

Cadbury Sixth Form College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1997-98**

**THE
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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.

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100*

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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

Cadbury Sixth Form College

West Midlands Region

Inspected April 1998

Cadbury Sixth Form College is situated on the outskirts of Birmingham. The college is a successful and popular provider for full-time students aged 16 to 19, who mainly follow courses at GCE A level. Inspection of curriculum subjects covered work in each of the college's five faculties. The action plan for the whole college that accompanied the self-assessment report was thorough and well constructed. Inspectors' judgements were broadly in agreement with the overall judgements and grades reached by the college for its curriculum provision. The college's self-assessment report did not appropriately evaluate all aspects of its work. Many sections of the report did not address in sufficient depth the statements on quality issues of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. Evidence for some judgements was not clear. The self-assessment process was based on a review by each department. A particular strength was the creation of departmental handbooks. The college placed specific emphasis upon the analysis of added value. Departmental reviews were graded, moderated and subsumed into self-assessments by faculties.

Student numbers have grown steadily and the college has exceeded its enrolment targets in each of the last three years. Teaching is of a high standard. Students' achievements are good. Most students progress to higher

education. The quality of provision in mathematics is outstanding. The college provides good pre-entry guidance. There is a useful work experience programme and careers advice is particularly well developed. Students' perception surveys are used effectively and lead to improvements in provision. Staff development activities are well organised. The college has addressed weaknesses in quality assurance which were identified in the last inspection report. Governors have a wide range of backgrounds and their skills and experience are used effectively by the corporation. Governors pay close attention to students' achievements. The college has a clear management structure. Substantial efficiency gains have been made in the last two years. Careful attention is paid to the deployment of resources. The college has compared its standards of efficiency with those of other colleges to assess the extent to which it obtains value for money. The college's financial management is good. The college should improve: the provision for learning support and the service for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; development plans for departments and faculties; the analysis of lesson observation; the setting of precise numerical targets in key areas such as retention and students' achievements; the overall monitoring and reporting arrangements for quality assurance; reporting to governors on the progress made in achieving the aims of the strategic plan; and library provision.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Mathematics and computing	1	Support for students	2
Biology and chemistry	2	General resources	3
Business	2	Quality assurance	3
English and modern languages	2	Governance	3
Psychology and sociology	2	Management	2

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Cadbury Sixth Form College was one of three sixth form colleges established in Birmingham in 1983 following reorganisation of post-16 education by the local education authority (LEA).

2 The college occupies a single site in the suburb of Kings Norton in the south-west of the city. It comprises four buildings, two built in the late 1950s and two in the late 1970s. There are relatively prosperous and socially deprived areas in the immediate vicinity. The college recruits students from well beyond these local areas. Significant numbers come from the inner-city and from the north-west and south-east suburbs. The college is particularly popular with Asian students who make up 30 per cent of the college population.

3 Birmingham is a major cultural centre and the regional capital for financial services. Predictions of future patterns of employment point to a need for more people with professional skills in the workforce. It is forecast that by 2006 there will be more managerial, professional and technical workers in the city, whilst the numbers of craft, plant and machine operatives and unskilled workers will continue to fall. The Birmingham Economic Review for 1996-97 concludes that an increase in the qualification levels of the city's resident workforce is needed if it is to compete for future job opportunities.

4 The pattern of provision for the 11 to 18 age group in Birmingham is diverse. Within the local catchment area of the college, there are schools of several types for the 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 age groups: maintained comprehensive; grant maintained; grammar; and independent. The college attracts students from all these institutions and has particularly strong links with eight local 11 to 16 'feeder' schools. There is competition from other local colleges which have significant provision for full-time students

aged 16 to 19. There is also competition from the sixth forms of local schools.

5 Since incorporation the college, without substantially diversifying the curriculum, has achieved a 28 per cent growth in student numbers in the 16 to 19 age range. In November 1997 the college had 1,209 full-time students following a two-year programme for the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) and 115 students following a one-year programme of courses leading to the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) or the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) at intermediate level. Significant numbers of students progress to higher education; in 1997, the proportion was 63 per cent of leavers, a total of 415 students.

6 Staff posts and responsibilities were restructured in 1996-97. The college now employs 108 staff. The senior management group consists of the principal, the vice-principal and two assistant principals. These staff have taken on additional responsibilities following a reduction in the number of senior managers. The curriculum is managed through five faculties. The five heads of faculty have relinquished their previous duties as heads of department and have assumed some cross-college responsibilities. New posts for the co-ordination of a number of cross-college areas have been created. There is a policy and planning group of 12 staff. Heads of faculty hold joint curriculum and pastoral responsibilities.

7 The college mission is: 'to provide, for students from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds, an educational experience of high quality in an atmosphere which is supportive, co-operative and conducive to learning; to encourage them to develop as individuals within society and to fulfil their academic potential'.

Context

The Inspection

8 The college was inspected in April 1998. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and 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 which were checked by the inspectorate against primary sources, for example class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. The college was notified approximately two months before the inspection of the sample of its provision which was to be assessed. The inspection was carried out by 10 inspectors working for a total of 36 days. They observed 60 lessons, and examined samples of students' work and a variety of college documents. The inspection team also included an auditor who worked for five days. Meetings were held with governors, managers, college staff and students, parents and representatives of local schools.

9 Of the lessons inspected, 83 per cent were rated good or outstanding and 3 per cent were less than satisfactory. This profile is significantly better than the profile of 61 per

cent and 8 per cent, respectively, for colleges inspected in 1996-97 according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report*. The highest average level of attendance was in biology and chemistry at 87 per cent and the lowest in business at 72 per cent. The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	16	25	4	1	0	46
GCSE	1	3	4	1	0	9
GNVQ	0	5	0	0	0	5
Total	17	33	8	2	0	60

Curriculum Areas

Mathematics and Computing

Grade 1

10 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering mathematics and computing in courses leading to GCSE, GCE A level and GNVQ qualifications. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- innovative lessons
- pass rates significantly above the national average
- high rates of retention and attendance
- effective use of value-added measures
- a confident, mutually supportive departmental ethos
- initiatives to increase enrolment and to recruit more female students
- departmental course documentation and student handbooks
- promotion of the subjects
- the accommodation used by mathematics

Weaknesses

- some old and unreliable computing equipment
- the lack of appropriate information for quality assurance
- dispersed accommodation for computing classes

11 The college offers mathematics and computing courses at GCSE and GCE A/AS levels. There are well-designed course handbooks. Teachers provide advice in timetabled and additional support sessions on how to study. This provision includes lessons to assist in the transition in mathematics from GCSE to GCE A level. Large numbers of students take single subjects in pure

mathematics, mechanics, statistics and computing; significant numbers take further mathematics. Teachers of mathematics and computing also contribute to the small amount of provision for GNVQ, and to the numeracy course which has recently been introduced. Student enrolments to both departments have increased significantly since the last inspection. The college is also achieving success in attracting more females to study these subjects. Mathematics staff have work areas adjacent to classrooms. This arrangement helps to provide a supportive atmosphere and to promote the study of mathematics. The resources available to mathematics are recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report; however, inspectors considered that the dispersed accommodation for computing is a weakness.

12 The standard of teaching is high. Teachers use innovative techniques to enliven lessons, especially in mathematics. For example, in a mathematics lesson, groups of students wrote the solution to examination questions on the board and explained the method of solution. Students confidently presented solutions to the problems, using examples from the world of work that sustained their interest and gave depth and relevance to the subjects; they demonstrated both presentational and mathematical skills. The exercise promoted teamwork and contributions from all students. Both subjects are enriched by visits to industrial, leisure and sporting events where students have the opportunity to collect data and to test hypotheses. Good practice is shared through regular observations of lessons, particularly in the mathematics department. Inspectors produced a profile of grades similar to that resulting from formal lesson observation within the departments. Schemes of work are well developed. Teachers make good use of past examination papers and appropriate classroom exercises to support standard course texts.

13 Good use is also made of the applications of information technology (IT) but departments

Curriculum Areas

are only beginning to develop strategies to promote independent learning and research. The self-assessment identifies the use of students' surveys as a strength. Inspectors found that information arising from students' perception surveys is discussed at regular departmental meetings and is used effectively to improve the quality of provision. Teachers have access to data on: students' achievements; rates of retention and attendance; and value-added measurements. Although data are evaluated, sometimes in detail, there is a need for more rigour in course evaluation and data analysis if the quality of provision is to be improved.

14 Teachers set homework regularly and mark and return it promptly with appropriate comments. For the last three years, the pass rates for GCE A level have been significantly above the national average for sixth form colleges. Value-added analysis indicates that most students in the college achieve examination results that are better than had been predicted on the basis of their GCSE results on entry. The self-assessment report accurately records this strength but also notes that this conclusion applies far less to the more able students in mathematics. Pass rates for GCSE mathematics at grade C or above are

consistently above the national average for sixth form colleges whilst those for IT at GCSE level, which attracts only a few students, have been below average for some time. Retention and attendance levels are among the highest in the college and well above the average for the sector. A significant proportion, some 70 per cent, of students progress to higher education. Most students of computing choose degree courses that are related to computing and a significant minority of those studying mathematics take mathematics degrees.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level mathematics	Retention (%)	96	81 *	78 *
	Pass rate (%)	97	96	99
GCE A level computing	Retention (%)	91	61	79
	Pass rate (%)	74	95	79
GCSE mathematics and IT	Retention (%)	87	88	81
	Pass rate (%)	42	54	47

Source: college data

*includes students who do not complete GCE A level but gain GCE AS mathematics

Curriculum Areas

Biology and Chemistry

Grade 2

15 Inspectors observed 11 classes covering subjects at GCE A level and GCSE in biology and chemistry. The self-assessment report contains some clear evaluations but few relate to the quality statements of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. The section on teaching and learning is weak and tends to overemphasise strengths and overlook weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with most other judgements in the report.

Key strengths

- careful preparation of lessons
- effective teaching in many lessons
- well-managed practical classes
- good levels of student attention and application
- regular setting and marking of homework
- high pass rates in chemistry at GCE A level and improving pass rates in biology
- effective teamwork and departmental management

Weaknesses

- an inadequate range of activities in some lessons
- low results for GCSE
- lack of sufficient detail in some schemes of work

16 The chemistry and biology departments are part of the faculty of science which also includes physics and sports studies. The departments offer courses in biology, chemistry and social biology at GCE A level and courses for biology, chemistry, and human physiology and health at GCSE level. Courses for biology and chemistry at GCE A level follow modular syllabuses.

Students can improve their performance through regular assessments of modules which provide short-term goals. Chemistry students can gain the GCE advanced supplementary (AS) qualification if they complete a smaller number of modules than the full GCE A level programme; a few students each year take this opportunity.

17 Teaching was good in the majority of lessons and some was outstanding. The self-assessment report justifiably recognises the planning of teaching and learning as a strength, but does not identify some weaknesses observed by inspectors. Careful planning of courses is evident but, in some cases, is not translated systematically into detailed schemes of work. Most teaching schemes do not define teaching and learning strategies clearly or describe how they meet the needs of students of different abilities. Some teaching schemes, for example on the GCSE courses, are little more than a weekly schedule of topics. Practical demonstrations are used effectively to illustrate key concepts and to stimulate students' interest. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Students respond well to the opportunities that they are given to join in discussion, to solve problems and to work in groups. In a few lessons their activity is limited to responding directly to teachers' questions and taking notes. Students apply themselves well and work methodically in practical lessons which are well managed. Careful attention is given to safe working practices. Teachers set homework regularly and return it promptly with helpful comments. General points are discussed in class. Lessons start and end promptly.

18 The best lessons have high standards of achievement. Some high-quality reports on assignments are produced, for example for a group research project on chlorofluorocarbons in chemistry. Such projects enable students to develop a range of key skills that include group working, research and IT. Few students have

Curriculum Areas

the opportunity of work experience that relates to the science subjects that they are studying. The self-assessment report recognises this omission as a weakness; a work placement programme has been recently established for some students. Pass rates for GCE A level are consistently above the national average for sixth form colleges in chemistry and close to the national average in biology. The pass rates are lower for the small number of students entered for social biology at GCE A level. In all these subjects students' achievements in 1997 have exceeded the expectations that were calculated on the basis of their GCSE attainment on entry to the college. Overall retention rates in most GCE A levels have remained constant at about 80 per cent for the past two years, but there has been a decline in chemistry. GCSE examination results often fluctuate from year to year. In 1996, pass rates in all three subjects at GCSE exceeded the national average for sixth form colleges but in 1997 were below the national figure, and well below in biology. Retention rates on courses at GCSE level exceed 80 per cent in all subjects.

19 Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic about their subjects and work well in teams. Departmental meetings are productive and attend to curriculum issues and students' progress. Teachers provide effective informal support and advice for students. Technician staff are well qualified and provide excellent support, particularly in managing the heavy demand on facilities for practical assessments. Most of the laboratories provide suitable working environments for practical work; some have interesting displays of students' work. The laboratories are heavily used and an increasing proportion of science classes are taught elsewhere. The last minute rearrangements of accommodation sometimes waste time. There is an appropriate range of materials and equipment and students are provided with text books that have been published specifically to support the modular courses.

Examples of students' achievements in biology and chemistry, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level biology	Retention (%)	99	75	84
	Pass rate (%)	62	83	85
GCE A level social biology	Retention (%)	93	82	78
	Pass rate (%)	62	64	57
GCE A level chemistry	Retention (%)	94	84	72
	Pass rate (%)	97	97	93
GCSE biology	Retention (%)	96	95	83
	Pass rate (%)	50	56	16
GCSE human biology	Retention (%)	96	93	82
	Pass rate (%)	44	43	31

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 2

20 Inspectors observed 10 lessons in business across the range of provision. The departmental self-assessment was generally thorough and contained evaluative comment. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college but considered that some were understated. There were in addition a few strengths and weaknesses that had not been recognised.

Key strengths

- effective teaching
- the programme of speakers and visits
- some outstanding pass rates
- above average achievement by students on the majority of courses
- work experience that complements coursework
- highly motivated staff with relevant work experience

Weaknesses

- some poor lesson plans
- low attendance and retention rates on some courses
- a poor pass rate for GCSE business studies in 1997
- lack of continuity in curriculum development

21 Most students follow two-year business courses at GCE A level. Courses for GCE AS and GCSE business studies are also available. Vocational courses consist of the intermediate GNVQ in business, which was reintroduced in 1997 after a two-year gap, and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) levels 2 and 3 in business administration. The GNVQ advanced is not offered as a progression route for

intermediate students. NVQ provision will not be offered in future due to a lack of demand. GNVQ students undertake work experience which is well managed, effectively complements their studies and develops business awareness. An extensive programme of visiting speakers and visits for GCE A/AS level students widens their knowledge of business practice. The college acknowledges that not all students take advantage of these opportunities, which relate theoretical knowledge to current vocational practice. There is no adequate assessment of curriculum provision in relation to the needs of employers.

22 Teachers have up-to-date knowledge of the subject, enthusiasm and commitment to their work. The majority of lessons observed by inspectors were good. A strength highlighted in the self-assessment report is the appropriate variety of teaching styles used by staff to sustain students' interest. This characteristic was evident in many of the lessons observed. Teachers combined presentations with effective question-and-answer sessions to promote students' learning. Teachers use up-to-date business case studies to support learning. Lesson plans are not written to a common format and are often of poor quality, containing little detail. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment. Vocational students have opportunities to develop key skills. The schemes of work at GCE A level do not ensure that students make sufficient use of IT. In a minority of lessons, teachers did not take enough account of the individual learning needs of students of differing abilities. The self-assessment report acknowledges this weakness.

23 Students have a good level of knowledge and understanding of the subject. Some students show a low level of oral communication and lack skills in group work. Most students have a good attendance record but there is persistent low attendance by a minority of students. There are poor levels of retention on the GNVQ intermediate course. This weakness

Curriculum Areas

was not sufficiently recognised by the college. Students' written work and class work show evidence of interest and commitment. Their work is not always marked promptly. Teachers differ in the amount of homework which they set for students at GCE A level. Students do not receive a course handbook.

24 The self-assessment report recognises students' achievements as a strength. Outstanding pass rates have been achieved in 1997 by students on the business studies course at GCE A level. Pass rates for GCE A level in 1995 and 1996, and for the GNVQ intermediate in 1995, were well above national averages. Pass rates in GCSE business studies were poor in 1997.

25 There are regular team meetings. Action plans are documented and monitored. The department does not set targets for retention or achievement rates for students. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report. There is a lack of continuity and planning in the development of the business studies curriculum. Changes to decisions by the college in the provision of GNVQ at both intermediate and advanced levels have hindered curriculum

planning by teachers and affected opportunities available to students for progression.

26 Well-qualified staff provide effective informal help which is appreciated by students. There are no subject tutorials that are timetabled to monitor students' progress. The overall standard of specialist facilities, equipment, learning resources and books is good.

Examples of students' achievements in business, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level business studies	Retention (%)	88	78	76
	Pass rate (%)	79	89	100
GCE AS business studies	Retention (%)	*	80	72
	Pass rate (%)	*	63	69
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	62	*	*
	Pass rate (%)	80	*	*
GCSE business studies	Retention (%)	85	77	85
	Pass rate (%)	44	71	13

Source: college data

*course not running

Curriculum Areas

English and Modern Languages

Grade 2

27 Inspectors observed 17 lessons covering English subjects at GCSE and at GCE A level and French, German and Spanish at GCE A level. They endorsed a number of the strengths in this provision that had been identified in the college's self-assessment report. They also found that some weaknesses were understated or not recognised, particularly in teaching and learning and students' achievements.

Key strengths

- effective, well-planned teaching in most classes
- good levels of achievement in examinations on most courses
- the high standard of students' written work
- effective management and good teamwork at course level
- the range of opportunities for students to enrich their studies

Weaknesses

- lack of an overall system for planning and evaluating lessons
- some ineffective teaching in GCSE English classes
- low rates for recruitment and retention of students on modern language courses

28 Teaching in the majority of GCE A level classes is lively and sustains students' interest. Most lessons are well planned and teachers use a variety of appropriate learning strategies which include debate, argument, group work, and student presentations. In many English lessons at GCE A level the teachers' obvious enthusiasm promotes effective learning and challenges students. In one class a discussion of the impact of Americanisms on the English

language indicated students' maturing grasp of linguistic change. Another lesson dealt skilfully with the comparison of two sonnets, one from the sixteenth century and one from the twentieth century. Modern language classes are conducted mainly in the target language and teachers clearly encourage students to contribute and develop their language skills. The students of German at GCE A level benefited from watching a video of a contemporary German film as preparation for coursework on foreign workers in Germany. Students have opportunities to undertake a range of additional study activities including theatre visits, attendance at creative writing workshops, and foreign visits and exchanges. Teachers willingly give support to students who require extra help. They set appropriate written tasks, which are marked promptly and returned with helpful advice. In some lessons students are given few opportunities to contribute. In others a lack of appropriate variety in teaching methods and slow presentation causes students to lose motivation and interest. These shortcomings particularly apply in GCSE English classes. There is no overall system to record lesson plans or to evaluate their impact. These weaknesses in classroom practice are not identified in the self-assessment report.

29 English examination results are generally good. Pass rates at GCE A level in English literature, which is the subject that has the largest number of candidates, have consistently been above or near the national average for sixth form colleges. English pass rates at GCSE have consistently been well above the national average. Pass rates for modern languages at GCE A level have improved from well below to well above the national average. Pass rates in modern languages at GCSE level have improved from a low pass rate in 1996 to a level at or close to national averages in 1997. However, these successes have been accompanied by a much lower retention rate and a critical drop in recruitment to French at GCE A level. The self-

Curriculum Areas

assessment report does not identify these weaknesses. Students' written work is good. Students write critically, relevantly and accurately. They also benefit from the promotion of creative writing which is evident in the English department. Most modern language students are confident in oral work. This confidence is reinforced by the presence of foreign language assistants in all three languages. Students' attendance in a number of classes was low during the inspection.

30 Departmental management at course level is good. There is a clear staffing structure. Teamwork is good; staff communicate well with each other. Effective course handbooks and schemes of work have been produced. The self-assessment report identifies strong links with higher education which is confirmed by the high number of students gaining places at universities. The introduction of a system of lesson observation has led to a greater awareness of teaching strategies and of the benefits of sharing good practice. Care is taken to obtain and evaluate students' views; they feel that they are genuinely and effectively consulted.

31 Teachers are well qualified and effectively deployed, even though there are two small teaching groups for GCSE courses in French and German. Classrooms are equipped and furnished appropriately. Handouts and teaching aids are of high quality. Text books, video players and overhead transparency projectors are readily available. Modern languages teachers do not have sufficient up-to-date IT equipment. Moreover, it is located in a room used for the majority of the time for teaching purposes. A language laboratory with 16 positions is available to support teaching and learning. Appropriate CD-ROM facilities are available in the library, where language students can also use the internet.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level English	Retention (%)	97	76	82
	Pass rate (%)	91	89	92
GCE A level modern languages	Retention (%)	86	84	87
	Pass rate (%)	72	60	79
GCSE English	Retention (%)	78	71	71
	Pass rate (%)	63	70	80
GCSE modern languages	Retention (%)	87	86	72
	Pass rate (%)	76	85	87

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Psychology and Sociology

Grade 2

32 Ten lessons were observed in sociology and psychology. The inspection covered provision in both subjects for courses at GCE A level and in sociology for courses at GCSE level. Most of the strengths and weaknesses noted during the inspection were included in the self-assessment report. Inspectors supported the judgements made by the college but considered that some low retention rates did not receive sufficient emphasis.

Key strengths

- teaching of high quality
- excellent schemes of work
- clear guidance for students on learning and assessment
- the well-organised management of coursework
- students' achievements consistently above the national average
- a well-managed curriculum, effectively monitored for quality of provision
- good classroom resources which help students to learn on their own

Weaknesses

- some poor lesson plans
- some low retention and attendance rates
- insufficiently developed key skills, particularly in IT
- lack of computer resources in psychology

33 Inspectors confirmed the strengths in the self-assessment report relating to good practice in teaching and learning. A good range of teaching and learning strategies that includes group work and presentations is supported by

comprehensive schemes of work and effective planning. Teaching is good, and sometimes excellent; there is a clear sense of purpose in all lessons. Teachers encourage students to discuss cultural, moral and contemporary issues in class and in their work generally. They ensure systematic coverage of the curriculum and make effective use of excellent learning materials, which include study guides and good-quality handouts. Teaching is reinforced through the effective use of overhead projectors and video recordings. Teachers plan to meet the needs of groups of students of differing ability. This approach was recognised in the self-assessment as a strength; inspectors agreed with the finding. Support for students with learning difficulties or study problems is well conceived and sensitively implemented. Schemes of work are exemplars of good practice. Lesson plans are not all of comparable quality; some weak plans can result in problems of classroom organisation and time management. To help students to learn on their own, teachers give suitable encouragement and provide excellent guidance notes. Inspectors concluded that key skills are not as well embedded in the curriculum as is claimed in the self-assessment. Key skills do not always appear to be an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment.

34 Most students' written work is of at least satisfactory quality and some is excellent. Inspectors found that most students' work files were well organised. Students' achievements are good. For example, in 1996 for GCE A level there was an 86 per cent pass rate in psychology and a 90 per cent pass rate in sociology. In 1997, sociology achieved a pass rate of 88 per cent. Pass rates for sociology at GCSE level are also well above the national average for sixth form colleges. Retention and attendance rates are low on some courses.

35 The curriculum is well managed. There are comprehensive subject and staff handbooks. Course records and supporting documentation provide evidence of the efficient organisation of

Curriculum Areas

courses. Curriculum review and development are based on careful and informed consideration of what is best for the students. Teachers use attendance and retention data to monitor performance, and regularly carry out evaluations of questionnaires surveying students' views. These activities inform staff discussion and often result in curriculum or policy improvements. Target-setting is not well developed, though value-added measures have been used to evaluate student performance in examinations at GCE A level for several years.

36 There are extensive classroom resources and materials. All students receive a copy of each of the major text books. The provision of handouts and study guides is generous. There is a growing range and number of computers, many of which give access to CD-ROM, but overall there are not enough IT resources for staff and students. There is good provision of books and journal in the department and the college library. Classrooms are enhanced with posters and wall displays.

Examples of students' achievements in psychology and sociology, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level sociology	Retention (%)	97	69	74
	Pass rate (%)	88	90	88
GCE A level psychology	Retention (%)	*	50	73
	Pass rate (%)	*	86	80
GCSE sociology	Retention (%)	94	95	67
	Pass rate (%)	44	76	69

Source: college data

*course not running

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

37 Inspectors found that the self-assessment report identified many of the strengths and some of the weaknesses. They noted a few additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- effective pre-entry guidance for students
- an informative prospectus
- a comprehensive students' diary
- effective induction to courses
- helpful counselling
- well-developed careers guidance
- opportunities for work experience

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped learning support
- limited take-up of opportunities to develop records of achievement
- inconsistencies in aspects of the tutorial system

38 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment on the provision of good pre-entry guidance. Prospective students receive information and guidance through a well-managed system of support. Good-quality publicity material includes an attractively designed and informative prospectus. There are effective links with schools; staff visit some schools to give advice on the college's courses. Open days are well attended and applicants can seek advice at an induction day held in the summer. Students who do not achieve the qualifications that gain entry to their chosen course are offered alternative opportunities. Staff from the local careers service provide impartial guidance at enrolment. Induction programmes and course handbooks provide a helpful introduction to the college and to the requirements of each course. There is a helpful

students' diary, noted in the self-assessment as a strength, which includes the college charter and general advice. The clear procedures for course transfer work well. The college has not analysed data on students who withdraw from courses although the results might have assisted the development of policies on guidance.

39 The college's brief statement on disability makes relatively little comment about increasing the opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The service for this group of students is not well developed, although some students do receive extra support during examinations. Classes which include wheelchair users are provided in the ground-floor classrooms. An assessment test in numeracy is taken by GNVQ students. There is no comprehensive assessment of students' needs in literacy and numeracy although additional support follows referral by a tutor or a self-referral by a student. An English workshop which has been established recently lacks relevant learning materials. Students resitting GCSEs in English and mathematics are given substantial support.

40 Each student has a personal tutor. The emphasis of the tutorial system is on monitoring the academic progress of individual students. Tutors follow clear procedures to record students' progress. Persistent absenteeism is reported to tutors and unsatisfactory performance is reviewed. Advice on study skills, health awareness and examination stress is not consistent in quality. The college does not analyse attendance figures from tutorial registers. Students expressed mixed views about the effectiveness of the tutorial system; some aspects of the system are being reviewed to improve the overall standard of this service. Reports are sent directly to parents of students who are invited to the college to discuss progress. Invitations are written in the languages spoken in the local community and interpreters are available to assist, where required. Once examination results are known,

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the college provides students with a special advice service, which benefits from the college's links with external agencies. For example, counsellors are regularly available to advise students on personal and financial issues, and a female Asian counsellor has been employed to give advice to female Asian students. A small hardship fund offers help with transport costs for students in receipt of benefit.

41 A work experience programme which has been well developed is provided for GNVQ students; it is optional for other students. Students who wish to take up work experience are helped to complete a curriculum vitae. This provision, identified as a strength in the self-assessment, was endorsed by inspectors. Other activities which assist students to develop a range of skills include: activities in the arts; computer literacy and IT courses; an annual university residential course; and the Engineering Education Scheme of England.

42 Few students take advantage of opportunities to develop a record of achievement. This weakness was noted in the previous inspection report. However, a pilot scheme sets students targets that encourage them to achieve better results than were predicted for them on entry to the college; this scheme has a built-in record of achievement.

43 Careers advice is particularly well developed; this strength is noted in the self-assessment report. Each faculty has a careers co-ordinator. There is an extensive programme of advice on higher education which includes: guidance on subject and course choices; a higher education conference; and a parents' evening. Some students and parents would welcome advice earlier, in the first year. Application forms are completed using the college's computer network and students are helped to prepare their personal statements. Students who apply for additional further education courses or who seek employment are given effective support. Students are required to

research several possible routes for their future after completing their GCSE course. There is close liaison with the Careers and Education Business Partnership. Careers officers provide interviews in college twice each week. The careers library has relevant books, electronic databases and a jobs vacancies noticeboard.

General Resources

Grade 3

44 The findings of the inspection confirmed some of the strengths and weaknesses in the college's self-assessment report. However, inspectors judged the quality of evidence in the report to be poor. They found that some weaknesses were understated and others had not been identified.

Key strengths

- high level of space utilisation
- some good general accommodation
- effective liaison between library and curriculum staff

Weaknesses

- insufficient recreational and social areas
- inadequate toilet facilities
- restricted access for wheelchair users
- insufficient access to computers and the internet
- inadequate library accommodation

45 The college recognises that its use of classroom space and of practical areas is generally good and above the average for the sector. Refectory areas have been improved to meet increased demand but overcrowding still occurs and is a source of complaints from students. There are not enough social areas and some are of poor quality. Administration areas are adequate in size and layout. There is insufficient secure storage in most areas of the college.

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46 The refectory, sports hall, lecture theatre and a small hall are included in the better quality general accommodation. The small hall has been refurbished to a high standard for multi-purpose use. The reception area is centrally located and conveniently adjacent to the administration area. Most external and internal signposting is good. Learning materials and students' work are used to establish extensive and stimulating wall displays throughout the college.

47 The college is generally clean and well maintained. Litter is a problem in the refectory, main corridors and social areas when the college is full of students and especially during break times. Some staff rooms have been refurbished but others are cramped. The college has plans to improve these rooms to an acceptable standard. Toilet facilities are insufficient for the number of students and most are in need of refurbishment. There is only one toilet for wheelchair users which is poorly located. The college identified these weaknesses in its self-assessment.

48 The college has improved access for wheelchair users since the last inspection. Access is still limited on higher floors in one building and there is no lift in the multi-storey building. Changes in floor levels make it difficult for wheelchair users to move around the college.

49 The college has landscaped areas and sports fields which include a football pitch and three tennis courts. There are fewer facilities for other sports. Vehicle access to the site is limited to one narrow entrance which restricts the flow of traffic. The college is considering solutions to this problem. The external fabric of the buildings appears to be sound. The college grounds have effective floodlighting and high perimeter fencing.

50 Students can use five small open access centres for IT but this provision is inadequate in relation to student numbers. The existing computer network is being phased out; it

frequently breaks down and the software on the system is outdated. A new system has been installed and will be fully operational by September 1998. The overall ratio of computers to full-time students is good at 1:7. Access to the internet is poor, with only one computer connection in the library. Hardware specifications in the draft IT policy are becoming outdated. The college has appointed an IT co-ordinator. Technician support for the area is good.

51 The assessment by the college of its library provision reflects weaknesses noted by inspectors. The library is often overcrowded. There is not enough seating for students for group work or for private study. The library is sometimes noisy and it is difficult for students to view or listen to audiovisual equipment. There is a lack of space for staff to prepare learning materials and to store video cassettes and CD-ROMs securely. The enquiry desk is poorly located. A new security system has recently been installed which allows easier access for wheelchair users. The computerised library management system is not well developed. The bookstock is small but the quality of books, periodicals, videos and the range of CD-ROMs is good. The library budget is low for this type and size of college. Library staff are well qualified and experienced. There is good liaison between the library and curriculum areas and meetings of the library committee are carefully minuted. There are useful guides for staff and students and an informative library newsletter is produced each term.

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Quality Assurance

Grade 3

52 Inspectors found that the self-assessment report did not give a full account of quality assurance in the college. Many of the statements in the report were too brief to provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses and the evidence on which they were based. Inspectors concluded that the college overstated some strengths and did not recognise some weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a helpful quality assurance manual
- effective contribution of students' perception surveys
- well-organised staff development
- good availability and use of some data on students' achievements

Weaknesses

- the lack of clear definition of service standards
- inadequate arrangements for quality assurance in some non-teaching areas
- the underdeveloped use of formal and clear targets to assess performance in course reviews
- the system for the oversight and co-ordination of reviews
- shortcomings in the college's self-assessment process

53 The college has addressed significant weaknesses in quality assurance arrangements that were identified in the last inspection report. It has made good progress in developing quality assurance procedures and processes since then; the system is still evolving. The self-assessment records the need for a more formalised cross-college review process. A useful manual for quality assurance was published one month before the inspection. The effective contribution

of students' perception surveys in the achievement of improvements is well established and recognised as a strength, but the benefits of other aspects of the college's quality assurance arrangements are less evident.

54 Quality assurance arrangements have developed unevenly across the college. Progress in applying them to some support areas has been inadequate. In some curriculum areas, explicit performance standards have been included in departmental charters. For example, the departments of psychology and sociology have specified the help that students can expect with their revision programmes for examinations. However, standards which clearly identify the features of good teaching and of support for students with their learning have not been consistently adopted.

55 The college's procedures for self-assessment follow the pattern of its annual review process. The college's previous system of course reviews was replaced in 1997 by reviews based on the self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses. The setting of targets in key areas, for example retention rates and students' achievements, is underdeveloped. Up to 1997, curriculum reviews did not include an analysis of how each area performed in relation to predetermined targets. Curriculum leaders are required to set targets for attendance; in some areas these have not been established. Teachers compare college pass rates and retention rates with national averages for the sector. They receive information on students' actual and predicted grades which helps them to assess the effectiveness of their teaching. Many of the self-assessment and review documents for 1997 do not contain enough references to the statistical information available to assess performance. Some action plans included in reviews are limited in their scope and precision. College managers recognise that overall monitoring and reporting arrangements need to be improved.

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56 Surveys of student perceptions are effectively monitored and carefully analysed. A well-developed range of questionnaires, which is used at cross-college and departmental levels, helps staff to evaluate and make recommendations on: admissions; the rejection of places; open days; induction; the library; student support; accommodation; and the college charter. A particular strength is the use of newsletters to communicate the findings and outcomes of the surveys to students. Departmental surveys are organised to assess students' experience of their courses. Good use is made of the findings.

57 Many sections of the self-assessment are brief and lack adequate evaluation. Strengths and weaknesses are not clearly expressed as judgements and sometimes their actual meaning is obscure. Sources for obtaining evidence are given in the report but specific evidence is not provided. The report does not make clear the grounds on which judgements are made. The college has not yet developed its scheme of lesson observation to support the process of quality assurance. Some of the college's assessment of teaching and learning is superficial. A well-constructed action plan for the whole college accompanies the self-assessment report.

58 Staff development is effectively organised and evaluated. Departments identify their training needs and a professional development group oversees training and development activities. The first two-year cycle for the appraisal of teaching staff has been completed. A personal development scheme for support staff, introduced in January 1998, has also completed its first cycle. Commitment to the standard of Investor in People has led to the introduction of an effective scheme for the induction of new staff and to the extension of the role of faculty head to include evaluation and training. The college expects to achieve the award of Investor in People in July 1998.

59 The college has made an accurate assessment of the strengths and weaknesses relating to its charter. A thorough report on the charter was written in 1997. The self-assessment paid considerable attention to the charter. Some aspects of the charter are monitored through the students' perception surveys. The content of the charter which contains an appropriate range of commitments, is reviewed annually. After the 1998 review the college plans to make its contents more interesting and relevant to students.

Governance

Grade 3

60 Findings from the inspection support many of the strengths outlined in the college's self-assessment report. However, inspectors identified weaknesses which were not recognised in the report.

Key strengths

- the structured self-evaluation of the corporation's performance
- a thorough induction process for governors
- frequent and clear financial reports
- a sound understanding of the difference between governance and management
- the comprehensive review of students' achievements

Weaknesses

- the failure to give formal approval to the strategic plan and three-year financial forecast
- no formal monitoring of progress in meeting strategic objectives
- incomplete register of interests
- a lack of standing orders
- incomplete terms of reference for committees

Cross-college Provision

61 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college 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.

62 Governors have a wide range of backgrounds. Their skills, which include expertise in education, personnel and business, are effectively used by the corporation. The board meets approximately six times each year and keeps detailed minutes. Corporation papers, excepting confidential items, are available for public inspection. Governors pay close attention to students' achievements and undertake a comprehensive review of public examination results. Attendance at corporation meetings and committees is good. There are no standing orders to guide the conduct of the corporation and its committees. The clerk to the corporation is independent of college management.

63 There is no search committee to consider proposals for new members and no formal audit of skills has taken place. Potential governors are nominated by existing members. The appointment process has not been documented nor made publicly available. On appointment, governors receive good induction training and appropriate guidance which includes the benefits of a mentor system to assist familiarisation with the corporation's work. There is no formal development and training programme although the need for governor development is noted in the governors' code of conduct. Opportunities for training are communicated to governors by the clerk.

64 The corporation's committees meet regularly and undertake much of the detailed work of the corporation. Formal reports of committees' business in the form of minutes are routinely received by the corporation. Each committee, with the exception of the

remuneration committee, has terms of reference which have been approved by the corporation. The terms of reference for the finance, policy and resources committee and the audit committee do not adequately define their role and responsibilities. The planning and student provision committee has not contributed to the strategic planning process to the extent that is required by its terms of reference.

65 Governors clearly understand the distinction between governance and management. The chairman and principal meet frequently and there are good working relationships between governors and senior managers; this strength is reflected in the self-assessment report. The corporation has recently used a questionnaire to evaluate its own performance and has formally reported the conclusions. One result is the improved induction process. The governors' code of conduct states that self-evaluation is intended to be an annual exercise.

66 The clerk to the corporation maintains a register of the financial and personal interests of governors. This register has not been extended to include staff with significant financial responsibilities. The register is updated annually but some governors have not returned declarations for 1997-98. The categories of interest to be declared are not comprehensive and there is no requirement for the declaration forms to be signed. The register is available for public inspection on application to the clerk. The corporation has recently adopted a code of conduct for its members which is not sufficiently detailed. Governors are currently considering a draft code on 'whistleblowing'.

67 The strategic plan and three-year financial forecast have not been formally approved and were not considered as a final draft document by the corporation until October 1997. The strategic plan contains a partially-costed operating statement which includes: indicators of success; target dates for their achievement; and assigned responsibility for their

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implementation. Although the principal's reports inform the corporation of college activities covering a number of strategic issues, the corporation is not provided with specific, written reports detailing progress in meeting short-term objectives. These points support the weakness identified in the self-assessment report that governors do not fully understand the contribution that is expected from them to the strategic planning process.

68 There is good evidence to support the strength identified in the college's self-assessment that there is clear financial reporting. The finance, policy and resources committee receives management accounts at every meeting, and scrutinises the college's financial performance in detail. Governors who are not members of this committee receive management accounts before corporation meetings. The management accounts provided to governors do not include cashflow or balance sheet forecasts, but they do include cash-in-hand figures, past, current, and projected, and some information on funding targets and estimated achievement.

Management

Grade 2

69 The inspection team agreed with most of the judgements included in the self-assessment report but considered that some weaknesses identified by the college were less significant than others that the team found during the inspection.

Key strengths

- the successful achievement of the college's objectives
- a clear, revised management structure
- good internal communication
- effective deployment of resources

- productive links with a range of external organisations
- a well-publicised policy on equal opportunities
- frequent and clear financial reports
- good financial regulations and procedures

Weaknesses

- a lack of performance indicators and specific targets in the strategic plan
- no formal development plans for departments and faculties
- unclear responsibilities for cross-college committees
- weaknesses in the implementation and monitoring of the policy for equal opportunities

70 The process of strategic planning involves extensive consultation with teaching staff, who have a clear understanding of the college's mission. The strategic plan lists seven corporate objectives. These support the college's plans to maintain and consolidate its existing provision. The operating statement broadly reflects the corporate objectives but lacks performance indicators and specific targets. Curriculum areas are well managed at course level but there are no formal development plans for departments and faculties. These weaknesses were not identified in the college's self-assessment.

71 The college has a clear management structure. A new principal was appointed in September 1996 and a revised management structure was introduced in September 1997, after thorough consultation with staff and governors. A new cycle of meetings has helped to support and improve communication. The management style established by the principal is widely acknowledged as open and consultative. The responsibilities of some cross-college

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committees and co-ordinators have not been clearly established. As a result, some college policies are not yet being effectively implemented.

72 The college has made substantial efficiency gains in the last two years. Careful attention is paid to the deployment of resources. The college has undertaken to compare itself with other colleges to check that it is achieving value for money in its operations. A new system of bidding has resulted in a better match between departmental needs and expenditure. The number of senior managers and teachers has been reduced; the average class size and teachers' contact time with students have been increased and teaching time for some courses has been reduced.

73 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that its links with other organisations constitute a strength. Particularly good links have been established with two major local manufacturers. The college is a member of a number of city-wide projects involving collaboration with other colleges, schools, the LEA, the local Careers and Education Partnership and the training and enterprise council (TEC). TEC funding has been received to help the college towards obtaining recognition as an Investor in People and for a project to enhance work experience for students.

74 The college's market research has included targeted mailings to parts of the region where recruitment patterns are changing. The college considered labour market information provided by the TEC when drafting its strategic plan. Consideration has been paid to national issues, for example the introduction of modular courses, in plans for developing the curriculum. There has been little research by the college to obtain views from employers, a weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment.

75 The self-assessment report identified areas of strength and weakness in management information. The computerised management

information system produces data on enrolments, attendance, retention and achievements, including trends that relate to gender and ethnicity. Some useful analysis of data has helped to produce reports, for example on students' achievements. The information is not yet effectively used to help teachers to analyse and improve their work. Reports can be produced when requested but few teachers and managers have electronic access to the system.

76 Inspectors agreed with the college's claim that there is a clear policy on equal opportunities. The policy is well publicised but there are no procedures to ensure that it is effectively implemented and monitored. Some curriculum departments and support areas have developed helpful policies on equal opportunities, but the remit of the equal opportunities committee has not been clearly established. A weakness identified in the self-assessment report is the very low number of staff from minority ethnic groups compared with the proportion of enrolled students from these groups. The college is attempting to address this issue. It has published a comprehensive code of fair practice on the recruitment and selection of staff. The college broadly fulfils the requirements of sections 44 and 45 of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*. It makes available rooms in which students can participate in collective worship and offers religious education to those students who wish to receive it.

77 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The college's average level of funding for 1997-98 is £17.23 per unit. The median for sixth form colleges is £17.50 per unit. The college has assessed itself as having good financial health. The finance team has ensured, in conjunction with senior management and governors, that tight financial controls have been maintained. Management accounts are clear, understandable and produced in accordance with a timetable set by

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the college. Budget holders receive timely reports on expenditure and, when requested, good advice. Comprehensive financial regulations and procedures have been established. The college's internal and external auditors have identified no significant weaknesses in the systems of financial control.

Conclusions

78 The college's self-assessment provided a useful starting point for planning and carrying out the inspection. The inspection team concluded, however, that the college's self-assessment report is insufficiently self-critical and does not appropriately evaluate all aspects of the college's work. Inspectors found the college to be realistic in its overall judgements of its curriculum provision. They recognised that the college is maintaining standards of teaching and students' achievement whilst undergoing a process of change. In the cross-college areas, inspectors were only able to agree with the grade awarded by the college for management. In all other cross-college areas inspectors considered the grades awarded by the college to be generous. The inspection team identified several weaknesses and a few areas of strength that were not recognised in the self-assessment report. Many procedures are in the process of development, following the restructuring of college management in September 1997. Inspectors considered that the action plan for the whole college that accompanied the self-assessment report was thorough and well constructed.

79 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)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	0
16-18 years	99
19-24 years	1
25+ years	0
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1997)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Foundation	0
Intermediate	9
Advanced	91
Higher education	0
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	0
Total	100

Source: college data

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

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	402	4	31
Business	72	1	6
Hotel and catering	4	0	0
Health and community care	17	0	1
Art and design	151	1	11
Humanities	658	13	51
Total	1,304	19	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 1997)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	62	4	0	66
Supporting direct learning contact	9	0	0	9
Other support	13	0	0	13
Total	84	4	0	88

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£2,916,000	£3,247,000	£3,386,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£18.42	£17.60	£18.34
Payroll as a proportion of income	75%	72%	70%
Achievement of funding target	102%	106%	*
Diversity of income	2%	1%	2%
Operating surplus	-£112,000	£83,000	£88,000

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)

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

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

*data not available

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	401	450	941+
	Average point score per entry	4.7	4.6	4.4
	Position in tables	top third	top third	middle third
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	21	23
	Percentage achieving qualification	*	95%	91%
	Position in tables	*	top 10%	top 10%

Source: DfEE

+this includes 357 general studies GCE AS entries in lower sixth

*1994-95 intermediate vocational results not available

Students' achievements

		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Advanced academic	Pass (%)	83	87	87
	Retention (%)	95	76	79
Intermediate academic	Pass (%)	56	67	62
	Retention (%)	78	74	74

Source: college data

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