

**Chichester
College of Arts,
Science and
Technology**

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1998-99**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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

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

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Grade Descriptors

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

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

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

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

Student Achievements

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

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

Summary

Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology

South East Region

Inspected January 1999

Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology is a general further education college in West Sussex. Governors, staff, students and external representatives were involved in producing the college's self-assessment report, which involved a rigorous examination of all aspects of the work of the college. The report is long but clearly organised. Each section indicates the progress made in addressing each of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Since the report was written the college has made progress in addressing some weaknesses it identified. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and identified a small number of weaknesses not identified by the college. They agreed with the curriculum and cross-college grades awarded by the college.

The college offers courses in all 10 of the FEFC's programme areas, although its provision in agriculture is small. The inspection covered provision in seven programme areas and all aspects of cross-college provision. The quality of teaching and learning was judged to be good or better in 71% of the lessons observed and only

one lesson was judged to be less than satisfactory. The overall support for students is exemplary. The governors have a strong commitment to the college's success, and it is effectively managed. The attractive buildings close to the city centre have been considerably improved and extended since the last inspection. There is a strong commitment to high-quality and continuous improvement, although a clear analysis of student achievement data does not inform the quality assurance process. The college has identified improvements in students' retention and achievements as its main priorities and they appear as weaknesses in most curriculum sections of the self-assessment report. In the tables that follow each curriculum section of this report, the retention figures for 1996 and 1997 were obtained using data submitted by the college as part of its returns to the FEFC for those years. A technical difficulty with the recording of students who left their course early means that some retention data are unreliable, showing higher percentages than was the case. Students' achievements are good. The college has started to address poor retention and early indicators show that improvements have been made. It should continue with its aim to improve the retention and achievements of its students and to build upon the high standards it has set for itself.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Computing	2	Support for students	1
Construction	2	General resources	2
Engineering	2	Quality assurance	2
Business and professional studies	2	Governance	2
Performing arts	2	Management	2
Humanities	2		
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	1		

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology opened in Chichester in 1964 having previously operated as a technical institute in nearby Bognor Regis. The college operates on a single site close to the city centre. In recent years a number of building projects have increased the college's facilities. Courses in information technology (IT) and basic education are now offered in Bognor Regis, mainly for students who have difficulty travelling to Chichester. A similar centre has just opened at Littlehampton, some 17 miles east of Chichester.

2 The college is the main provider of vocational education in West Sussex. Chichester and the surrounding area have a population of 240,000. Good transport links bring students from an area spanning the 60 miles from Worthing in the east to Portsmouth in the west. Some courses recruit students from outside the region. The college has sought to become a centre of excellence for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and makes extensive provision for them. Overseas students have been enrolled from some 70 countries. Many of these students study English language courses, although a significant number are studying for vocational qualifications. The cultural diversity brought by these students is a significant benefit. A hall of residence on campus provides accommodation for 102 students. More than 700 students live with host families in the city.

3 West Sussex is predominantly rural and an area of small businesses of which 93% employ less than 25 people. Unemployment in the area is very low, at about 2%. There are good links with three local 11 to 16 partner schools. There are also eight 11 to 18 schools in the local catchment area of the college. Improved links with these schools are developing with the help of the local education authority (LEA). The West Sussex LEA also supports the college's adult education programme which provides for over

2,500 students. The college's mission is to serve the community by:

- providing a high-quality comprehensive range of further education and continuing education programmes
- providing routes for clients to progress from further to higher education, professional training or employment
- being responsive to client needs and delivering what they want
- supporting the economy, employment and individual development in south-west Sussex
- becoming a centre of excellence and innovation nationally and internationally in vocational education
- being a caring employer and equal opportunities employer.

The Inspection

4 The college was inspected during the week beginning 18 January 1999. Before the inspection, inspectors reviewed the self-assessment report and considered information from other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The college provided data on students' achievements for 1998 for the curriculum areas inspected. These were checked by inspectors against primary sources of evidence, such as registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies, and were found to be reliable. The college's data for 1998 and the individualised student record (ISR) data for 1996 and 1997 were used to compile the tables in the curriculum area reports. The inspection was carried out by 12 inspectors and an auditor, working for a total of 55 days. They observed lessons, evaluated students' work and examined college documents. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff and students.

5 This college was one of 30 in the current cycle of inspections which agreed to participate in the joint Department for Education and

Context

Employment (DfEE) and FEFC assessment of careers education and guidance. The joint assessment was guided by the inspection framework, with careers education assessors contributing to judgements made by inspectors. The emphasis in this report on careers education and guidance will help colleges and careers services to improve the quality of the careers education and guidance they offer and help the DfEE to disseminate good practice.

6 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the 88 lessons observed, 71% were judged to be good or outstanding and 1% less than satisfactory. This compares with sector averages of 65% and 6%, respectively, for all lessons observed during 1997-98.

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

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	2	8	7	0	0	17
GCSE	0	1	2	0	0	3
GNVQ	1	4	4	0	0	9
NVQ	0	9	1	1	0	11
Other vocational	4	7	5	0	0	16
Other*	14	12	6	0	0	32
Total (No.)	21	41	25	1	0	88
Total (%)	24	47	28	1	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 (%)	19	46	29	6	0	100

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

*includes basic education, access to further education, access to higher education and higher education

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology	10.5	80
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98	10.4	77

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

Curriculum Areas

Computing

Grade 2

8 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in computing. The college self-assessment report was comprehensive and inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- good course and lesson planning and maintenance of records
- flexible modular provision on some courses
- high level of students' achievements on level 3 vocational programmes
- effective curriculum management
- a strong commitment by teachers to continuous improvement
- effective teamworking

Weaknesses

- insufficient emphasis on developing students' individual learning skills
- failure of some teachers to use an appropriate variety of methods in some lessons

9 The college offers a wide range of courses in computing and IT ranging from a short introductory course in the use of computers to higher national diplomas. The school of computing and IT is also responsible for managing collaborative provision in Gosport. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that course organisation and management is a strength. The curriculum is well managed by course teams within clear guidelines and policies. Team meetings are held regularly. These are well recorded and minutes contain clear action points that are followed through by teachers. Students usually attend

team meetings and teachers take action on items raised by them. Teachers work effectively together and most part-time teachers are well integrated with teaching teams. Teachers have a strong commitment to improving continually their courses and the achievements of their students.

10 Most teaching observed by inspectors was good and in some lessons it was outstanding. Teachers follow clear schemes of work that are shared with students at the beginning of each module. Schemes of work are reviewed at the end of each year. Teachers plan lessons effectively. In most lessons, teachers carefully structure the activities so that students improve their knowledge and understanding at an appropriate rate. Most teachers use a combination of teaching methods. In one outstanding lesson on the exploration of 'IF' statements students were given clear and detailed handouts. The concept was clearly presented, and the teacher made good use of the whiteboard and overhead transparencies. Students followed this with practice exercises. This way of working enabled the teacher to identify clearly where students' difficulties lay and gave students the opportunity to improve their skills with confidence. There is little systematic development of students' study skills.

11 Students are regularly set a variety of appropriate assessments. The criteria for achieving different levels of pass in these are clearly stated. Students' work is assessed promptly and returned with helpful written comments. Detailed records of students' progress are maintained and their performance is regularly discussed at team meetings. Modularisation of some courses enables students to study at a time of their choosing and to complete programmes over varying timescales. For example, some students absent from a Monday evening class attended the same class the following evening instead.

12 On most courses, students who complete their studies do well in their examinations.

Curriculum Areas

Pass rates on the one-year first diploma course have been good, although there have been fluctuations from year to year. Pass rates on the national diploma and certificate courses in computing are good but have fallen slightly in each of the last three years. A high proportion were awarded a distinction grade and the good quality of their work was commented on by the external verifier. GCE A/AS level pass rates have improved in each of the last three years and reached 91% in 1998. In its self-assessment the college recognised that retention is a key weakness. Teachers are taking steps in an attempt to improve it. A variety of strategies were used last year to address this, including additional workshop sessions, collection and scrutiny of students' notes, changes of unit

scheduling, changes of syllabus and more tutorials.

13 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that teachers are suitably qualified and several have significant relevant commercial experience. Technician support is good at all times. Staff and students have access to a good range of books, periodicals, videos and CD-ROMs, both in lessons and in the library. Computer hardware and software are good and students have sufficient access to the facilities. Some teaching rooms are too small and have too little space for students to combine written and practical work. The new centre is being planned to overcome such difficulties.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
BTEC first diploma	2	Expected completions	18	26	22
		Retention (%)	56	88	76
		Achievement (%)	90	72	82
BTEC national diploma and certificates	3	Expected completions	122	103	80
		Retention (%)	76	83	71
		Achievement (%)	94	93	89
GCE A/AS level	3	Expected completions	29	16	23
		Retention (%)	72	94	100
		Achievement (%)	73	60	91

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

Curriculum Areas

Construction

Grade 2

14 Inspectors observed 14 lessons that covered construction and building service crafts, national diploma and certificate and higher national certificate programmes. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses included in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good range of courses and variety of study opportunities
- high student achievement rates
- good teaching
- effective management of courses
- good specialist accommodation

Weaknesses

- low proportion of level 2 and 3 students completing their courses
- some lack of compliance with health and safety requirements in workshop

15 The construction provision includes a good range of full-time and part-time courses, with flexible entry arrangements for students who wish to obtain technician and craft qualifications. The college offers national certificate and diploma courses, a higher national certificate course and courses leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in five building craft subjects. Progression routes are clearly documented and students are informed of the various career pathways available in the construction industry. Most craft and technician students use their qualifications to obtain work or continue their studies. All programmes are operated on a modular basis, allowing students to accumulate credits towards whole qualifications. Inspectors agreed with the college's identification of this as a strength in its self-assessment report.

16 Courses are effectively managed. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that clear schemes of work, the planning of course delivery and the monitoring of students' progress are strengths. Teaching was good or better in three-quarters of the lessons observed. In several lessons, teachers used good-quality visual aids and clear board work. Students were encouraged to describe their industrial experiences and relate them to the topic being taught. Inspectors observed a high work rate in most of the practical lessons. Students demonstrated the skills of planning their work, selecting appropriate tools and working without close supervision. Good features of practical work include students discussing their tasks, working in pairs or in small groups and attempting to resolve most problems with the minimum of help from teachers. In one practical lesson in carpentry and joinery, students were hanging doors and fitting door furniture. One student had sufficient confidence and experience to demonstrate his skill using hand-held power tools. Following this demonstration other students successfully completed their work. On some occasions, safety precautions in workshops were not enforced. For example, some students were allowed to work in the workshop wearing inappropriate footwear. There were also instances where students did not wear head protection in designated hard hat areas. Students' punctuality and attendance were good.

17 The quality of practical work in all craft subject areas is good and some meets high industrial standards. On craft courses the quality of students' written work meets the standard required for an NVQ award. General national vocational qualification (GNVQ) students demonstrated good communication skills in lecture presentations, which they prepared and delivered to other students in their own class. At higher technician level retention is good, but at national diploma and certificate and NVQ levels 2 and 3 it is poor. Students' achievements in examinations are

Curriculum Areas

good. The college's self-assessment report acknowledged these strengths and weaknesses.

18 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced for the courses offered. All full-time teachers hold recognised teaching qualifications, and training and development lead body training and assessor awards. The college recognises the need for new teachers to obtain formal teaching qualifications and for part-time teachers to gain training and development lead body awards. Both are college priorities for staff development. Practical training and assessment facilities have been improved since the college was last inspected. Workshops are good and provide a training environment which simulates the

various aspects of site working. These facilities are valued by students, and inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that these are a strength. Equipment and hand tools are similar to those used in industry and are adequately maintained. Whilst a small amount of equipment is old, the college has replaced some machinery used in the timber trades and for brickwork. The library and specialist learning facilities are good. Together they provide comfortable study facilities with an adequate range of written, audio and video study materials. Students have good access to modern computing facilities and appropriate software.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
NVQ	2	Expected completions	*	188	168
		Retention (%)	*	77	42
		Achievement (%)	81	100	65
NVQ	3	Expected completions	29	46	14
		Retention (%)	72	74	71
		Achievement (%)	90	100	100
GNVQ advanced and precursors	3	Expected completions	61	27	15
		Retention (%)	62	56	60
		Achievement (%)	95	89	89
Higher national certificate building	4	Expected completions	*	24	11
		Retention (%)	*	92	91
		Achievement (%)	93	100	80

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

*data not available

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 2

19 The inspection covered electronic, manufacturing and motor vehicle engineering, and included the observation of 12 lessons. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements in its self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- individual learning programmes for students
- effective course management
- appropriate assessment strategies
- good links with engineering companies and higher education
- programme of capital investment

Weaknesses

- low student retention on some programmes
- shortage of small consumable items

20 The three engineering schools offer a wide range of electronic, manufacturing and motor vehicle engineering courses through full-time and part-time study. A good range of specialist short courses is also offered. These include computer-aided engineering, design and manufacture and courses in quality assurance. Good use is made of information learning technology in all programmes but particularly so in computer-aided engineering and electronics courses where students can use the facilities on demand. Good links exist between the engineering schools and local engineering employers. The links have resulted in course developments and in keeping the college informed of the training needs of local engineering employers. There are also good links with higher education institutions that provide progression routes for students.

21 Most of the teaching is good or better and no poor lessons were observed. Teachers used well-devised schemes of work and lesson plans have clear aims and objectives. In the most successful lessons, teachers used a variety of appropriate teaching methods. Teachers made good use of the overhead projector and board work to explain engineering principles. They also used engineering components to illustrate the principles being taught. Teachers regularly check students' learning and understanding. The teaching of most engineering theory is based on learning programmes designed so that students can learn and progress at their own pace. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that this is a strength. It allows students of different levels and abilities to be taught in the same specialist workshops and laboratories at the same time. In one lesson, students of different levels worked at their own pace on a number of electrical tasks while others worked through mathematical problems. The practical tasks set were demanding and the teacher spent time with individual students explaining the principles involved and ensuring that they understood. The relationships between the teacher and students were good and the students made good progress. Teaching and learning in practical workshop lessons was good. In some lessons, teachers failed to provide work that was sufficiently demanding, not all students were sufficiently challenged and in a few lessons the teaching was so dull that students' attention was lost.

22 The quality of students' practical work is good and some is above the standard required by the industry lead bodies. Students are set regular assessments and assignments. Teachers' marking is good. They provide clear written comments that enable students to understand their mistakes and help them to improve their performance. Pass rates on most courses are good, although some results were not as good in 1998 as in previous years. Results on the higher national certificate courses have been particularly good with some subjects

Curriculum Areas

achieving 100% pass rates. Retention and success rates on the national diploma and certificate courses are also good. The table shows that retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate, and first diploma and certificate courses over the last three years are below the national average. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that retention is poor on some courses.

23 All full-time teachers are well qualified for the courses they teach. They all have teaching qualifications and priority has been given for them to obtain appropriate verifier and assessor awards. All teachers have industrial experience but, for many, this is now dated. The range of

engineering equipment to support the courses is good. The college has recently upgraded computer-aided engineering and electronic engineering in its open access areas. There is a good range of specialist equipment in all three engineering schools together with computer-aided learning equipment and a good range of software. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that for all learning programmes there is an appropriate range of up-to-date equipment. However, students sometimes have difficulty obtaining small tools and consumable items such as transistors. The library and learning resource areas have a good range of engineering books and materials.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ intermediate, BTEC first diplomas and certificates	2	Expected completions	64	94	110
		Retention (%)	78	64	72
		Achievement (%)	54	65	57
NVQ	2	Expected completions	94	96	24
		Retention (%)	84	77	96
		Achievement (%)	88	100	95
National diplomas and certificates	3	Expected completions	*	77	60
		Retention (%)	*	82	83
		Achievement (%)	80	97	72
NVQ	3	Expected completions	42	34	29
		Retention (%)	83	97	90
		Achievement (%)	100	100	40
Higher national certificates	4	Expected completions	*	*	25
		Retention (%)	*	*	82
		Achievement (%)	84	100	81

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

*data not available

Curriculum Areas

Business and Professional Studies

Grade 2

24 Inspectors observed 11 teaching lessons covering both full-time and part-time provision on business and professional courses. They agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good, well-planned teaching
- appropriate teaching methods to meet students' needs
- well-planned curriculum
- good-quality specialist equipment, including computer hardware and software
- good students' achievements on GCE A level and on part-time programmes

Weaknesses

- teachers' lack of recent commercial or industrial experience
- poor library book provision
- declining student retention on GNVQ courses

25 The school of business and professional studies is one of four schools in the business and computing department. It offers GNVQs in business at intermediate and advanced levels, GCE A levels and NVQ provision from level 2 to level 4 and a higher national certificate course in business. There are also one-year 'fast-track' courses leading to GNVQ advanced and GCE A level, and part-time evening provision. Although the department has attempted to expand the GNVQ intermediate course, it has not been successful and intends to stop offering it at the end of this academic year. There are regular course team meetings to monitor

students' retention and achievements, as well as matters of course development. The result is a flexible programme which takes account of the needs of individual students.

26 Most teaching is good. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that lessons are planned to meet the needs of students, cover syllabuses and achieve the standards set by awarding bodies. The aims and objectives of lessons are made clear to students. Teachers often use appropriate methods which take account of students' learning needs and promote productive working relationships. Inspectors observed a good example in an accounting lesson where the teacher brought the class towards a genuine understanding of complex topics through team work. The teacher praised, coaxed and inspired the students with good humour and used considerable subject expertise to improve their learning. Teachers' attention to meeting individual needs is particularly evident in the case of adult part-time learners, where the particular challenges of using the students' work-based experiences is taken into account. However, in some of the lessons observed, teachers failed to differentiate the work enough and as a result some students were not given work commensurate with their abilities. In some lessons, and especially in GCE A level lessons, teachers did not vary their methods of presentation enough to keep the interest of students, or extend their learning. The departmental action plan identifies this weakness and has a programme to address it.

27 Students' work is of a good standard and their portfolios are well organised. Assignments are appropriately assessed and effective internal verification is in place. Students' information and communications technology skills are well developed. Achievements in external examinations are often good. Pass rates for GCE A level and the Association of Accounting Technicians examinations at levels 2, 3 and 4 are well above the national average. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate and advanced

Curriculum Areas

courses were well above the national average until 1998 when they fell considerably. Achievement on the GNVQ 'fast-track' course remains good. Course teams recognise that student retention is poor on the GNVQ courses. Teachers give students effective learning support through tutorials and mark their work in detail to help them improve their performance.

28 All classrooms are well equipped with overhead projectors and whiteboards. Most furniture is of good quality and the standard of decoration is high. Both the last inspection report and the most recent self-assessment report indicated the need to provide greater

visual stimulation to the learning environment. Efforts in this respect have not been successful. Almost no student work is on display and wall posters are not business related. Students have good access to computers and software which is often of industrial standard. There are few library texts, especially for higher level work. Teachers are well qualified in relation to their subjects and all have completed assessor training and a majority are working towards qualifying as verifiers. They do not, however, have recent commercial or industrial experience and there is no policy in place to ensure that they acquire it.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in business and professional studies, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ intermediate and precursors	2	Expected completions	40	22	20
		Retention (%)	65	55	27
		Achievement (%)	76	100	43
NVQ Association of Accounting Technicians	2	Expected completions	45	51	52
		Retention (%)	73	76	69
		Achievement (%)	57	100	78
GNVQ advanced and precursors	3	Expected completions	110	87	88
		Retention (%)	75	71	61
		Achievement (%)	85	94	54
GCE A levels	3	Expected completions	87	80	81
		Retention (%)	87	71	67
		Achievement (%)	84	88	89
NVQ Association of Accounting Technicians	3	Expected completions	47	58	74
		Retention (%)	74	83	80
		Achievement (%)	43	35	69
NVQ Association of Accounting Technicians	4	Expected completions	27	51	38
		Retention (%)	85	90	63
		Achievement (%)	29	50	67
Higher national certificate and professional courses	4	Expected completions	23	26	18
		Retention (%)	65	58	55
		Achievement (%)	89	100	75

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

Curriculum Areas

Performing Arts

Grade 2

29 The inspector observed 13 lessons from a wide range of drama and performing arts courses. The college's self-assessment report was detailed and clearly identified strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good extension of students' knowledge through their involvement in performances
- good range of demanding tasks
- good student achievements
- students' progress through a range of courses of different levels
- well-managed courses, led by skilled and experienced tutors

Weaknesses

- poor retention on some courses
- some duplication of courses and uneconomic use of staff and accommodation
- poor soundproofing of dance spaces

30 The department offers an unusual and unique range of drama and performing arts courses. They include foundation courses in dance and drama which combine GCE A level drama with open college network certificates in performance and production, as well as an intensive acting course and one in musical theatre. These allow students to progress from one level to another at the college. The wide range of courses, however, leads to some duplication and ineffective use of staff and resources. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the progression opportunities available for students are a strength. The department is well managed with clear delegation of the wide range of responsibilities. Students are offered good guidance and support,

both through the formal tutorial system and informal contact with the head of school and their tutors. These opportunities are valued by students.

31 Teaching is of good quality and well managed. There are detailed schemes of work for all courses. Students are given an appropriate variety of demanding tasks to develop their knowledge. They were observed learning new skills through carefully-structured activities that gradually became more complex. In one successful lesson, students moved from clapping simple rhythms to sight reading and singing complex notation. The lesson was obviously enjoyed by the students who took great delight in acquiring new skills. Some students worked well on their own. They were clear about the nature of the tasks they were engaged on and the timescale for completion. Students following courses on the technical aspects of performance could demonstrate skills learnt in operating the lighting desk and sound systems and showed some knowledge of computer-aided design in the design of lighting rigs. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the high quality of teaching and learning and the professional expertise of the teachers are key strengths in this area.

32 Students' achievements are in line with or better than national averages. In intensive acting and musical theatre 91% of students achieve the level 4 qualification. Retention on these courses is also high at more than 90% for the last three years. Students are well equipped, through audition preparation classes and the experience of working on a wide variety of plays, for entry to drama school and many achieve this goal. The college offers opportunities for students to gain experience of a professional standard in both performance and production. In a college production students were involved in all areas. They had constructed the set, organised the front-of-house management and managed lighting and sound. They provided the stage management staff. Performance work is of a high standard and the

Curriculum Areas

result of the sound work ethos engendered throughout the school, that values team work and co-operation highly. In all practical work there was constant reference to the skills being learnt. The self-assessment identified that retention is poor but teachers have now put strategies in place to improve it.

33 Inspectors agreed that this is a well-resourced department. It is housed in very attractive purpose-built facilities with an excellent flexible theatre space. It offers students opportunities to use lighting and workshop equipment ably supported by an experienced theatre technician. The theatre lighting rig, sound equipment and lantern stock is of a standard to allow students to take

professional development certificates. The area has been well planned to incorporate an attractive foyer space for performances and good office accommodation for staff. However, despite the newness of the building, poor soundproofing is an urgent problem. Music from dance lessons constantly disturbs drama lessons. Dance studios are clean and attractive and well equipped with mirrors, barres and good sound systems. The library has a good bookstock that supports the needs of the department with a wide range of texts and theatrical books and magazines. All staff are well qualified and have a wide range of professional expertise.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCE A levels	3	Expected completions	22	44	34
		Retention (%)	78	70	68
		Achievement (%)	75	93	88
GNVQ and precursors	3	Expected completions	30	27	42
		Retention (%)	80	27	42
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
Professional development courses	4	Expected completions	*	42	80
		Retention (%)	*	95	90
		Achievement (%)	*	98	91

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

*course not running

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Humanities

Grade 2

34 Inspectors observed 16 lessons covering GCE A level humanities, general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), access to higher education, Institute of Linguists and open college network courses. Inspectors concluded that the college's self-assessment report identified the major strengths of this provision but that some weaknesses in teaching and learning were understated.

Key strengths

- the high quality of most of the teaching
- well-developed course material and schemes of work
- high levels of achievement on advanced level and access courses
- effective management and teamwork at course level

Weaknesses

- poor retention on a wide range of courses
- poor recruitment on some modern languages courses

35 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that course management of humanities courses, including access to higher education, is good. Teams work well together, clear lines of communication have been established and there is a successful emphasis on course review and development. Recruitment to advanced level courses has decreased by more than 20% since 1997, but most courses remain viable. However, some class sizes in modern languages are uneconomically small: GCE A level German has three students in the first and second year, and GCSE Spanish has five students. In contrast, open college network and Institute of Linguists evening classes have recruited well and a number are oversubscribed.

36 Students' written work is good. The majority of students write with accuracy, and organise and present assignments well. The majority of modern language students speak the language being learned with confidence and enjoyment but a small number find oral work difficult and need support and encouragement. GCE A level psychology students prepared overhead transparencies and made short and effective presentations on the Milgram study. An access student made a more extended presentation on eugenics, fielding comments and questions with skill and tact. However, a worrying lack of knowledge of European geography was displayed by GCE A level German students building their place name vocabulary. Visits to theatres, foreign exchanges and fieldwork provide students with opportunities for enhancing their work. Assignments are thoroughly marked and assessment is appropriate. As indicated in the self-assessment report, students' progress is systematically monitored. Achievements on all courses except GCSE are good. GCE A level pass rates are well above the average for general further education colleges. Rates of progress to higher education are high for both advanced level and access students. As the self-assessment report indicated, there are low levels of retention on a wide range of courses. It is clear that the department carefully monitors and analyses retention and is developing strategies to improve retention levels.

37 Teaching is good. As the self-assessment report indicated, most lessons are well planned, have a clear sense of purpose and are presented in a lively manner. Teaching is supported by well-developed schemes of work. In the most successful lessons, teachers use a wide range of appropriate teaching methods, including working in groups and pairs, whole-class discussion and student presentations. In modern language lessons, the use of the language being learned is widespread, appropriate and successful. In a GCE A level English evening class, students were fascinated

Curriculum Areas

by listening to an abridged version of the early chapters of *Great Expectations* on an audio cassette and then comparing it with the richness and poetry of the original. In an access history lesson, students built up a picture of nineteenth-century social issues from extracts obtained from contemporary newspapers after a visit to the Chichester archive office. Teachers' expectations of students are high. Students are supported and encouraged. However, in a minority of lessons teachers fail to sustain students' interest by varying their teaching methods enough. This weakness in classroom practice was not identified in the self-assessment report. Attendance at lessons and punctuality is generally good.

38 Teachers are well qualified and generally effectively deployed. The majority are qualified teachers. Most lessons take place in well-furnished, well-equipped classrooms. There is an 18-station language laboratory for use by the modern languages department as well as access to satellite television for teaching purposes. Video recorders and audio cassettes are widely available and used. Other teaching rooms are spacious, well furnished and well decorated with appropriate subject material. The library is adequately stocked with books and videos related to the courses taught.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE	2	Expected completions	278	238	186
		Retention (%)	81	60	68
		Achievement (%)	46	62	54
GCE A levels	3	Expected completions	426	545	404
		Retention (%)	84	70	60
		Achievement (%)	81	83	82
Access courses	3	Expected completions	95	106	82
		Retention (%)	70	65	62
		Achievement (%)	100	91	72

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

Curriculum Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Grade 1

39 Inspectors observed 10 lessons across the range of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They agreed with the college's assessment of the key strengths, but judged that one weakness had been overlooked.

Key strengths

- a coherent range of progressive provision enabling students' progress
- programmes of study flexibly designed to meet students' needs
- high standard of teaching and learning
- basic skills effectively developed through other subjects
- appropriate opportunities for the accreditation of learning
- the contribution of learning-support staff to students' learning
- an impressive range of specialist learning resources and facilities

Weaknesses

- initial assessment and subsequent review insufficiently focused on students' future progression

40 Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is located in the school of learning support, one of three schools in the community studies department. A majority of the 662 students have severe learning difficulties, but the school also caters for students with a wide range of other learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provision has been developed to accommodate increasing numbers of people with profound and/or

multiple disabilities. A coherent programme of 'extended education' and 'introduction to college' courses, modular programmes and pre-entry and entry level vocational courses means that students can progress from a residential environment to college-based provision and employment. Learning programmes drawn from a range of modular options in vocational and creative studies and social and basic skills are designed to meet the individual needs and aspirations of students who are not ready to undertake a full course. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that its flexibility in programme design is a strength.

41 Many of the lessons observed were outstanding. Teachers planned lessons which challenged students to extend their perceptual, motor, social and basic skills by undertaking a series of related activities in order to complete a project. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that its integrated approach to the development of basic skills is a strength. Students applied themselves purposefully and with enthusiasm. The work they produced was of a high standard. Many students were able to perceive continuity in their work. Teachers used questioning effectively, gave clear explanations and were helpful. They encouraged students to reflect on their work and to make choices about its development. Learning-support staff made a significant contribution to students' learning. Students worked with a level of assistance appropriate to their needs. All staff encouraged students and praised their achievements. Students themselves were often mutually supportive. The entire environment of the learning support school was used to maximise opportunities for learning. Students' behaviour outside the classroom, as well as in it, demonstrated that they were learning personal and interpersonal skills appropriate for adult life.

42 During the first six weeks at college, students' capabilities are assessed in each

Curriculum Areas

aspect of their programme. Teachers set specific objectives with students and devise differentiated lesson plans to meet their individual needs. Progress is reviewed regularly. At the end of the year, teachers complete an assessment record for each student. The student's year co-ordinator then prepares an overall record of achievement and agrees a progression route with the student. However, the processes of initial assessment and review of achievement are not sufficiently focused on how a particular learning programme will help the student achieve the knowledge and skills the student needs for adult life. The college draws upon a range of awards to accredit students' development of basic skills. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that students have appropriate opportunities for the accreditation of learning. All students receive an end-of-year college certificate which recognises their successful completion of their programme. Opportunities for work experience are provided in the college. Foundation courses are available in a range of subjects.

43 Teaching and learning support staff have a range of relevant qualifications. The school operates a programme of staff development which is responsive to staff needs. There is an impressive range of resources and facilities for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This includes an overhead hoist, talking scales, talking microwave, vari-height tables for wheelchair users and a computer software package which produces symbology as an alternative to text. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that its specialist resources are a strength.

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 1

44 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths identified in the college's self-assessment and found that some weaknesses had now been rectified.

Key strengths

- flexible and effective guidance unit providing pre-admission advice
- comprehensive procedures for induction
- supportive personal tutoring in many curriculum areas
- effective support provided by central support unit
- good support for students with learning disabilities
- committed staff in the student services team
- excellent accommodation service providing high-quality support to students
- an active student association

Weaknesses

- lack of liaison between departmental and cross-college service staff over departmental arrangements for tutorials

45 The college central admissions and guidance unit provides a comprehensive 'drop-in' service providing impartial and appropriate pre-course advice. Publicity materials are attractive and informative and are also produced on audiotape for students who have a visual impairment. There are good links with three 11 to 16 feeder schools that include 'taster' days in the summer term and attendance at school career functions by college staff. The college has recently re-established links with the LEA and eight 11 to 18 schools in Chichester and West Sussex.

46 There is a comprehensive induction programme for all full-time and part-time students. There is a clear policy on tutorial systems. Every full-time and part-time student is allocated a personal tutor and has individual tutorials which include opportunities for reviewing progress and target-setting. All tutors are given guidance on how to conduct tutorials. Tutor training is also available. Each department develops the tutorial system and fixes tutorial times to fit in with its own needs. This departmental freedom causes some difficulty for staff in cross-college areas such as counselling and careers who may wish to attend departmental meetings or link into tutorial programmes. Inspectors observed tutorials across a range of the college's provision and found that tutor support was good.

47 All full-time students are assessed during induction to determine their literacy and numeracy support needs. The college study unit provides a comprehensive range of specialist tuition to all those identified as needing it and currently 355 students are receiving this additional support. The same facilities are available to part-time students but their take-up of the support is low. The unit is well staffed and individual support is provided in the study unit or in the student's department. Welfare assistants provide less-formal educational help and also emotional support and encouragement. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Induction, review and evaluation materials are modified to accommodate students' needs and are available in two forms, one with text and another with symbols for students who have reading difficulties. Inspectors agreed that learning support is a strength.

48 Inspectors agreed that the careers information, education and guidance provided by the college is good. The college has a partnership agreement with VTWS Careers Service. The careers section of the college is staffed by a college careers co-ordinator and two

Cross-college Provision

part-time careers advisers from the careers service. The level of central careers advice provided to students depends on the strength of links developed with each department. The current accommodation provided for the careers section is small but more suitable accommodation will be available from September 1999 when existing building work is complete. The college also has plans for a centrally located careers shop in the college to provide careers information.

49 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that its student services team which provides a wide range of year-round welfare support for students and parents is a strength. This support includes advice on accommodation, part-time job availability and financial advice. The staff are available to students outside college hours. Residential supervisors provide support for students living in halls and a college nurse is available daily. The college has collaborated with a local property developer who built a 60-place self-catering block. The college has an excellent 24-hour service that provides information on accommodation available in the town. There are around 700 host families who are all checked and reviewed regularly. The accommodation is taken up by the growing numbers of international students and students from military families and from the Isles of Scilly. The college is also a partner in the Chichester Foyer project which provides accommodation and training for homeless young people. A college crisis-loan facility is available as well as college bursary funds for students experiencing financial hardship.

50 The college counselling service provides a well-used and confidential service. The college chaplain provides multi-faith support for students. The student association is active and funds clubs, societies and social events. The student association meets with the governors and principal each term in a formal liaison committee to discuss issues of concern. The committee has recently promoted the

introduction of subsidised childcare facilities for students. The college identified the lack of childcare for students as a weakness in its self-assessment report. A 22-place, low-cost creche has been created for the children of students. The college has also established out-of-school care and holiday schemes that include places for the children of students.

General Resources

Grade 2

51 Inspectors agreed with most aspects of the college's assessment of its general resources but considered that the college had not identified some weaknesses relating to the library and had overstated other weaknesses. Some weaknesses mentioned in the self-assessment report had been addressed by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- extensive new building and refurbishment programme
- well-planned and executed buildings maintenance
- good access and provision for students with physical disability
- good access to computers for students' use
- purpose-built residential accommodation for international students

Weaknesses

- under-investment in library bookstock and unco-ordinated expenditure on books
- inadequate liaison between library staff and teachers
- too small refectory

Cross-college Provision

52 The college is situated on an attractive and extensive campus near the centre of Chichester. It leases a small building in the nearby seaside resort of Bognor Regis; a similar centre in Littlehampton has just opened. The college has actively implemented an imaginative accommodation strategy. In the last four years, the college has built specialist accommodation for performing arts and for students with learning difficulties, and a 100-place nursery with classrooms for care courses. In the summer of 1999 it will open a new information learning technology centre that will include a library, open-access computing, and art and design and IT centres. An artificial playing pitch and sports pavilion has recently opened. This was built with substantial funding from the English Sports Lottery Council and support from a local hockey club. This extensive programme together with effective buildings maintenance has resulted in the good state of the accommodation, including communal areas and general teaching rooms.

53 The college's accommodation strategy has clear priorities and is well managed. The buildings and estates committee of the corporation gives appropriate direction on the priorities for development. The senior vice-principal and a team of facilities managers address key issues, including health and safety. The accommodation is well maintained. A planned and budgeted maintenance programme prioritises work, much of which is undertaken by the college's engineering and maintenance team. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that there is a clear resource management organisational structure. The college uses its teaching accommodation efficiently and regularly uses space utilisation surveys. Access for students with physical disabilities is good in most parts of the college. The community studies centre for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provides excellent accommodation. In its self-assessment report the college noted as a weakness the absence of lifts to three upper-floor areas.

There is now a lift to one of these and two others are planned.

54 Since the last inspection, the college has improved the number and quality of its computers. It regularly spends some 75% of its annual capital budget on computers, together with significant amounts earned from projects and special funds. There are 608 modern standard computers for students' use and most use the latest software. This represents a good ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students of 1:6. Students have good access to computers for individual study and access to the internet and CD-ROM. In addition to the open-access centre, students use departmental resources, including computers in classrooms that are not being used. An additional 76 open-access computers will be available to students when the new information learning technology centre opens later in the year. Staff have good access to IT for their work. The extensive IT provision is well serviced by the college's computer support unit.

55 The previous inspection report described the college library as poor. The college has taken this criticism seriously. The recently-appointed learning resources manager is central to the college's strategy to provide an integrated service in the new information learning technology centre. As an interim measure, the existing library was refurbished and additional study places have been provided. Opening hours have been extended and now include opening on Saturdays. The college has in the past under-invested in the library. It currently spends only £7.90 for each full-time equivalent student, which is very low. There are only 21,000 books, although most are modern. The college intends that significant investment in the new library will considerably improve the bookstock. Current expenditure is not co-ordinated and results largely from teachers' bids. Links between the library and teachers have been poor, although they are now improving.

Cross-college Provision

56 The purpose-built student centre houses the students' common room managed by the student association. The area is well used and offers good facilities. Mature students have requested their own common room and the college plans to provide this. The valuable purpose-built hall of residence largely serves international students, but it is too small and planning permission is being sought to build a new hall. The refectory offers a good service, including weekend meals to resident students. The refectory is a pleasant area, but it is too small at peak times. The college recognises this and governors have agreed its extension and remodelling during the summer of 1999. The 100-place nursery is an excellent training facility but its fees are beyond the reach of most students' budgets. A subsidised low-cost crèche has now been opened specifically for the children of students. Students have good access to sporting facilities in the college and at the nearby leisure centre. There are a range of sports pitches on the campus, including the all-weather pitch, and a fitness centre.

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

57 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths identified in the college's self-assessment. However, they considered that some weaknesses were understated.

Key strengths

- commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement
- good understanding of, and support for, quality assurance by college staff
- clear standards and arrangements for improving retention rates
- the quality assurance system clearly linked to the strategic planning process
- quality improvement performance indicators set at all levels

- a well-developed system of course review and evaluation
- regular review of the college charter

Weaknesses

- no clear analysis of student achievement data to inform quality assurance
- failure to integrate staff appraisal and development with the quality assurance process
- inadequate quality assurance of one collaborative provision course

58 The college has a long-established commitment to the principles and practice of quality assurance and continuous improvement. It has continued to improve its quality assurance arrangements since its last inspection by developing its procedures and practice for course review and evaluation and introducing numerous quality improvement projects. Review and evaluation has recently been extended to involve middle and senior managers in strategic planning. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that this is a strength.

59 There is a comprehensive and clear quality assurance policy that has developed since the last inspection. The quality system and procedures are well documented and have clear guidelines. The quality cycle is synchronised with that for strategic and operational planning. The college's 'quality' forum, a subcommittee of the academic board, meets regularly to ensure compliance with quality assurance procedures and to recommend action on deficiencies to the academic board and the principal.

60 The quality assurance process is designed to ensure the maintenance of agreed standards and the setting of targets that lead to achievement that is at, or above, the national average. The core of the quality assurance cycle is course review and evaluation. This is well

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developed and clearly understood by teachers. Achievement and retention statistics are analysed annually by departments but there is no systematic use of achievement data to indicate trends over time and thus evaluate the usefulness of action plans in improving quality. This weakness was not identified by the college in its self-assessment. Governors have recently taken a comprehensive review of the quality assurance process but their contribution to quality assurance is still small. Retention of students on courses has been identified as unsatisfactory and it is being addressed at senior level. The principal has recently established, and chairs, a retention working party whose aim is to improve student retention. The number of students leaving their course between September and November 1998 showed a marked reduction over the same period for the last three years as a result of the strategies introduced.

61 Performance indicators from each course are aggregated at school and departmental level. Course data are aggregated and, through school and department development plans, inform the college's strategic and operational planning. Performance indicators are used in some cross-college areas, notably student services in relation to admissions, guidance and support. Many of these indicators have developed from the college's review of the college charter and as a result of weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The use of performance indicators in other cross-college areas is less well developed, but the college identified in its self-assessment that this is an area in which progress is still to be made.

62 Staff development systems are well established. However, the college does not make clear how staff appraisal and development are integral to the quality assurance process. Lesson observation is an established part of the quality assurance system but it is not linked to the appraisal and development system. The college overstated classroom observation as a

strength in its self-assessment report. The college gained the Investor in People award in 1996.

63 Responsibilities for contracting, managing and monitoring collaborative provision are clearly allocated between the vice-principal (administration and management information) and relevant heads of department. Collaborative provision uses the college's quality assurance review and evaluation system for all but one course. In this course, the main indicators of enrolment, retention and achievement are not used. This weakness was not identified in the college's self-assessment report.

64 The college's procedure for producing its self-assessment report was thorough and well planned. The report was prepared in consultation with all staff, governors, students and external representatives. Successive versions of the report were considered by governors and the quality forum and scrutinised by the internal verification panels. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements made in the report.

Governance

Grade 2

65 Governors produced a self-assessment of their activities for the first time for the inspection. The process was thorough and, as a result, governors identified a number of key issues for improvement. Inspectors agreed with the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, although they gave them a different significance. Some features identified as strengths were recent developments which have not yet had time to produce their full effect.

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Key strengths

- the governors' strong commitment to the college's success
- effective oversight of the college's finances
- comprehensive and effective committee structure
- high standard of clerking
- positive approach to openness and accountability

Weaknesses

- the need to develop further the contribution of governors to strategic educational planning
- underdeveloped monitoring of non-financial performance

66 Governors have a keen interest in the work and future success of the college. They speak positively about the greater understanding of their role which they have developed over the last year. The previous concentration on financial monitoring is broadening to encompass a greater understanding of the college's performance and strategic development as an educational organisation. As a result of their self-assessment, governors have recognised that they needed to make this change.

67 The corporation has a determined membership of 18. There is one recent vacancy. The present membership comprises ten independent, two co-opted, one community and two staff governors, a training and enterprise council (TEC) nominee, and the principal. Governors' professional interests include IT, engineering, building, accountancy, marketing, health care and education. There are well-organised and extensive contacts between college departments and their nominated governors. By familiarising themselves with departmental activities, governors are learning more about their role in directing the educational character of the college which they

acknowledged in their self-assessment was, as yet, underdeveloped.

68 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.

69 The corporation has an appropriate committee structure, including committees for finance and general purposes, personnel, building and estates, audit and remuneration. All committees have terms of reference which clearly identify their responsibilities and relationship to the corporation. The finance and general purposes committee undertakes effective monitoring of the college's finances, including active consideration of a comprehensive set of management accounts. Development of the college's estate is carefully scrutinised by the building and estates committee. The audit committee operates effectively in monitoring audit matters and advising the corporation on the effectiveness of the college's system of internal control. A governance committee oversees procedural matters, including governor appointments, and this committee steered the self-assessment. The consultative committee, through which governors liaise with students, works well; the parallel group for liaison with staff is not effective, and is under review. There is a good level of attendance at corporation and committee meetings.

70 The clerk to the corporation is also the vice-principal for administration and management information. He is a qualified company secretary. There are separate job descriptions for each role and the clerk has good administrative support. Comprehensive papers are prepared for the corporation and its committees and provide a good basis for discussion and decision-making. Minutes provide a clear record of the decisions made as

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well as evidence of the amount and quality of debate given to key issues. In their self-assessment, governors acknowledged the strength of the support they derive from the clerking arrangements.

71 Some governors have served for a long time, and new arrangements to determine their length of service have been agreed. Newly-appointed governors are offered information and guidance about their duties, although there is not yet a structured induction programme. Governors have welcomed the development opportunities they have been offered, including external courses. A comprehensive set of standing orders guides the conduct of business for the corporation and its committees. The register of interests includes declarations by all governors and has been extended to cover senior management. The corporation has a code of conduct and a code of ethics which reflect the Nolan committee's recommendations on openness and accountability.

Management

Grade 2

72 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the college's management. An action plan to address weaknesses in management is being implemented and improvements are already evident.

Key strengths

- effective strategic and operational planning
- good financial management
- strong external links
- clear organisational structure and widely understood managerial roles
- well-managed departments, schools and courses

- good communications throughout the college
- performance indicators and targets for academic departments

Weaknesses

- slow development of performance indicators and targets for most business support services
- lack of budget management training
- lack of versatility in current computerised management information system
- little monitoring of impact of equal opportunities policy

73 The college is effectively managed. There is an increased awareness amongst staff of the importance of improving retention and developing teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students. Communications throughout the college have been improved through a variety of measures, including regular staff meetings, written briefings and weekly sessions at which staff can discuss matters of concern with the principal.

74 As the self-assessment report noted, the strategic plan has been developed in consultation with staff and governors. The plan commits the college to meeting the education and training needs of local people and employers, and supporting the economic development of the region. The college makes good use of available market research data. It has also forged good links with the LEA and organisations such as Sussex Enterprise and Chichester Business Federation. Departmental operational plans closely reflect the college's strategic objectives and the findings of the quality assurance process. Some plans are less clear and precise than others but effective arrangements are in place to assess their strengths and to monitor their implementation.

Cross-college Provision

75 The college has a wide range of policies and procedures which specify students' rights and responsibilities and guide staff in carrying out their duties. However, although the college has an aim to widen participation, it has not yet developed a policy for this.

76 Management and organisational structures of the college are clearly defined, a fact recognised in the self-assessment report. There are job descriptions for managers and terms of reference for committees. The senior management team, comprising the principal and four vice-principals, meets each week to formulate policy and monitor the achievement of strategic objectives. The team is complemented by the college planning group which meets fortnightly and includes heads of business support services, the quality assurance manager and a head of department, as well as the senior management team.

77 The college makes good use of working groups which are constituted to address specific issues. The retention working group has played a key role in highlighting the importance of student retention and in suggesting ways of improving the college's retention rate. The academic board is becoming increasingly influential in advising the senior management team on curriculum development issues.

78 There are seven academic departments, subdivided into a total of 21 schools. In general, departments, schools and courses are effectively managed. Departmental performance indicators are defined and targets set for FEFC funding units, retention and students' achievements. Within the context of a college-wide target of 85% for retention and achievements, departmental managers set individual course targets. The self-assessment report recognised that, with the exception of student services, progress in defining performance indicators and setting targets for business support services has been slow.

79 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's

financial management is good. The college's income is obtained from a wide range of sources; approximately one-third from non-FEFC activities. Senior managers closely monitor the college's financial performance. The college has a budgetary management system which involves devolving much of its income and responsibility for expenditure to departments. Financial information is available to budget holders which enables them to monitor closely income and expenditure but there has not been a systematic approach to training managers in budget management, an issue not mentioned in the self-assessment report. The college maintains a comprehensive set of financial regulations and procedures. The internal and external auditors have not identified any significant weaknesses in the college's systems of financial control. The college's internal audit service has not expanded its plans in order to ensure coverage of the college's whole system of internal control.

80 A good deal of computerised management information is available to support the work of the college. Senior managers, heads of departments and schools have access to the information available and receive effective support from management information staff. Regularly updated reports are provided on funding units achieved, retention and achievement. A weakness of the current management information system is that it is difficult for managers to have reports produced specifically for their own purposes. This issue will be addressed by a new system scheduled to be introduced in September 1999.

81 An equal opportunities policy covering staff and students addresses the recruitment of staff and students, harassment and discrimination. As the self-assessment report recognised there has been little formal monitoring of the impact of some aspects of the policy. An equal opportunities committee has only recently been convened to address this.

Cross-college Provision

Conclusions

82 The self-assessment report was evaluative. It provided an effective basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths identified in the report, but considered that a few weaknesses had not been identified by the college. At the time of the inspection, action to address some of the weaknesses identified through self-assessment had taken place. Staff of the college worked hard to ensure that data used for inspection were as reliable as possible. In the process they identified some improvements which can be made to data collection systems.

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

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (November 1998)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	27
19-24 years	19
25+ years	51
Not known	2
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1998)

Level of study	%
Foundation	13
Intermediate	36
Advanced	23
Higher education	8
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	20
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (November 1998)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	433	852	19
Agriculture	48	8	1
Construction	184	193	6
Engineering	130	322	7
Business	280	596	13
Hotel and catering	264	114	6
Health and community care	403	279	10
Art and design	656	389	16
Humanities	366	774	17
Basic education	166	197	5
Total	2,930	3,724	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 3% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 1998)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	137	148	0	285
Supporting direct learning contact	27	10	25	62
Other support	81	61	16	158
Total	245	219	41	505

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£13,962,000	£15,441,000	£16,587,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£16.17	£15.02	£15.58
Payroll as a proportion of income	68%	62%	59%
Achievement of funding target	102%	113%	100%
Diversity of income	34%	32%	37%
Operating surplus	£26,000	£868,000	£1,624,000

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
1	Expected completions	231	473	652	768	1,244	1,806
	Retention (%)	83	90	73	76	82	73
	Achievement (%)	86	78	52	74	69	68
2	Expected completions	607	1,076	1,410	754	994	1,483
	Retention (%)	74	82	78	76	79	75
	Achievement (%)	85	60	55	76	73	78
3	Expected completions	–	1,816	1,843	–	1,298	1,568
	Retention (%)	–	83	75	–	81	81
	Achievement (%)	86	83	86	78	81	91
4 or 5	Expected completions	–	80	127	–	591	555
	Retention (%)	–	83	98	–	89	88
	Achievement (%)	87	90	100	77	85	94
Short courses	Expected completions	174	274	598	578	2,876	4,088
	Retention (%)	95	93	89	87	86	94
	Achievement (%)	91	92	68	75	94	91
Unknown/unclassified	Expected completions	560	842	989	943	1,024	687
	Retention (%)	92	91	86	81	81	83
	Achievement (%)	85	95	94	86	93	94

Source: ISR

–ISR data not collected

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