Results of questionnaires to students show an increasing use of the centres and growing satisfaction with the facilities provided. User groups meet regularly. The college has rigorous policies and procedures relating to equipment and other capital purchases.

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

50 Inspectors considered that the college's self-assessment report provides a realistic view of quality assurance in the college.

Key strengths

- a strong commitment to continuous quality improvement
- a comprehensive and well co-ordinated framework for quality assurance
- rigorous monitoring of quality assurance arrangements
- well-established course review and evaluation procedures
- the introduction of service standards

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- an effective staff review process
- the professional management of staff development

Weaknesses

- lack of critical evaluation in some course reviews
- underdeveloped use of lesson observation to inform quality assurance processes

51 The college's commitment to continuous improvement is expressed strongly in its mission statement, strategic plan and operating statements. Staff speak enthusiastically of the need to focus on the quality of the learning experience. The quality assurance framework is comprehensive and covers both teaching and cross-college functions. Throughout the college, attention is paid to quality improvements. The structure for the management of quality assurance, the implementation of policies and procedures and their subsequent review and evaluation are clear and effective.

52 The standards committee of the academic board meets regularly to set and monitor the standards of both teaching and, more recently, cross-college functions. Processes for reviewing new course proposals are thorough. Reports from the standards committee to the academic board are comprehensive. A quality audit group undertakes value for money studies and ensures compliance with college policies and procedures. Remedial action is taken when necessary and good practice is shared. External verifier reports are not always seen by senior managers and good practice identified in them is not always disseminated. This issue is recognised in the self-assessment report and the college's action plan addresses it.

53 Service standards allow evaluation of the quality of the services offered by cross-college functions. In some areas, for example admissions and guidance, standards are well

established; performance against standards is closely monitored and informs planning. Elsewhere, their use is more recent and reporting the progress made towards achieving standards is weaker. Staff comment that the process has helped them increase their sense of accountability.

54 Course teams hold formal review meetings three times a year using set agenda, standard documentation and performance indicators for enrolments, retention, attendance and achievements. Comparisons are made with targets agreed with the sector manager. National averages are used to inform target-setting by sector managers but are not so well used by course teams. The quality of course reviews is variable and this weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Not all include a sufficiently critical review of teaching and students' achievements. Action plans are not always comprehensive. The college applies its quality assurance procedures vigorously to its collaborative provision.

55 Forty pilot lesson observations in the summer term of 1997 helped to inform judgements about teaching and learning for the college's self-assessment report. During the autumn of 1997, a further 195 lessons were observed. The model is well considered and has rigorous procedures in which the teaching and learning quality group identifies key issues for development. Trained observers are supported by an internal verifier. Staff are keen to participate. It is too early to confirm that the process has led to improvements in the quality of teaching.

56 The college's charter is reviewed regularly. Complaints are carefully documented and resolved; an additional system records plaudits. Student representatives are encouraged to become involved in course and faculty review meetings. They confirm that their views lead to improvements. Questionnaires to students are issued three times each year; their coverage is

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comprehensive and response rates good. Summary data are produced quickly and comparisons are made with the previous year. However, not all course teams include discussion of responses to questionnaires as part of their review meetings.

57 Procedures which support staff development were identified as a major strength by the college in its self-assessment report, and by inspectors. All staff take part in a formal review every two years with an intermediary meeting to check on progress; many part-time staff also participate. The process is supportive and effective. Staff development needs are also identified following teaching observation, at course team review meetings, and at college level through the focus on college priority areas. An extensive programme of training offered within the college is widely advertised. Staff development is well managed and evaluated. The college achieved Investor in People status in July 1997.

58 A college self-assessment report was produced to support the inspection process. It was based on reports from each teaching area and cross-college function. Each of the major curriculum and cross-college functions was graded, together with subgrades for many subject areas. The report drew evidence from the pilot lesson observations. It clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses, and sources of supporting evidence to substantiate the grades awarded. It is followed by a detailed action plan which addresses the identified weaknesses.

Governance

Grade 1

59 Inspectors and auditors agreed with the judgements on governance in the college's self-assessment report but identified an additional weakness. Since the report was drawn up, the college has addressed the few, minor weaknesses identified within it.

Key strengths

- well-informed governors who are committed to supporting the college
- governors' involvement in developing and reviewing the mission and strategic plan
- wide range of experience and skills
- governors' use of strategic objectives and targets to monitor the college's performance
- involvement of governors in the self-assessment process
- the wide range of training opportunities for new and experienced governors
- high-quality reporting of financial and other information

Weaknesses

- inadequate procedures to ensure implementation of all actions agreed at meetings

60 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

61 The inspectors found the governance of the college to be outstanding. There are 19 governors. The self-assessment report correctly

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identifies that the extensive range of skills and experience within the corporation is effectively used to conduct the college's business and to strengthen its links with the local community. Each governor belongs to at least one of the wide range of committees of the corporation. The corporation takes care to ensure that governors serve on committees in which they have a direct interest and which can benefit from their particular skills and experience. These committees operate effectively and in accordance with their terms of reference. The finance committee reviews monthly management accounts and the corporation receives summary financial reports. A curriculum committee ensures the corporation has an oversight of strategic curriculum issues. Currently the corporation is reviewing the vacancy for a student representative.

62 Collectively the governors have skills in business management, law, health trust management, industrial relations, marketing, finance and education. The TEC nominee is vice-president of the Bolton and Bury Chamber of Commerce and a business member is president of the Bury Chamber of Trade. Business members are drawn from small, medium and large enterprises. The number of women on the corporation has doubled to eight in the last two years and there is one governor of minority ethnic origin. New governors are recruited by a search committee through advertising and interview procedures.

63 Governors are well informed. Agendas and corporation papers are sent out in good time and are informative. Corporation papers are clear, concise, and easy to follow. Meetings are well attended, start and finish on time, and are conducted in a business-like fashion. All governors contribute fully to discussions during meetings. Corporation minutes represent an accurate summary of the business conducted and resolutions are clearly minuted. These strengths in the operation of the corporation were included in the self-assessment report.

The mechanism for checking on actions following corporation resolutions needs to be improved. On one occasion the corporation resolved that two of its members should, on its behalf, sign a significant capital contract and the corporation's seal should be affixed to that contract. This resolution was not implemented prior to the commencement of work and this fact was not promptly brought to the attention of the corporation.

64 Governors carry out strategic planning and review according to a published annual calendar which takes account of funding applications and other information requirements. They review the mission as part of the development of a new three-year strategic plan. They ensure that staff are consulted and that the views of the TEC, local employers and community groups are sought. Governors regularly monitor the college's progress towards the achievement of the strategic objectives and related targets. They use the annual operational objectives, which are published to all staff in a clear and concise booklet form and reviewed twice a year, to monitor the college's educational and financial performance. They set and monitor targets for the senior postholders to achieve. The self-assessment report recognised these good features of the work of the governors.

65 Governors are strongly committed to supporting the college. They attend college events and keep in touch with developments through briefings before each corporation meeting. There are formal and informal training opportunities available which many governors take up. Details of relevant external courses are circulated and governors receive support in making bookings and travel arrangements. New governors benefit from an extensive induction programme. They receive further education journals, FEFC publications and relevant press cuttings. Governors recognise the importance of monitoring their own work. For the last two years they have assessed their own individual and collective

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performance, using a range of indicators and the instruments and articles of government. These self-assessments have identified ways to improve further their governance, and appropriate action has been taken. Governors received, considered and commented on the college's full self-assessment report.

Management

Grade 1

66 Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the college's self-assessment report on management. Since the report was drawn up, most of the few weaknesses have been addressed.

Key strengths

- strong leadership
- clear identification of key strategic issues and aims
- successful involvement of staff in setting and monitoring operational targets
- well-defined management structure
- extensive and effective communications systems
- the focus on maintaining the students' learning experience whilst improving staffing efficiencies
- rigorous financial monitoring and control systems
- productive collaboration with a wide range of partners
- comprehensive, accurate and timely management information
- an effective marketing function
- promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities for staff and students

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

67 Senior managers provide strong leadership. They have a clear view of the action needed to respond to key strategic issues. They involve governors and staff in setting appropriate objectives which are incorporated into the strategic plan and financial forecasts. These objectives are used to set annual operational targets, with deadlines given for their achievement and managers responsible for action named. Progress on these annual targets is assessed twice annually and the results reported to all staff and governors. Staff understand the curriculum and financial bases of strategic objectives. Their own operational plans reflect and seek to achieve the mission and college plans. Line management and functional responsibilities are well understood and effectively carried out. Working relationships between senior staff and between managers and their teams are good. Innovation and development are undertaken by cross-college working groups and project teams formed for specific purposes. The college's collaborative provision is carefully managed with a high standard of planning and record-keeping. All these strengths are identified in the self-assessment report.

68 Extensive and effective communication systems keep staff well informed about strategic and operational matters and ensure that they can make their views known at all levels. A college meetings schedule enables staff to meet in faculty, sector and course teams and in a range of cross-college groups. The principal leads a full staff meeting each term. The college journal is published twice termly and a weekly bulletin deals with immediate issues. The college computer network, which links all sites, carries up-to-date information on students and courses. In addition, the college intranet carries electronic mail, routine reports, internal and external circulars, and minutes of corporation and academic board meetings. A terminal in every main staff room enables ready use of the intranet. Access to both the

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network and the college intranet is provided at home for all staff for whom these facilities are essential. The computer networks, a recently-installed voice-mail system and an efficient courier service ensure speedy communications throughout the three college sites. The self-assessment report understates the high quality and variety of the communications channels in the college. Informal communications are assisted by staff room arrangements and the 'open door' policy adopted by managers is valued by staff. The principal holds a surgery twice a term when staff can meet her informally on an individual or group basis.

69 Staff resources are well managed and the personnel function is supported by an extensive human resource policy and personnel procedures. In making efficiency gains care has been taken to maintain the quality of students' learning experience. Support staff and teachers are members of most teams through the college. Part-time teachers are successfully encouraged to attend team meetings and participate in curriculum development.

70 There is a clear framework, understood and supported by staff, for identifying resource needs and allocating resources. Course information held on the computerised information system helps managers to monitor usage effectively. Staff, capital and consumable resources have been used increasingly effectively year on year. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good and this judgement is reflected in the self-assessment report. The financial services team is appropriately structured and its members are both suitably qualified and experienced. The senior management team has regularly reviewed the college's monthly accounts and has taken appropriate action to ensure that the college's finances are controlled within budget. The college has robust financial controls in place as demonstrated by the positive conclusions of the internal and external auditors. The financial

services team supports budget holders through relevant briefings and training as well as frequent budgetary reports. The consumables budget is allocated in three blocks and adjusted to budget holders as their success in meeting targets clarifies through the year. The control system does not allow variance without the signed agreement of the appropriate senior manager. The college has reduced its average level of funding to £17.71 per unit in 1997-98. The average level of funding for the sector is £16.72 per unit.

71 The college has a productive and positive relationship with Bolton Bury TEC and is represented on most of the TEC's strategic committees and working groups. It makes a valuable contribution to economic and social development through its education and training provision and range of specialist facilities. It is a key member of the Bury strategic partnership and it collaborates effectively with local employers, particularly in those occupational sectors relevant to its curriculum provision. It is involved, with a range of partners, in successful bids for regeneration and European Union funds. The college is currently funded by the TEC to work with Bury Community Education Service to widen participation among adults in the more deprived areas of the borough. It is a member of the inclusive learning quality initiative on measuring the benefits of inclusiveness for the individual learner and the organisation. It has initiated co-operative working with the sixth form college in the borough and is a member of a collaborative group of five colleges in the north of Greater Manchester. The self-assessment report correctly claims its good record for liaison with external bodies as a strength.

72 The provision of information is well organised and effective through the information services team. As the self-assessment report identifies there have been extensive improvements in the management information system since the last inspection. The system

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provides a wide range of accurate and timely reports routinely, and on request, which managers use to inform course planning and review. The information services team includes the highly effective marketing unit which gathers and analyses labour market, demographic, careers and schools-generated information. It also uses information from internal sources such as course teams, the external funding officer and the computerised information system. The outcomes of analysis are provided in clear and concise written and oral briefings to managers to inform needs analysis and recruitment target-setting. The marketing unit informs and evaluates promotional materials and advertising campaigns. It informs staff training which develops in all teams an awareness of the importance of their participation in market research and promotion of the college. The unit won first prize in a national marketing competition for colleges this year, after being runner up in the previous year.

73 Equality of opportunity is central to the college's mission. Its promotion and effective management are correctly included as a strength in the self-assessment report. The detailed equal opportunities policy is supported by procedures and quality statements and clearly indicates responsibilities for implementation and monitoring. The policy informs the human resource procedures, the complaints procedure, and inclusive learning policy, as well as leading to a quality criterion for teaching observation. The impact of the policy is monitored through various review procedures and through statistical reports which inform targets for improvement.

Conclusions

74 Inspectors found the college's self-assessment report an effective basis for planning and undertaking the inspection. They agreed with most of the findings in the self-assessment report relating to aspects of

cross-college provision. In half of the curriculum areas, the report was insufficiently critical in defining weaknesses. However, inspectors agreed with the grades awarded in the college report in every cross-college aspect and curriculum area. The self-assessment report included an action plan. Many of the identified weaknesses had been addressed or were in the process of being addressed at the time of the inspection.

75 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	3
16-18 years	38
19-24 years	13
25+ years	46
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1997)

Level of study	%
Foundation	27
Intermediate	22
Advanced	46
Higher education	3
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	2
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	493	694	17
Agriculture	19	19	0
Engineering	106	142	3
Business	380	884	18
Hotel and catering	253	47	4
Health and community care	473	733	17
Art and design	367	308	10
Humanities	922	960	27
Basic education	54	230	4
Total	3,067	4,017	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (December 1997)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	144	24	4	172
Supporting direct learning contact	51	4	2	57
Other support	123	10	0	133
Total	318	38	6	362

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£12,223,000	£12,838,000	£13,284,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£19.96	£19.41	£19.50
Payroll as a proportion of income	78%	68%	64%
Achievement of funding target	100%	101%	100%
Diversity of income	17%	14%	15%
Operating surplus	-£850,000	£85,000	£93,000

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

ALF – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), Funding Allocations 1996-97 (1996-97)

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

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), college (1996-97)

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

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

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	557	520	507
	Average point score per entry	4.3	4.0	4.0
	Position in tables	top third	middle third	middle third
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	272	243	242
	Percentage achieving qualification	83%	67%	73%
	Position in tables	middle third	bottom third	middle third
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	250	247
	Percentage achieving qualification	*	46%	56%
	Position in tables	*	bottom third	middle 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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