

# Liverpool Community College

**REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
1999-00**

**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

*Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT  
Telephone 024 7686 3000  
Fax 024 7686 3100  
Website [www.fefc.ac.uk](http://www.fefc.ac.uk)*

*© FEFC 2000 You may photocopy this report and use extracts in promotional or other material provided quotes are accurate, and the findings are not misrepresented.*

# Contents

Paragraph

---

Summary	
<hr/>	
Context	
The college and its mission	1
The inspection	9
<hr/>	
Curriculum areas	
Science, mathematics and computing	12
Construction	17
Motor vehicle engineering	22
General engineering	29
Health, social care and childcare	35
Art, design, performing arts and music	40
Social sciences	46
ESOL	51
Basic skills	56
<hr/>	
Cross-college provision	
Support for students	61
General resources	68
Quality assurance	74
Governance	81
Management	89
Conclusions	96
<hr/>	
College statistics	

## 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 1998-99, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	10	53	30	7	–
Cross-college provision	14	54	23	7	2

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*  
Sample size: 104 college inspections

## Student Achievements

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

- as number of starters, which is the number of enrolments on qualifications where the student was expecting to complete the qualification that college 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 students have completed as expected or where they are continuing their studies beyond the expected end date of the qualification. 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 included.

# Summary

## Liverpool Community College

### *North West Region*

#### **Inspected February 2000**

Liverpool Community College is a large general further education college in the North West region. All staff in the college were involved in preparing the self-assessment report which was produced for the inspection. The report was subject to critical scrutiny by senior managers and governors. Inspectors generally agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report. They found that in several curriculum areas insufficient weight had been given to students' retention and achievements and that the quality of teaching had been overstated.

The college offers a broad range of vocational and general education courses with provision in each of the 10 programme areas funded by the FEFC. Inspectors awarded nine grades in seven programme areas, as well as grading aspects of cross-college provision. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and learning. The college has continued its successful tradition of encouraging people from groups previously under-represented in further education to come to the college; 69% of students are recruited from disadvantaged areas. Courses are now delivered in over 50 community centres. Basic skills provision, support for students and college

governance are outstanding. The college has effective arrangements for recruiting students who would not normally attend college and ensuring they are placed on appropriate courses. Learning and personal support services for students are sensitively delivered. The college has a well-conceived and well-managed accommodation strategy. Managers successfully steered the college through a major reduction in the number of main sites from 14 to six and the relocation of provision. Arrangements for quality assurance are well managed. The college has developed a rigorous system for internal inspection that mirrors the FEFC inspection process. It has worked hard to improve its systems for recording and analysing student data. Managers have prioritised action to improve students' retention and achievements. Despite improvements, some college retention and achievement rates still fall short of national benchmarks for similar colleges. Governors have an appropriate range of expertise that they use constructively to support the college in improving accommodation and the financial position. The college should further improve: the quality of teaching; student attendance and punctuality; retention and achievement rates; and the collection and use of management information in some curriculum areas.

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Cross-college provision</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science, mathematics and computing	3	Support for students	1
Construction	3	General resources	3
Motor vehicle engineering	2	Quality assurance	2
General engineering	3	Governance	1
Health, social care and childcare	3	Management	2
Art, design, performing arts and music	2		
Social sciences	3		
ESOL	3		
Basic skills	1		

## The College and its Mission

1 Liverpool Community College is the only general further education college in Liverpool. It serves a population of 464,000, and recruits students from the whole of England for its specialist and higher education courses.

2 The college now has six main sites and in addition delivers community-based provision in over 50 outreach centres away from the main sites in Liverpool. Since the previous inspection the college has closed eight sites and opened a purpose-built arts centre. Vocational provision has been reorganised so that, in the main, each programme area is located within one centre. At the same time, the college has expanded its community-based provision.

3 The economic poverty of Merseyside and of Liverpool in particular resulted in the area being granted European Union objective 1 status. The area will continue to receive European Union funding for the years 2000 to 2006. European Union funding has enabled the college to establish a network of 'drop-in' study centres, extend its work in the community, invest in equipment to deliver new technology courses, and respond to the educational needs of recently arrived refugees and asylum seekers. These developments have built on the college's successful and long-established community profile.

4 Liverpool has unemployment rates that are higher than average, low educational achievement rates and low levels of post-16 participation in education and training. In 1999, unemployment rates in Liverpool were 10.6%, and 21% of unemployed people had been out of work for more than two years. Whilst unemployment rates are declining, they are still more than twice the regional and national levels. In the most deprived areas of Liverpool, annual household incomes are less than 50% of the national average.

5 The Merseyside labour market assessment in June 1999 reports that only 30% of Liverpool

school-leavers achieved five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects at grades C or above, which is well below the national average of 46%. Information from the local careers company indicates that only 54% of pupils aged 16 continue in further education or training, compared with a national average of 66%. Of these figures 15% attended further education colleges. In the Merseyside region, there are five other general further education colleges and three sixth form colleges. More than 30 schools in Liverpool offer post-16 education.

6 The college operates in some of the most deprived communities in England. The FEFC has identified the college as one of a group which typically recruits a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas. In 1998-99 the highest number of enrolments by postcode were from Liverpool 8, which is listed as one of the areas with the highest levels of economic deprivation by government poverty indicators.

7 In December 1999, 13,293 students had enrolled at the college of whom 4,898 were full time. Of the total student cohort, 75% are over 18 and 39% are studying at foundation level. The college has 576 full-time equivalent academic staff, 294 full-time equivalent staff who directly support learning and 160 full-time equivalent support staff. It has met its unit targets in the last two years.

8 The college's activities take place within a framework of equality of opportunity. The college's mission is to be a community resource for the people of Liverpool. Its overall aim is 'to provide quality, equality and value in programmes offering access to and progression within education, training, employment and personal development'. Within its mission and overall aim, the college has highlighted three key priorities: to raise standards so that students achieve their goals; to continue to develop an inclusive learning organisation; and to secure the financial health of the college.

# Context

## The Inspection

9 The college was inspected during the week beginning 7 February 2000. Before the inspection, inspectors studied the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information about the college provided by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors used data from the individualised student record (ISR) for 1997 and 1998 for information on student achievement and retention. The college provided its own data for 1999. These were checked by inspectors against primary sources such as registers and pass lists from awarding bodies. Most of the data relating to vocational provision were found to be reliable. Inspectors were not able to validate data relating to students on general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses. The college was notified of the sample of its provision to be inspected approximately two months before the inspection. The FEFC inspection was carried out by 20 inspectors and an auditor working for

a total of 78 days. They observed 153 lessons, evaluated students' work, and examined college documents. Meetings were held with college governors, managers, other college staff and students. A team of seven inspectors from the Training Standards Council (TSC) worked jointly with FEFC inspectors in the inspection of construction, engineering, media and design, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), access to higher education, and GCSE and GCE A level courses. TSC inspectors interviewed 30 college staff, 47 trainees and New Deal clients and eight work placement providers. They observed 11 training sessions. Evidence gathered by TSC inspectors was taken into account when grading college provision, where it was appropriate to the FEFC framework.

10 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the lessons inspected, 65% were rated good or outstanding and 6% were less than satisfactory.

### Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	1	4	4	0	0	9
GCSE	4	2	3	0	0	9
GNVQ	1	3	10	1	0	15
Access to higher education	2	2	2	1	0	7
NVQ	5	5	4	4	0	18
Other vocational	7	35	18	3	0	63
Other*	10	18	4	0	0	32
Total (No)	30	69	45	9	0	153
Total (%)	20	45	29	6	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99 (%)	20	45	29	6	0	100

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*

\*includes basic skills and tutorials

# Context

11 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Inspectors noted through reviewing registers that attendance levels were adversely affected by a two-day strike during the inspection.

## Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Liverpool Community College	8.7	65
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99	11.2	78

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*



# Curriculum Areas

## Science, Mathematics and Computing

### Grade 3

**12 FEFC inspectors observed 22 lessons covering science, mathematics and computing courses. They agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report. The profile of lesson observation grades awarded by FEFC inspectors correlated closely with that produced by the college as a result of internal inspection.**

#### Key strengths

- extensive range of provision
- effective planning and marking of assignments and tests
- good achievements in GCSE mathematics
- significant rates of progression from access courses

#### Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some courses
- poor achievements in some subjects
- some inadequate teaching accommodation and resources
- limited range of teaching activities

13 The wide range of courses in computing, information technology (IT), mathematics and science has been successful in furthering the college's mission to widen participation and promote equal opportunities. Students are able to study from foundation level through to level 3 in all curriculum areas and to level 4 in IT. Pre-access and access to science courses provide additional opportunities for mature students. Courses are generally well managed. There is close collaboration with local universities to aid those students who wish to progress to higher education. Enrolments on GCE A level courses

have increased significantly. The proportion of female students and those from minority ethnic groups is high.

14 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching lacks variety. Most teachers provide little opportunity for group or individual activity. In some groups the range of students' abilities is wide and the learning activities used did not meet the needs of all the students or encourage them to contribute to the lesson. Some students have poor numeracy skills and do not benefit fully from quantitative work in lessons. Discipline in some lessons is not tight enough and a number of students play with computers instead of working. In GCSE mathematics lessons, good use is made of a bank of learning materials, which allows more able students to take on more challenging work. Assignments are well designed and relevant to industry. Assessment is accurate and in most cases feedback is constructive. Key skills are effectively integrated with other elements of the course. These points were recognised in the self-assessment report.

15 Although student retention rates show a small reduction overall, they generally remain at or above the national average. An exception is the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) at advanced level, where retention is considerably below national averages. For GCE A level science subjects, retention rates fluctuate wildly; they are sometimes at or above national averages, though each subject has fallen below in at least one of the last three years. Inspectors agreed with the college that examination pass rates in GCSE mathematics were significantly above the national benchmarks. Enrolments on the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) computing course have increased over the past three years, and pass rates continue to exceed national averages. Achievement rates for GCE A level science courses are well below national averages. Those students who progress from the access course to higher education do well. A number of former students have gone on to work for higher degrees.

# Curriculum Areas

16 Teachers are well qualified and experienced, though few have recent industrial experience. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report. There is insufficient technical support for IT. The teaching accommodation is not flexible enough to support the use of an appropriate range of teaching strategies. Specialist accommodation is poorly furnished and sometimes inappropriately used for theory lessons. For example, a GCE A level mathematics lesson took place in a science laboratory. Many specialist rooms lack

appropriate displays; whiteboards are small and some are stained, and overhead projectors are rarely used. There are sufficient computers for students at the two main sites used for teaching in this area, but there is not enough space between them. There is a good supply of support material for mathematics students at each main site and in outreach centres. There are not enough books for IT and science subjects.

## **A summary of retention and achievement rates in science, mathematics and computing, 1997 to 1999**

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G 726 computing	1	Number of starters	50	55	80
		Retention (%)	78	75	71
		Achievement (%)	82	93	93
GCSE mathematics	2	Number of starters	527	467	383
		Retention (%)	72	73	67
		Achievement (%)	37	46	59
GCSE biology, chemistry, human physiology and health and physics	2	Number of starters	190	135	139
		Retention (%)	65	69	68
		Achievement (%)	31	43	39
BTEC national diploma in computing studies	3	Number of starters	22	31	47
		Retention (%)	86	74	74
		Achievement (%)	53	82	78
GCE A level biology, chemistry, human biology and physics	3	Number of starters	73	194	*
		Retention (%)	82	62	*
		Achievement (%)	49	35	*
Access to science	3	Number of starters	72	87	73
		Retention (%)	69	66	62
		Achievement (%)	76	82	78

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*data unreliable

# Curriculum Areas

## Construction

### Grade 3

**17 Inspectors observed 17 lessons covering building crafts and furniture, building services and technician studies. They agreed with most of the college's judgements in the self-assessment report but identified some additional weaknesses. Inspectors from the TSC observed training in plumbing and furniture for five work-based trainees.**

#### Key strengths

- well-planned teaching in practical lessons
- good pass rates on building services courses
- good specialist accommodation and equipment

#### Weaknesses

- poor pass and retention rates on building craft courses
- some unsatisfactory teaching of theory
- poor accommodation for trowel trades courses

18 The college provides a wide range of construction courses though there are few at foundation level. Enrolments have increased by over 20% in the last two years. Students from four local secondary schools follow courses leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Links with employers and other outside agencies are good. Short courses for industry include gas installation and testing. The college worked with a national mechanical services contractor to design national and higher national certificate courses in building services engineering. The programme area is effectively managed and there are regular programme team meetings. Students attend course reviews. Internal verification procedures are well organised. Inspectors agreed with the self-

assessment report that good use is made of management information to monitor retention, attendance and achievement rates.

Comparisons with national benchmark data are made at course and programme level to assess performance. Where necessary, course teams produce plans to improve poor performance. Reports of students' performance are regularly sent to parents of full-time students under 19 years old as well as to employers.

19 Most teaching is satisfactory. Schemes of work ensure that the content of the course is fully covered. Teachers offer students good support and guidance, and students' progress is regularly monitored. Most workshop lessons are well planned. Students undertake practical activities in realistic working environments. In the better lessons, teachers plan their demonstrations well and ensure students understand the reasons for particular techniques. For example, in one lesson, the teacher explained the use of different tools in fixing wall coverings. Each student then used the tools with a range of materials. They noted how easy or difficult it was to use each tool, and then compared their findings. In a number of lessons, especially those teaching theory, there is little variety in the presentations given by teachers, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Teachers sometimes make poor use of questioning. Lesson plans do not always identify the resources to be used or the most effective method of ensuring that students understand the topic. Insufficient use is made of visual aids. Many handouts contain information not relevant to the topic being discussed. Insufficient attention is given to developing students' IT skills.

20 Most students demonstrate competence in their practical work and comply with health and safety requirements. In recent years, craft students have won regional and national prizes. In 1999, two students were finalists in the national 'Skill Build' competition. Students' portfolios of work and written projects are of a

# Curriculum Areas

satisfactory standard, and some show good use of photographic evidence and witness statements. Pass rates on many building services craft courses at intermediate and advanced level have been above the national average in the last three years. For example, the pass rate for plumbing at advanced level was 88% in both 1998 and 1999, and on the intermediate level course on electrical installation pass rates improved dramatically to 73%. However, pass rates for the electrical installation advanced level course have fallen from 61% to 31% since 1998. Pass rates on building and furniture craft courses at foundation and intermediate level are below the national average. The self-assessment report did not mention poor pass rates. Retention on the national diploma in construction has been below the national average for the last two years. The overall retention rate for the programme area fell from 84% in 1997 to 66% in 1999.

21 Teachers are appropriately qualified. A large purpose-built workshop for plumbing has two-storey installation bays accessed by an independent scaffold, providing an excellent simulation of a construction site. This strength is recognised in the self-assessment report. In carpentry and joinery, a full-size bungalow is used for installation and assessment purposes. Other workshops are less satisfactory; some have low ceilings, others are cramped. The brickwork shop is inadequate. Many manufacturers donate equipment and materials. For example, one manufacturer supplied shower fittings and provided training to staff and students on how to fit and service them. Learning resource areas adjacent to craft workshops provide students with good access to technical information. A well-equipped construction learning centre includes up-to-date computers with industrial standard software and technical reference materials. However, IT technician support is limited and there is no Internet access.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in construction, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Foundation craft: building and furniture	1	Number of starters	13	30	74
		Retention (%)	92	73	70
		Achievement (%)	67	18	40
Intermediate craft: building and furniture	2	Number of starters	149	220	278
		Retention (%)	78	62	60
		Achievement (%)	54	49	46
Intermediate craft: building services	2	Number of starters	110	153	173
		Retention (%)	84	64	67
		Achievement (%)	57	54	80
Advanced craft: building and furniture	3	Number of starters	46	92	90
		Retention (%)	80	86	81
		Achievement (%)	84	62	74
Advanced craft: building services	3	Number of starters	57	86	86
		Retention (%)	98	79	85
		Achievement (%)	68	91	68
Advanced technician	3	Number of starters	45	94	122
		Retention (%)	88	63	52
		Achievement (%)	95	78	78

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

# Curriculum Areas

## Motor Vehicle Engineering

### Grade 2

**22 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering the range of motor vehicle courses. Inspectors generally agreed with the judgements in the college's self-assessment report but identified additional strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors from the TSC observed one training session for work-based students.**

#### Key strengths

- much good teaching
- successful inclusive practices
- effective system of technical tutorial
- achievement rates above national averages
- good level of student competence
- thorough course reviews
- well-resourced workshops and practical facilities

#### Weaknesses

- some uninteresting teaching on mechanical and electrical systems courses
- poor punctuality and low retention rates on many courses
- unrecorded student destinations

23 The curriculum is well managed. A schedule of meetings ensures that communications are effective at course, programme area and faculty levels. Course teams meet regularly to review courses and plan improvements. Course reviews involve teachers, students and employers and result in action planned to bring about improvements. Progress on actions is carefully monitored. Internal verification is thorough. Key internal verifiers are responsible for groups of courses. Course teams review external verifier reports and carry out recommendations from awarding bodies.

Industrial liaison is strong. An active industrial advisory board informs curriculum planning. College staff assess students in the workplace. There is regular contact between managing agents and the college. The curriculum area runs courses designed to encourage women into technology. Saturday morning courses increase opportunities for people to study. These strengths are recognised in the college's self-assessment report.

24 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that teaching is a strength. Eight out of the 11 lessons observed were good or outstanding. Students assessed their own progress in developing underpinning knowledge by applying theory learned to practical situations. A group of national diploma students demonstrated their understanding and their competent practical workshop skills while working on alternators and starter motors. Well-planned practical activities provide students with opportunities for individual and group work. Teachers make use of their own and the students' industrial experience to provide relevant examples and set learning in context. Less effective lessons are characterised by uninteresting teaching with few opportunities for students to contribute to the lesson. Teachers actively pursue an inclusive approach to learning, catering effectively for all students. Two deaf students participated fully in one lesson with the aid of a sign language facilitator and other students on the course using sign language. An effective technical tutorial system is in place for all students, delivered as part of the course tutorial programme. Students are set targets to achieve technical competence. Diagnostic testing during induction, and basic skills and key skills support during the course, enables students' learning support needs to be met.

25 The self-assessment report did not identify that student achievement rates are generally above the national average and improving. Student pass rates on the level 1 vehicle body course improved from 25% in 1998 to 54% in

# Curriculum Areas

1999, and on the level 3 certificate in road haulage from 57% in 1998 to 62% in 1999. Students' achievements on the NVQ level 3 and the national diploma course are good. Students take pride in their work. Craft students demonstrate high levels of practical competence. Technician students use workshop activities to improve their understanding of technology and to apply their skills. The inclusive policy encourages mature students to enrol and two such students won national honours for their competence. Examples of recent student successes include distinction level achievements in course units and students with learning difficulties progressing from level 1 courses to technician programmes.

26 The self-assessment report recognises that student retention rates, although below national averages, are improving. A number of strategies are being successfully employed to maintain this improvement. These include initial diagnostic assessment, regular personal tutorials, key skills development, a bridging year for craft and technician programmes, and curriculum enrichment events such as overseas trips and industrial and trade visits.

27 The college's self-assessment report does not recognise the culture of poor student punctuality, which disrupts learning. However, the college is working to overcome this problem with strengthened tutorial support, action-planning and awards for continued punctuality. Student destinations are not systematically recorded.

28 Inspectors agreed with the college that specialist resources are good. They include different types of motor vehicles, painting and body repair equipment and diagnostic testing facilities. Significant investment has resulted in modern, well-designed accommodation that provides a stimulating learning environment. There has been significant improvement in the level of classroom resource since the self-assessment report was completed. Technician

support staff are fully involved in contributing to students' achievements.

# Curriculum Areas

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in motor vehicle engineering, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G 3980 vehicle body competence	1	Number of starters	31	28	76
		Retention (%)	100	100	80
		Achievement (%)	0	25	54
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electrical systems	2	Number of starters	24	40	30
		Retention (%)	75	42	47
		Achievement (%)	83	50	39
C&G 3830 repair and service of road vehicles	2	Number of starters	26	14	66
		Retention (%)	81	64	27
		Achievement (%)	10	11	45
C&G 3980 vehicle body competence	2	Number of starters	*	27	33
		Retention (%)	*	22	56
		Achievement (%)	*	100	53
NVQ vehicle body repair	3	Number of starters	*	*	24
		Retention (%)	*	*	38
		Achievement (%)	*	*	89
Certificate of professional competence (road haulage)	3	Number of starters	13	11	24
		Retention (%)	54	64	88
		Achievement (%)	57	57	62
National diploma	3	Number of starters	*	*	17
		Retention (%)	*	*	53
		Achievement (%)	*	*	89

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## General Engineering

### Grade 3

**29 The inspection covered mechanical and electrical engineering. Inspectors observed 11 lessons. They agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. Inspectors considered that the college understated weaknesses in teaching and learning, and placed insufficient emphasis on retention and achievement rates.**

#### Key strengths

- well-planned and well-managed courses
- theory effectively linked to practice
- good students' achievements in 1999 on electrical services courses
- effective support for students with learning difficulties
- good resources and well-maintained laboratories and workshops

#### Weaknesses

- some unimaginative teaching
- schemes of work and lesson plans not sufficiently detailed
- low achievement rates on many courses
- some low retention rates
- poor punctuality in most lessons
- insufficient links with employers

30 The college offers full-time and part-time technician and craft courses from foundation to advanced level. Students come from widely differing backgrounds, and many are recruited from disadvantaged areas. A specialised marine communication course attracts students from overseas. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the management structure is clear, and that communications are effective. Course management is good. Course teams meet regularly to review provision, and the action plans produced bring about

improvements. Student representatives attended course team meetings and student opinion is used to inform course planning. Induction for students is well managed. For example, the induction for GNVQ students includes a team-building week in an activity centre. Students receive effective support from teachers who take into account the challenges faced by students from deprived areas and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

31 Course teams actively promote equality of opportunities. For example, in NVQ level 2 engineering, over 90% of the students are mature students. They use the workshop facilities to build their individual projects, which are mapped to the NVQ framework. Inspectors agreed with the college that links with employers are insufficient. Students are not provided with opportunities to develop their skills on 'live' workplace projects. Students on most courses do not have industrial placements.

32 In nine out of the 11 lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory or better. Most teachers explained the learning objectives clearly to their students. They related theory to practice, and students were able to apply their understanding to real tasks. For example, one student on the first year of a GNVQ advanced course developed a financial management database for use at home. Another developed an effective design package for his business. Some teachers did not check that students were in fact learning. For example, two students in one lesson did no work for 40 minutes. In another, the tutor directed the lesson to the first two rows of students and did not involve the students at the back of the classroom. Most lesson plans and schemes of work were insufficiently detailed. On most courses the students had no opportunity to plan their work for themselves or work at a pace that suited them. Students are set appropriate assignments. Teachers' feedback does not always include enough guidance on how students can improve their performance. The



# Curriculum Areas

self-assessment report recognises all the strengths but not all the weaknesses in teaching.

33 Achievement and retention in most areas have improved since 1997-98. On the C&G course in electronic servicing, achievement increased by 64% between 1997 and 1999 and is now well above the national average. Pass rates on the C&G course in fabrication and welding increased from 29% in 1997-98 to 54% in 1998-99. The self-assessment report did not identify as a weakness the decline in achievement and retention on some courses. For example, the retention rate of 88% in 1997-98 on the GNVQ intermediate course declined to 60% in 1998-99. The pass rate of 86% in 1997-98 declined to 50% in 1998-99 and is now below national average. Students' punctuality

and attendance in most of the lessons observed was unsatisfactory. Latecomers frequently interrupted lessons and sometimes went unchallenged. Attendance in lessons observed was 64%.

34 Teachers are appropriately qualified and take opportunities to update their knowledge. Workshops and laboratories are well equipped and properly maintained. There are clear policies guiding equipment disposal and replacement. Inspectors agreed with the college judgement that some equipment is of industrial standard. Standards in health and safety are high and the safe use of machinery is demonstrated to all students. However, risk assessment is not carried out consistently. The library stock is adequate.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in general engineering, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G 2240 electric service part 1	1	Number of starters	36	27	19
		Retention (%)	75	63	68
		Achievement (%)	37	52	77
C&G 2240 electric service part 2	2	Number of starters	30	19	14
		Retention (%)	90	68	79
		Achievement (%)	11	18	82
C&G fabrication and welding	2	Number of starters	12	29	20
		Retention (%)	100	73	65
		Achievement (%)	67	29	54
GNVQ intermediate	2	Number of starters	10	8	10
		Retention (%)	50	88	60
		Achievement (%)	60	86	50
NVQ engineering	2	Number of starters	13	26	36
		Retention (%)	62	73	61
		Achievement (%)	38	0	55
National diploma engineering	3	Number of starters	*	27	31
		Retention (%)	*	63	71
		Achievement (%)	*	18	77
National certificate engineering	3	Number of starters	12	13	24
		Retention (%)	100	78	88
		Achievement (%)	8	50	67

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Health, Social Care and Childcare

### Grade 3

**35 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered that insufficient weight had been given to poor retention rates.**

#### Key strengths

- a wide range of courses
- strong links with outside agencies
- work experience effectively integrated with the programme of study
- good teaching and achievement rates on early years courses

#### Weaknesses

- some poor and declining retention
- poor GNVQ achievement levels
- underdeveloped integration of key skills

36 The college offers a range of health, social and childcare courses, which offer students the opportunity to progress from foundation to level 4 professional practice courses. The faculty has developed productive links with outside agencies such as universities, care consortia and the local early years forum. It has developed part-time provision in response to requests from local organisations. A planned series of meetings at course team, programme area and faculty levels is used to review provision and to identify and monitor action to bring about improvements. The self-assessment report recognises these strengths in course management. Work experience is well integrated with all courses. Tutors visit students on work placement and their observations form part of the regular tutorial review. A group of GNVQ students who enrolled in September had not had a tutorial by the time of inspection.

37 All teaching observed was satisfactory or better. In eight out of the 12 lessons observed by inspectors, teaching was good or outstanding. Schemes of work are comprehensive. Teachers adapt their methods in response to the learning needs of students. In the better lessons, topics were considered in depth and students were expected to respond to challenging ideas and information. For example, in a childcare lesson, the teacher used a series of tasks and games to prepare students for developing number concepts in reception and year 1 children. A game called Oware, devised by African farmers using seeds and hollowed out wood, was used. Through playing Oware, students increased their own confidence in number whilst gaining a new perspective on mathematics. Equal opportunities issues feature prominently in all courses, and stereotypical views are challenged. In a lesson aimed at introducing the concept of creativity in children, students studied research on children's approaches to problem-solving. They expressed surprise at the unusual strategies children were observed using during the research project. This exercise challenged the students' previous assumptions about children's abilities. Work experience is planned to complement classroom activities, and assignments are designed to consolidate the linkage. However, opportunities to tie key skills into learning activities are often missed, and key skills are not integrated with assignments. This is acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

38 Student retention rates on most courses have declined to below national averages in 1999. The self-assessment report did not identify this as a weaknesses. Strategies to improve retention include the setting of targets to improve attendance. The tutorial system ensures that students' absences are followed up. Late comers in lessons are asked for explanations. These and other strategies are contributing to improved retention on courses. Retention on the GNVQ intermediate course has improved from 82% in January 1999 to 94% in January 2000. Achievements on early years

# Curriculum Areas

programmes are consistently at or above national averages. Students who do not achieve their qualification within normal timescales are encouraged and supported to complete their courses. Students have achieved several national awards, including the Institute of Welfare Officers award and the C&G medal for excellence. Students' written work is of a satisfactory standard. In the workplace, students demonstrate knowledge, understanding and practical competence. One first-year student, working in a nursery unit was observed completing a sequencing task with a group of eight children. She then used the pictures on the cards to tell improvised stories to the children. By varying her tone of voice, she held the children's attention and gradually other

children left what they were doing and came over to join the group.

39 The NVQ base room is equipped with beds and hoists that meet the year 2000 regulations. Teachers are well qualified and regularly undertake vocational updating. Students have access to computers within the vocational area, and they can also use the computers in the learning centre. The library stock is adequate although it contains some old stock. Corridors and classrooms are used to display well-presented examples of students' work.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in health, social care and childcare, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GNVQ foundation	1	Number of starters	14	10	11
		Retention (%)	70	53	62
		Achievement (%)	79	60	55
Certificate in childcare and education	2	Number of starters	13	12	19
		Retention (%)	77	55	86
		Achievement (%)	100	92	89
GNVQ intermediate	2	Number of starters	22	15	11
		Retention (%)	71	44	65
		Achievement (%)	82	40	36
CACHE diploma	3	Number of starters	62	52	50
		Retention (%)	94	67	54
		Achievement (%)	87	88	90
BTEC national diploma nursery nursing	3	Number of starters	12	20	19
		Retention (%)	100	91	76
		Achievement (%)	92	90	95
GNVQ advanced	3	Number of starters	22	29	19
		Retention (%)	96	85	51
		Achievement (%)	55	48	68
Diploma in social work	4	Number of starters	31	24	19
		Retention (%)	76	86	58
		Achievement (%)	90	79	89

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

# Curriculum Areas

## Art, Design, Performing Arts and Music

### Grade 2

**40 Twenty-three lessons were observed covering the range of courses in visual arts, performance and music. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report but thought that weaknesses in students' achievements were understated and other weaknesses omitted. TSC inspectors observed one training session in media and design.**

#### Key strengths

- good teaching
- a broad and inclusive curriculum
- strong teamwork and support for students
- effective development of skills in visual arts
- excellent specialist accommodation and resources

#### Weaknesses

- poor achievement and uneven retention
- insufficient professional rigour in some level 3 lessons

41 Inspectors agreed that the college offers a wide range of courses designed to cater for diverse student needs and offer good opportunities for progression. The range of foundation level courses has been extended to include expressive and performing arts, and music technology. The curriculum effectively meets the demands of the local community. Outreach provision is offered in six community centres. Students benefit from a wide variety of enrichment activities in drama, music, theatre, art and media. They are encouraged to take part in field trips and in visits to galleries, museums, theatres and live concerts. Courses are well organised. With the exception of

outreach provision, all courses are located in a designated art building. This assisted close and collaborative teamwork and led to effective joint projects in art, drama and media. Students are well supported in their learning. Teachers work effectively in teams to maintain consistent and friendly levels of support.

42 Inspectors judged 18 out of the 23 lessons observed to be good or outstanding. Teachers plan learning activities to take into account the needs of individual students. This strength is recognised in the self-assessment report. Extra lessons in music are arranged each week for students who need additional help. Lessons and assignments are well prepared. During a practical lesson in art, the teacher provided a good range of resources based on the theme of surrealism to support learning. Humour was used effectively. In an art lesson, students were encouraged to develop individual styles and to experiment with techniques and materials. Students exploring self-portraiture made clever use of long sticks and ink to draw the head. In most lessons, targets and deadlines are set for the completion of tasks. Assignments are suitably demanding. Structure and discipline underpin practical art lessons. In an intermediate art lesson, the group maintained good concentration and successfully completed a series of drawings based on the inner structure of fruit and vegetables. Students did not fully understand the aims of weaker lessons. Some teachers did not engage students in discussion when it would have been appropriate. Assessment is thorough and teachers provide regular and supportive feedback that enables students to improve their work.

43 Students' vocational skills are well developed. They are encouraged to develop evaluative skills by considering each other's work. Visual arts students have the opportunity to develop basic drawing skills during life lessons. Dance students are encouraged to use traditional ballet techniques and refer to them using correct vocabulary. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment judgement that

# Curriculum Areas

curriculum enrichment activities enhance students' experiences. Students on vocational courses are involved in 'live' projects to extend their experience and skills. For example, music technology students rigged the equipment and arranged the sound checks for a professional band, as well as mixing the sound tracks. The standards set in performance lessons at advanced level lack professional rigour. Some students are inappropriately dressed and poorly prepared for lessons. Lateness and unacceptable behaviour often go unchallenged. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

44 Achievement and retention rates are above national averages in GNVQ intermediate art and design and GCSE dance. On other level 2 courses, including GCSE art studies, and on the access art and design course, achievement rates are declining. GCSE fine art achievements are below the national average. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that

achievements on level 3 programmes are poor. On GCE A levels in art and theatre studies and BTEC national diplomas in design, achievement is significantly below national averages. Student retention is declining on GCSE drama, and on the access art and design course. Attendance is below the national average for the programme area. Strategies to strengthen retention and achievement are contributing to improvements on many courses.

45 The college has an excellent purpose-built arts centre providing a vibrant and dynamic learning environment. The dance and central performance area is designed for flexible use and provides excellent technical facilities. There are good specialist facilities in visual arts. Partitioning in open plan studios has created intimate spaces, reduced noise and increased display space. Some studio management is poor and there is insufficient technician support for photography. Teachers are well qualified, and many have professional experience.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in art, design, performing arts and music, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE art studies/fine arts	2	Number of starters	180	314	314
		Retention (%)	92	92	92
		Achievement (%)	56	48	43
GCSE dance	2	Number of starters	14	16	10
		Retention (%)	79	100	90
		Achievement (%)	55	25	89
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	Number of starters	35	45	40
		Retention (%)	57	64	75
		Achievement (%)	75	93	90
BTEC national diploma popular music	3	Number of starters	18	28	35
		Retention (%)	76	50	77
		Achievement (%)	91	96	83
BTEC national diploma performing arts	3	Number of starters	26	49	53
		Retention (%)	95	57	51
		Achievement (%)	91	89	82

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

# Curriculum Areas

## Social Sciences

### Grade 3

**46 The inspection covered the range of sociology, psychology, government and politics and access to higher education courses.**

**Inspectors observed 11 lessons. They considered the self-assessment report to be robust and detailed. Inspectors generally agreed with judgements in the report but identified additional strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- courses which promote equal opportunities and widening participation
- the increasing effectiveness of curriculum management
- much good teaching and well-structured lessons
- enthusiastic student participation in lessons
- good retention and achievement rates on access courses

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient detail in GCSE and GCE A level work schemes and lesson plans
- insufficient checking of students' learning
- poor retention and declining achievement on most GCE A level courses
- limited use of resources

47 The college offers full-time and part-time courses, including pre-access and access to higher education courses in addition to GCSE and GCE A level programmes of study. Inspectors agreed with the college that the content of courses promotes a good awareness of equal opportunities. For example, options in access modules include sociology of gender;

black studies and social work. Students with disabilities are recruited and given effective support. Curriculum group managers co-ordinate a system of course and subject team reviews. GCSE and GCE A level group teams review the programmes and student support. Subject teams review the development and quality of individual courses and resources. The use of performance indicators to measure and monitor improvements in the delivery of courses is increasingly effective. Student opinion informs course review. Part-time and full-time staff development needs are identified through appraisal and lesson observations. Staff development activities are planned to meet needs and to support curriculum developments. One access teacher is currently seconded to the Liverpool John Moores University, and another member of the team is seconded to a trade union project to develop strategies for encouraging members back into learning.

48 In seven out of 11 lessons observed, teaching was good or outstanding. None was unsatisfactory. Lesson plans vary in quality. Less effective plans do not identify learning outcomes or link lesson content to learning strategies. Detailed schemes of work have been standardised to the format followed by access to higher education courses. Lessons are taught with conviction and students' oral contributions are enthusiastic. The better lessons are those which provide a variety of opportunities for student-centred learning. In an access to higher education lesson, groups of students studying communications read an extract and then compiled appropriate comprehension questions for other groups to use. Video extracts from the 'Brent Child Game' were used by an access group to consider attitudes towards children at risk within the context of legislation. Teachers on GCSE and GCE A level courses do not check students' learning sufficiently. Reinforcement of learning, regularity of assignment setting, checks on notes taken and assessment of reading and speaking skills are unsatisfactory. With the exception of handouts, teaching and

# Curriculum Areas

learning aids are rarely used. The college recognises the strengths but not all of the weaknesses in teaching and learning.

49 Retention and achievement rates for access courses are above national benchmarks. Retention in GCSE psychology is consistently better than national averages. Achievement in GCSE sociology has been above national averages for 1998 and 1999. On two-year GCE A level courses, retention is declining and achievement rates are below national averages. These strengths and weaknesses are recognised in the college's self-assessment report. Action to address the weaknesses includes improved pre-entry and tutorial guidance, and strengthened evaluation of teaching and learning. Recruitment to some courses is problematic. The number of starters for the one-year psychology and sociology courses has fallen. Numbers on government and politics courses have declined from 24 in 1997 to six in 1999. This year enrolment targets for courses across access and social sciences have not been reached in 22 of the 30 programmes offered. The college recognises this weakness.

50 The amount of specialist resources to support learning is low. As the self-assessment report recognises, bookstocks are barely adequate, particularly for access students. There is a strong reliance on handouts most of which are good quality and relevant. Little use is made of IT and audiovisual equipment. Provision of these resources varies with centres. Equipment used by an access group in one outreach site is poor; of 14 computers, two do not have appropriate software, one has broken down and all are incompatible with the two new ones installed in the centre's library and with other college facilities.

# Curriculum Areas

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in social sciences, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE psychology (one-year course, all ages)	2	Number of starters	97	77	66
		Retention (%)	70	73	72
		Achievement (%)	5	27	34
GCSE sociology (one-year course, all ages)	2	Number of starters	+	41	34
		Retention (%)	+	84	64
		Achievement (%)	+	56	65
GCE A level psychology (one-year course, all ages)	3	Number of starters	62	71	*
		Retention (%)	59	80	*
		Achievement (%)	55	52	*
GCE A level psychology (two-year course, all ages)	3	Number of starters	26	34	*
		Retention (%)	96	60	*
		Achievement (%)	54	62	*
GCE A level sociology (one-year course, all ages)	3	Number of starters	77	51	*
		Retention (%)	81	80	*
		Achievement (%)	45	48	*
GCE A level sociology (two-year course, all ages)	3	Number of starters	39	42	*
		Retention (%)	93	58	*
		Achievement (%)	46	52	*
Access to higher education (one-year course, aged over 21)	3	Number of starters	138	221	138
		Retention (%)	78	84	76
		Achievement (%)	63	51	88

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*data unreliable

+data incomplete



# Curriculum Areas

## ESOL

### Grade 3

**51 The inspection covered the range of full-time and part-time programmes in ESOL. Fourteen lessons were observed. Inspectors considered that the self-assessment report identified some strengths which were not borne out by evidence and that it omitted others. They identified some additional weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- broad and responsive range of provision
- well-planned lessons
- effective use of mother tongue to enhance learning
- well-qualified and experienced team of teachers

#### Weaknesses

- teaching insufficiently tailored to different levels and abilities
- lack of learning plans and recording of individual progress
- curriculum not fully matched with student needs
- some unsatisfactory attendance and poor punctuality

52 The college has developed a broad range of programmes at different levels and with established progression routes. Provision is based on two main sites and five outreach centres. Course options available include numeracy, literacy, oracy and IT. There are bridging routes from ESOL into business, science and access to higher education courses. The ESOL team is working closely with social services to expand provision to meet the needs of newly arrived asylum seekers. This includes setting up short induction programmes in hostels for them, running summer courses and

planning a fast track route for professionals. Inter-agency working and collaboration with community groups is well established. A project with the Somali community for young people is one of several which widen participation and promote community links. Visits and social events are a regular feature of the ESOL programme.

53 All lessons observed were well planned with clear aims and structured learning activities. Teaching was generally lively. Students work hard, participate confidently and are enthusiastic about their studies and the personal support they receive. Teachers know their students' capabilities well and monitor paired work effectively. Most teaching is addressed to the group as a whole, and this style of teaching gives little opportunity for individuals to work on their own. Much language practice was mechanistic and did not lead to real communication between students. Learning materials are generally appropriate, but there is a lack of materials or activities to support students at differing levels within the same lesson. Teachers have developed their own materials to support learning on lower level courses. Nine members of staff are bilingual and they use their skills effectively to support learning, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Bilingual tuition in Chinese, Arabic or Somali develops the confidence and enhances the progress of beginner-level students. One group of Muslim women practised making appointments with the doctor, and the teacher used Arabic to check their learning and clarify instructions. Induction materials have been translated into five languages. Teachers regularly interpret to facilitate guidance and assessment sessions.

54 Good use is made of initial assessment to place students at appropriate starting levels on courses. There is no subsequent system for diagnostic assessment. Individual learning plans do not identify goals against which to review progress. The outcomes of termly

# Curriculum Areas

tutorial reviews are recorded for both full-time and part-time students, but there is no individual action-planning at the start of the year when students return to a new level of study. For many students, the achievement of a qualification is not their main reason for learning English. However, the main ESOL programmes are based on the requirements of accreditation. This narrows the curriculum framework and stops teachers from focusing on meeting learners' needs. Few students gain full or even partial accreditation. For example, in June 1999, 35% of the 448 students completing programmes achieved accreditation. The course team recognise these weaknesses and is reviewing its approach. Disaggregated and reliable data on achievement rates is not available, and this prevents systematic monitoring and setting of targets. In 1998-99, retention was satisfactory at 74%. Average attendance in the lessons observed was 70%, and in some lessons attendance was unsatisfactory. In a few lessons, punctuality was poor and latecomers were insufficiently challenged. The weaknesses in retention and achievement were not clearly identified in the self-assessment report.

55 Inspectors agreed that the team of full-time and part-time staff are experienced and well qualified, holding specialist ESOL certificates or diplomas. Several have progressed through internal training from volunteers to become established postholders. Some staff deliver teacher training in ESOL and there is active participation in staff development. Part-time staff are full members of a strong team who share materials and consult each other well on student progress. They provide a great deal of informal support to students facing personal or financial problems. Base rooms for full-time courses are adequate; some displays reflecting cultural diversity. The development of open learning and use of IT within the curriculum is constrained by the lack of facilities. Students are actively encouraged to use the learning centre in the arts centre nearby.

# Curriculum Areas

## Basic Skills

### Grade 1

**56 Inspectors observed 21 lessons in basic skills in 10 different locations. The college had successfully mapped its basic skills provision across the college and had produced an appropriate self-assessment of this provision. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- outstanding teaching and learning
- individual programmes that match students' learning needs
- increasing proportion of students achieving their learning goals
- improving retention rates
- responsive and flexible provision that widens participation
- effective curriculum management
- highly qualified teachers

#### Weaknesses

- low numbers of students achieving full awards

57 The scope of the inspection covered literacy and numeracy courses below level 2. This included: discrete basic skills courses at centres throughout the city; study support in basic skills provided in college study centres and as a part of students' main courses; special programmes of basic skills aimed at particular groups of students who do not attend main college sites; and some key skills provision at level 1. Basic skills provision is made at five main sites and more than 30 other community centres for more than 2,100 students. Most basic skills provision is managed within the faculty of adult basic education. The main programme consists of 'drop-in' sessions in college study centres. These centres are well known in the city and easily accessible to potential students, as

recognised in the college's self-assessment. They were recently featured in a popular television soap opera. The basic skills programme is well managed. Staff are well informed and communication across the team of 36 full-time and 32 part-time teachers is good. Tracking of students is effective and the quality of management information within the programme area is high. Liaison between basic skills managers and those responsible for study support and special programmes of basic skills works well. Managers have very good links with a wide range of organisations. They are leading a multi-agency initiative in the city in response to the report of the committee chaired by Sir Claus Moser on the national development of basic skills, *Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A fresh start*.

58 Inspectors agreed with the strengths noted in the self-assessment report relating to the high standards of teaching. Of the 21 lessons observed, 18 were judged to be good or outstanding which is significantly better than the average for the programme area in 1998-99. Teachers provide very effective individual tuition for students. Lesson and course objectives are clear and well met. 'Drop-in' sessions are well organised. Teachers manage the time well and their interventions with students are effective and well timed. Teachers are skilled at designing learning tasks that are appropriate for the wide range of students' abilities and experience. An outstanding feature of the provision is the careful and accurate matching of individual programmes to students' learning needs. Teachers keep good records of the progress made by students and review progress with them in order to revise their learning objectives. Some opportunities are missed to provide greater variety of learning methods. There are few group sessions at some centres and an over-reliance on printed materials. Most centres have computers available for students to use, but there is little use of IT to enhance learning.

# Curriculum Areas

59 The college provides a good range of basic skills awards. Most students work towards National Open College Network (NOCN) credits at entry level or level 1. Rates of achievement of whole awards have improved during the last three years but are still low at 41% for literacy and 32% for numeracy. This is acknowledged in the college's self-assessment. A higher proportion of students achieves one or more NOCN credits. Assessment criteria are rigorously applied. Pass rates for C&G numeracy level 1 have been consistently high but the pass rates for some other awards, including C&G Wordpower level 1, have remained below national averages. Overall, an increasing percentage of basic skills students are achieving their learning goals, including credit towards full awards; 61% did so in 1998-99. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. Overall, retention rates have improved during the last three years to more than 70%. Students gain in confidence and develop useful study skills, and most progress to other further education courses. Teachers have high expectations of their students and celebrate their success.

60 The principal regularly attends events to present awards to basic skills students. Inspectors agreed that teachers are well qualified. More than 70% have degrees and 81% have specialist basic skills teaching qualifications. Teachers work well in teams and are eager to make further improvements to provision. There is a comprehensive staff development programme. Teachers work to clear annual objectives but not all have been appraised. All managers have been appraised. Teachers have access to an appropriate range of teaching equipment. Standards of accommodation are generally good, although a few of the older buildings are in need of refurbishment. The study centres for 'drop-in' provision vary in size and some are too small for the planned numbers of students at peak times. All of the study centres are suitably furnished and equipped for adult students, and they provide a welcoming learning environment that is highly valued. Learning materials in the study centres are relevant and of good quality.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in basic skills, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
NOCN literacy (one-year course, primary provision)	Entry and 1	Number of starters	1,068	1,125	1,139
		Retention (%)	64	73	72
		Achievement (%)	36*	40*	41*
NOCN numeracy (one-year, primary provision)	Entry and 1	Number of starters	601	633	786
		Retention (%)	60	73	68
		Achievement (%)	37*	38*	32*
C&G 3750 numeracy (one-year course, primary provision)	1	Number of starters	72	126	402
		Retention (%)	72	87	77
		Achievement (%)	56	63	63
C&G 3793 communication skills (Wordpower) stage 1 (one-year course, primary provision)	1	Number of starters	20	38	61
		Retention (%)	60	39	56
		Achievement (%)	8	73	38

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*full awards only

# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 1

**61 Inspectors broadly agreed with the college's judgements on support for students. One of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report had been addressed before inspection.**

#### Key strengths

- well-thought-out arrangements for widening participation
- good strategies for placing students on appropriate courses
- comprehensive support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good systems for reviewing and recording students' progress
- outstanding range of sensitively delivered personal support
- carefully planned careers education and guidance

#### Weaknesses

- low take-up of learning support amongst 16 to 19 year old students

62 Liverpool Community College's pride in its title is well justified. Imaginative and effective arrangements are in place for responding to community needs. These include tailor-made packages for year 11 pupils excluded from school, taught in college or in local youth centres if the young people are reluctant to come into college. Placements are offered in the 'drop-in' study centres to black pupils no longer attending school. The college provides basic skills education to people on supervision orders and puts on drama courses in bail hostels. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that attractive and informative publicity and promotion materials support these initiatives.

63 Course specialists interview all applicants to the college. The student services unit provides well-informed, impartial guidance to applicants whose choice of course is inappropriate for their career aims or qualifications. Full-time students undergo initial assessment. Centrally produced tests are used to assess skills in reading, comprehension, writing and numeracy. There is exemplary practice in initial assessment within curriculum areas, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. An inclusive learning pilot in initial assessment encourages staff to look beyond assessing students' English and numeracy skills to determine their vocational support needs. For example, painting and decorating students are assessed for their ability to cope with heights, and students are helped where necessary to overcome difficulties with heights.

64 The college has developed a number of strategies to help students at all levels achieve their learning goals. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the quality of support offered to the 437 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Support for deaf students is particularly well managed. It is based on a joint agreement between student and staff setting out how the student learns best. The college has achieved the New Start quality kitemark for efforts to raise retention and achievement on the GNVQ intermediate course in IT. GCE A level students are challenged to work for the key skill 'improving own learning and performance'. Most English, mathematics and languages support takes place in the 'drop-in' study centres located on the main sites. Inspectors did not fully agree with the college's judgement that students on all programmes can easily access learning support in English and mathematics. A group of students on care courses was unable to arrange appointments at a 'drop-in' centre which fitted with their timetable and work placement commitments. The college recognised as a weakness the low

# Cross-college Provision

take-up of learning support among the 3,000 16 to 18 year olds. Some staff hold the mistaken view that support in mathematics and English was only for students who are struggling with their course.

65 Tutors are well supported in their role. All students have a tutorial entitlement, and tutors value the materials that student services staff have developed to support the tutorial programme. The student services team also help by delivering some of the lessons within the tutorial programme, and a growing number of tutors take this up. One-to-one tutorials are particularly effective. There is good practice in individual reviewing and recording of students' progress. Students' responsibility for their own learning is promoted through reviews which start with the students' own assessment of their performance.

66 The personal support offered to students is outstanding, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Financial help and advice is readily available and sensitively handled. Customer support officers provide friendly and accessible administrative services. The college employs six counsellors, four with British Association of Counselling accreditation, and they provide a confidential service for students. Childcare provision is excellent; there are six nurseries, two of which have provision for children under two.

67 The careers libraries on all the main sites are amply stocked with appropriate careers information, including software packages, higher education prospectuses and files on specific careers. The college's highly qualified careers guidance staff work with careers advisers from Career Decisions Ltd to offer a range of services. Nearly half of the courses requested careers lessons during the last autumn term, and careers staff have worked with all GCSE and GCE A level tutorial groups.

## General Resources

### Grade 3

**68 Inspectors broadly agreed with the judgements in the college's self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- well-conceived and well-managed accommodation strategy
- effective arrangements for managing expenditure on capital equipment
- good range of up-to-date computers
- well-furnished and well-equipped 'drop-in' study centres

#### Weaknesses

- poor quality of accommodation on older college sites
- outdated equipment in some vocational areas
- underdeveloped links between IT strategy and curriculum development

69 Since the last inspection the college has made significant progress in implementing its accommodation strategy. It now operates on six main sites instead of 14, and also makes extensive provision in over 50 outreach centres across the city. The changes have been well managed and carefully structured to take account of the needs of the local communities within the city and the need to make significant improvements in space utilisation and maintenance costs. Rationalisation has already halved the available space, produced savings of over £3.8 million in running costs with no adverse effect on the college's ability to develop provision in line with its mission. Subjects and courses have been relocated to concentrate specialisms on one site. The first major phase of building was completed in February 1999 when the arts centre was opened. This provides excellent accommodation for arts provision,

# Cross-college Provision

which had previously been based in four different centres. Work has begun on a second building to house science, IT and humanities courses. Expenditure on maintenance and refurbishment has been carefully prioritised. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment judgement that improvements to some of the buildings has increased access for people with mobility difficulties. The external appearance of some buildings is drab. The college recognises the need to improve reception areas at the older sites. Some internal refurbishment of classrooms has been carried out at sites that will be vacated during the next phase of the accommodation strategy. The quality of some accommodation remains poor. There is a marked contrast between those classrooms and corridors where staff and students have made efforts to improve the environment with displays of students' work or other material, and those areas where little or no effort has been made.

70 Inspectors agreed with the college that the arrangements to prioritise expenditure on capital equipment are effective. A college group receives proposals for expenditure that have to be justified with reference to college objectives. The same group receives a post-investment appraisal evaluating the benefits derived from the expenditure. The equipment available to support learning has been significantly upgraded in several curriculum areas. The new arts centre has excellent and up-to-date equipment to support art, design and performing arts. In engineering and construction, purchases of equipment and equipment donated from major companies have made significant improvements. As the self-assessment report recognises, equipment in other curriculum areas, including science, catering and engineering, remains in need of replacement.

71 Learning resource centres are conveniently located across the city sites providing ease of access for students. The five main centres provide specialist support to the curriculum

areas as well as 'drop-in' IT facilities. However, evening opening hours are restricted on some sites. 'Drop-in' study centres are well furnished and well equipped with appropriate resources. They have played a significant part in the college's strategy to widen participation. Links between subject areas and learning resource centre staff are too weak to ensure resources are kept up to date and available when students need them. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

72 The college is in the process of implementing a detailed information and learning technology plan. The stock of up-to-date computers was enhanced last year with £0.5 million spent on improving the ratio of students to computers to 7:1. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that student access to IT is a strength. However, some evidence claimed to support the strength is premature: the college intranet, as yet, contains little evidence of curriculum material. Some curriculum areas have not made any significant effort to embrace the potential of IT to enhance learning. Arrangements to monitor the students' use of IT facilities is rudimentary. Technician support is available at all sites but there has been slow progress in ensuring that response rates to requests for assistance are monitored and that skills of technician staff are fully up to date.

73 Recreational and social facilities for students are limited. Sports halls on two sites and playing fields at a third site support a programme of activities which is supplemented by the use of sports facilities elsewhere in the city. Catering facilities are adequate on all main sites. A significant number of students bring their own food, but there is nowhere for them to eat it in comfort on college premises. Staff workrooms are adequate or better, and part-time staff are able to make use of workspace when they need it.

# Cross-college Provision

## Quality Assurance

### Grade 2

**74 The inspectors broadly agreed with the self-assessment report but found additional strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- well-managed arrangements for quality assurance
- self-assessment leading to continuous improvement
- exhaustive and rigorous internal inspection process
- extensive participation in wide-ranging staff development activities
- good use of performance indicators at course level

#### Weaknesses

- some shortcomings in self-assessment and action-planning
- inconsistent use of student views at course level
- gaps in monitoring the quality of business support services

75 Inspectors agreed with the college that there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement. This is reflected in the strategic aim of raising standards. There are extensive arrangements for quality assurance which include creating defined management teams with clear terms of reference and assigning quality assurance managers to each faculty. Processes for monitoring, review and evaluation of procedures, policies, initiatives and action plans are extensive and drive continuous improvement. However, quality assurance arrangements for the business support services are less well developed. Customer satisfaction surveys have been used in some areas to obtain feedback on services provided. This has led to refinement of processes, for example, in study

support and cleaning services. Auditing against service standards has taken place in some areas including estates management, caretaking, finance and customer support services. The college recognises that practice is inconsistent. A generic quality assurance manual covering all business support services was launched in January 2000.

76 Inspectors agreed that self-assessment has resulted in significant improvement in the student experience. The lesson observation profile demonstrates significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. In this inspection, 65% of lessons were graded 1 or 2, and 6% graded less than satisfactory, compared with 54% graded 1 or 2, and 12% less than satisfactory at the last inspection. The system of self-assessment starts at course level and builds up to whole-college self-assessment. At each stage, staff acting as 'critical friends' and managers validate the self-assessment reports. The process is well understood by all staff and results in action plans to address weaknesses. These are formally reviewed twice yearly. Implementation of a new management information system has made data widely available to curriculum group managers through the intranet. Good use of performance indicators for retention, enrolment and students' achievements at course level informs self-assessment reports. Self-assessment on some courses is not sufficiently evaluative and there is little evidence of thorough action-planning. This weakness is recognised by the college.

77 Inspectors agreed with the college that the internal inspection process is rigorous. Planning is effective. Comprehensive guidelines and training for internal inspectors and course teams precede inspection. Reports are comprehensive and closely mirror the FEFC inspection process. Feedback sessions are formal and minuted, providing an accurate view of the area inspected. Progress on the action plans produced is formally reviewed twice yearly.



# Cross-college Provision

78 The observation of teaching and learning process has been further developed and now includes all full-time and substantive part-time staff. In 1999-2000, tutorials were included. Observations are carried out annually. The process is well managed by the curriculum group managers. The results of observations are summarised and used to inform self-assessment judgements and staff development. The college appraisal system covers all staff. The process includes a review of staff development undertaken and the setting and achievement of objectives. The college recognises the need to link observations with the appraisal process and to develop greater consistency in its implementation of the appraisal process.

79 The college's strong commitment to staff development is recognised by the achievement of the Investors in People award in June 1999. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is extensive and increasing participation in staff development activities which now include 92% of full-time staff and 72% of part-time staff. The college has three training half days each year. For two of these, the curriculum areas determine the programme; the third is a college-wide event focusing on a specific theme. The theme selected supports the strategic aims; in 1997-98 the theme was key skills, in 1998-99, inclusive learning. In addition, there is a very wide range of internal staff development activities. The staff development management group monitors staff development and ensures the effective allocation of the budget. Staff are expected to provide evaluations of all staff development activities. Although there were many examples of this process working effectively, a recent review of the evaluation procedure identified that there was insufficient compliance across the college. This has resulted in the modification and relaunch of the procedure.

80 Students are enthusiastic about their experiences at the college. They feel that the college is responsive to their needs and that they

are kept well informed. They are aware of the complaints procedures. Student feedback is obtained through surveys in the curriculum areas at induction and at the end of each year. The student charter identifies the entitlements and responsibilities of students and the right of every course to have a student representative. Student representatives make an active contribution to improving the learning environment. The college has supported this initiative by providing training and guidance for 57 student representatives in 1998-99 and 80 in 1999-2000. Inspectors noted inconsistent use of student feedback at course level and a lack of formal methods for monitoring the effectiveness of the student representative initiative.

## Governance

### Grade 1

**81 Inspectors and auditors broadly agreed with the college's assessment of governance. Actions to remedy weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report had been completed by the time of the inspection.**

#### Key strengths

- open conduct of corporation business
- effective use of governors' skills
- active involvement of governors in determining the strategic direction of the college
- regular monitoring of the college's performance against targets
- good arrangements for judging the effectiveness of the corporation

#### Weaknesses

- underdeveloped systems for the training of governors

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

# Cross-college Provision

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.

83 The corporation has a determined membership of 18; there is currently one vacancy. Governors have a broad range of experience including finance, audit, human resources, education, senior management, law and estates management. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. Governors use their broad range of skills and professional experience to benefit the college. They have contributed to the development of proposals for the new construction/engineering building.

84 Governors attend an induction event and receive a comprehensive pack of relevant documentation. Further training is provided at the annual strategic planning seminar and on one further occasion each year. However, the training programme is not adjusted to meet the needs of individual governors.

85 The conduct of corporation and committee meetings is regulated by a set of standing orders that have been revised to reflect recent statutory changes. Governors are satisfied with the annual calendar of meetings and the clarity of agendas and supporting papers. Some are less satisfied with the timeliness of papers to committees and the tabling of papers at meetings. Inspectors and auditors agreed with the college that the corporation conducts its business openly. The college's code of conduct has been revised recently and policies relating to the appointment of governors and disclosure of items have been approved. Minutes of corporation and committee meetings are available for public scrutiny in the college libraries and to staff on the intranet. Staff also receive summary corporation minutes. The college provides an annual report and holds an annual meeting. There is a policy on 'whistleblowing', and all governors and staff

with significant financial responsibility have completed the register of interests.

86 Inspectors agreed with the college that the corporation has an appropriate committee structure. All committees have approved terms of reference. Some of the terms of reference do not follow a standard format. The corporation receives clear minutes and papers following each committee meeting and all recommendations are appropriately approved. There is effective monitoring of the college's financial performance. All governors receive management accounts monthly, and the finance and general purposes committee formally reviews the management accounts at each of its meetings. The audit committee has assessed its own performance and that of the college auditors against the requirements of Council Circular 98/15, *Audit Code of Practice*. The search committee has been active in ensuring that requirements of the new statutory framework under which corporations operate are being addressed. The relatively new standards committee advises the corporation on academic targets to monitor retention, achievement and the quality of students' experience. It is assisted in this with regular reports from the academic board. Governors are linked to curriculum areas. These links are more productive in some areas than others.

87 Inspectors and auditors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that governors are actively involved in setting the strategic direction of the college and that they effectively monitor performance against targets and performance indicators, including the academic performance of the college. Governors take seriously their responsibility for determining the educational character and setting the strategic direction of the college. Governors are strongly committed to social inclusion, equal opportunities, widening participation and regenerating the local community, and take decisions in line with these commitments. Governors have steered the college through a

# Cross-college Provision

period of accommodation rationalisation and financial difficulties, while maintaining their concern for strategies to improve students' retention and achievements. Governors are well informed about the key issues facing the college. Governors receive an annual report on quality assurance activities and key developments for the forthcoming year. The corporation approves the college's self-assessment report and monitors subsequent action plans.

88 The corporation first agreed indicators which could be used to measure their effectiveness in 1996 and they regularly review their performance against targets. The college's internal inspection included governance. Governors also reviewed their own performance in the area of inclusive learning, identifying areas for improvement. The college identified this strength in its self-assessment report.

## Management

### Grade 2

**89 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and some of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report. At the time of inspection some weaknesses had been addressed. Inspectors identified one additional weakness.**

#### Key strengths

- effective links with the community
- college-wide support for the mission and strategic direction
- strong and collaborative management effecting major improvements
- good management of finances
- effective implementation of action to promote equal opportunities

#### Weaknesses

- strategies to improve retention and achievement not yet fully implemented

- ineffective collection and collation of data in some curriculum areas

90 The college's commitment to the development and regeneration of Liverpool is demonstrated in its mission and strategic aims. Community agencies value highly its active role in developing and supporting partnerships and working links. Senior managers and other staff are energetic in securing good relationships with, and membership of, key strategic partnerships. The college convenes the Liverpool Lifelong Learning Partnership and belongs to two education action zones. The college's contribution to the Liverpool Association of Secondary Headteachers has been important in securing a planned approach to post-16 education. The college is involved in joint projects with Liverpool John Moores University of which it is an associate college. Several voluntary organisations speak highly of the college's support for community projects to overcome disaffection and social exclusion. These strengths are recognised in the self-assessment report.

91 All staff understand the college mission and strategic objectives. The process of strategic and operational planning is tightly managed and firmly based on the self-assessment process. It is informed by a sound analysis of the needs of the local community. Curriculum and support service teams at every level of operation systematically address strategic objectives. Targets are set to help achieve strategic objectives. Performance is measured against benchmarks and quality standards. College management manuals for course teams and cross-college areas have been revised to ensure consistent management approaches.

92 The college management structure has been revised to reinforce and help implement its strategic aims. Senior managers work together to provide strong, collaborative management and bring about improvements. Lines of management responsibility and accountability

# Cross-college Provision

are clearly allocated and understood. A planned sequence of meetings ensures effective reporting and monitoring of performance at all levels on all aspects of college business. The teamwork in curriculum and service areas is a particularly strong feature. The college has been successful in implementing its accommodation strategy, deploying academic and support staff efficiently, widening participation and improving inclusivity. Inspectors agreed with the college that strategies for improving retention and achievement rates have yet to take effect in many programme areas.

93 Since the last inspection, communications in the college have improved significantly. Staff value the sharing of information and issues throughout the college. The management information system is much improved. The student record system has been replaced, and managers now receive reports on student enrolments, withdrawals and retention at course and subject levels. The system enables enrolments to be converted into funding units and compared with income targets. The college intranet provides a wide range of updated information and management reference materials including FEFC benchmarking data. Most staff are able to demonstrate use of the college information system. The collection and collation of information in some curriculum areas is poor and attendance registers are not accurately completed. This weakness is recognised in the college self-assessment report.

94 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The financial position of the college has improved in the past two years. The college reported operating and historic cost surpluses in 1998-99 and forecasts surpluses for 1999-2000. The college does not have reserves but managers recognise the need to address this. Detailed management accounts are produced each month; the form and content of which are in accordance with current sector practice. The senior management team formally

monitors them. The key assumptions underlying the budget and current financial forecasts have been clearly defined and are understood by senior managers. The director of finance supported by an appropriately qualified team, provides budget holders with timely reports of actual and committed expenditure against budget. There are comprehensive financial regulations. Internal and external audit reports in 1998-99 do not indicate any significant weaknesses in financial control. Returns to the FEFC have not always been within specified time limits. This is recognised by management and action is being taken.

95 Inspectors agreed that the college is highly committed to equal opportunities. There is a clear and comprehensive set of policies and procedures, and their implementation has been supported by extensive staff development. The equality assurance management group takes a major role across the college in action-planning, setting targets for and monitoring equality of opportunity, and producing reports for the academic board. Every faculty and service area demonstrates an active approach to equal opportunities. An equal opportunities representative in each faculty ensures courses and student services are monitored and issues identified are addressed. There are many examples of proactive equal opportunities initiatives in curriculum areas.

## Conclusions

96 The self-assessment report was thorough and provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. It was rigorous, evaluative and clearly presented. Each section contained an action plan. The college monitors progress with the action plan twice yearly. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but found some additional strengths and weaknesses. Two curriculum grades awarded by inspectors were lower than the college's grades and one was

# Cross-college Provision

higher. Inspectors confirmed the college grades for three aspects of their cross-college provision and awarded higher grades for the other two aspects.

97 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 1999)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	21
19-24 years	19
25+ years	56
Not known	3
Total	100

Source: college data

## Student numbers by level of study (December 1999)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation)	39
Level 2 (intermediate)	26
Level 3 (advanced)	27
Level 4/5 (higher)	7
Non-schedule 2	1
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	583	1,862	18
Agriculture	17	11	0
Construction	208	589	6
Engineering	445	508	7
Business	529	1,226	13
Hotel and catering	355	237	5
Health and community care	544	562	8
Art and design	1,018	666	13
Humanities	758	1,709	19
Basic education	441	1,025	11
Total	4,898	8,395	100

Source: college data

## Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 69% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

## Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (December 1999)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	435	0	141	576
Supporting direct learning contact	271	0	23	294
Other support	152	8	0	160
Total	858	8	164	1,030

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

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£31,581,000	£25,779,000	£26,670,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£21.89*	£21.41*	£19.67
Payroll as a proportion of income	82%	77%	76%
Achievement of funding target	90%	100%	100%
Diversity of income	27%	23%	21%
Operating surplus	-£1,217,000	£659,000	£740,000

Sources: Income – Council Circular 98/43, college (1998 and 1999)

ALF – Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1997 and 1998), Funding Allocations 1998-99 (1999)

Payroll – Council Circular 98/43, college (1998 and 1999)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1997-98 (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

Diversity of income – Council Circular 98/43, college (1998 and 1999)

Operating surplus – Council Circular 98/43, college (1998 and 1999)

\*provisional data

### Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
1	Number of starters	499	771	1,133	2,763	3,852	6,216
	Retention (%)	71	75	72	76	78	81
	Achievement (%)	40	44	52	46	50	47
2	Number of starters	1,996	2,071	2,453	3,051	3,726	4,888
	Retention (%)	67	71	70	76	77	79
	Achievement (%)	41	62	59	57	60	57
3	Number of starters	1,411	1,390	1,632	2,510	2,563	3,059
	Retention (%)	64	63	63	73	75	76
	Achievement (%)	56	53	66	56	57	60
4 or 5	Number of starters	5	10	16	146	193	373
	Retention (%)	80	90	75	73	60	76
	Achievement (%)	50	78	67	70	53	49
Short courses	Number of starters	143	298	479	1,660	5,058	1,695
	Retention (%)	92	96	100	95	99	99
	Achievement (%)	33	60	72	43	81	58
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	875	1,398	1,410	5,861	6,588	5,745
	Retention (%)	68	79	76	75	80	76
	Achievement (%)	16	35	64	20	40	42

Source: college

**FEFC Inspection Report 58/00**

**Published by the  
Further Education Funding Council  
Website [www.fefc.ac.uk](http://www.fefc.ac.uk)  
© FEFC May 2000**