

# Cleveland College of Art and Design

REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
**1999-00**

THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL

***THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL***

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*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)*

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### 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 1997-98, 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 expected 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

## Cleveland College of Art and Design

### *Northern Region*

#### **Inspected April 2000**

Cleveland College of Art and Design is the only specialist college of art and design in the FEFC's Northern Region. About one-quarter of its students are enrolled on higher education courses. The college introduced self-assessment relatively recently. Senior managers deferred the process until they resolved the operational difficulties faced by the college over the past two years. The self-assessment report provided for the inspection was the first produced by the college. Inspectors found the report helpful in planning and undertaking the inspection. Some of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report had been remedied before the inspection. Inspectors concluded that the college had overstated the strength of two areas: graphic design and support for students.

The college provides a wide range of art and design courses which meets the needs of school-leavers and offers opportunities for the wider community. Governors and managers work well together and have steered the college through a period of major change. Management is effective and lines of responsibility are clear. Communication is good. There is a strong sense of shared purpose in the college. Much of the teaching is good or outstanding. Programmes are well managed. Assignments are demanding and students' work is of a high standard.

Students are well supported and receive thorough and constructive feedback on their work. They make good progress in the college and most proceed to higher education. Retention is low on some programmes but improving. Accommodation is mostly good and is well maintained. The process of assuring quality is mainly effective but unwieldy. Many improvements have been achieved since the previous inspection. The college should: improve aspects of governance; increase the effectiveness of operational planning and the monitoring of key college policies; overcome shortcomings in the provision of additional support for students' learning; increase access for people with restricted mobility; ensure that quality assurance procedures are simplified and implemented; and improve college communal facilities.

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>
Diagnostic courses	2	Support for students	2
Graphic design	2	General resources	2
Three-dimensional design	2	Quality assurance	2
		Governance	3
		Management	2

## The College and its Mission

1 Cleveland College of Art and Design is the only specialist college of art and design in the Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC's) Northern Region. Almost a quarter of college students enrol for higher education courses. The college operates on four sites. Three sites are in Middlesbrough: Burlam Road, Fleetham Street and Green Lane, which includes the main administrative centre. The fourth site, a major centre, is in Hartlepool 13 miles to the north. The Burlam Road site is used solely for higher education courses and is not considered further in this report. The college recruits about 85% of its FEFC-funded students from four boroughs in the Tees Valley conurbation: Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton and Hartlepool. Applications from students outside the college's main recruitment area have increased since the government introduced residential bursaries in September 1999. The current local unemployment rates are high compared with the national rate of 3.9%. Three of the boroughs have rates of over 8%. In Hartlepool, the rate is 10.4%. The population of the four boroughs is approximately 554,200. Of the 7,764 young people in the boroughs completing full-time education in 1999, 62% continued in full-time further education. The national rate is 69%.

2 Within the college's main recruitment area there are two general further education colleges, three tertiary colleges, five sixth-form colleges, forty 11 to 16 schools, and four 11 to 18 schools. The proportion of pupils in the four boroughs that gain five or more grades C or above in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examinations in 1999 ranged from 31.0% in Middlesbrough to 44.6% in Redcar and Cleveland. The national average was 47.9%. Of the students commencing on level 3 two-year programmes in the college in 1999, 41% had less than five GCSEs at grade C or above.

3 All of the college's further education provision is within the art and design programme area. Courses include general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate and advanced art and design, diploma in foundation studies (art and design), national diplomas in aspects of art and design, and a range of Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) access to art and design programmes at levels 1, 2, and 3. The college employs 52 full-time equivalent teachers, 16 full-time equivalent technician demonstrators, six senior managers and 49 full-time equivalent support staff. It has a directorate comprising the principal, two assistant principals responsible for curriculum and finance, and three directors responsible for estates and corporate affairs, marketing and recruitment, and quality assurance and student services, respectively. The directorate is supported by seven middle managers responsible for a range of functional activities. Cross-college teams oversee recruitment, accommodation, welfare, finance, personal counselling, careers and additional support. In 1999-2000, the college enrolled 2,001 students of whom 564 are in full-time further education, and 669 are in part-time further education. Twenty-three are New Deal students. The remaining students are enrolled on higher education or recreational programmes.

4 The college mission is 'to provide specialist programmes in art and design and related areas at both further and higher education levels'. It aims to:

- encourage the community to use and benefit from college facilities
- provide individual support to students, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- encourage creativity, innovation and professionalism among all students and staff
- maintain or improve the guidance provided to individual students

# Context

- value all staff and seek to develop their professional skills
- provide high-quality resources that offer value for money.

## The Inspection

5 The college was inspected during the week beginning 10 April 2000. Before this, inspectors evaluated the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information about the college provided by other directorates of the FEFC. Data on students' achievements for 1997 and 1998 were derived from the individualised student record (ISR) to inform the inspection. The college supplied its own data for 1999. Inspectors checked the data against primary sources, such as class registers and pass lists from examination bodies, and found the data to be generally accurate. In comparing the retention and examination pass rates of students, inspectors used benchmarking data

derived from the specialist colleges and the art and design programme area across all colleges.

6 The inspection was carried out by a team of eight inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 35 days in the college. Inspectors observed 35 lessons. They examined samples of students' work and a wide range of college documents. Inspectors discussed aspects of the college's provision with the chief executive of the Tees Valley Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). They also held meetings with students, board members, managers and staff.

7 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 observed, 77% were judged to be good or outstanding and 3% were rated less than satisfactory. This is much better than the corresponding national averages of 65% and 6%, respectively.

### Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GNVQ*	8	4	2	1	0	15
Other vocational	3	9	4	0	0	16
Other**	0	3	1	0	0	4
Total (No)	11	16	7	1	0	35
Total (%)	31	46	20	3	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*

\*GNVQ lessons included some diploma in foundation studies students

\*\*includes access to higher education and GCSE

# Context

8 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99.

## Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Cleveland College of Art and Design	13.5	81
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

## Diagnostic Courses

### Grade 2

**9 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering GNVQ intermediate and advanced art and design courses and the diploma in foundation studies (art and design). They agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- effective programme management and lesson planning
- much good, and some outstanding teaching
- teachers' high expectations of students
- good pass rates and retention rates
- the high standard of students' work
- good progression to higher education

#### Weaknesses

- some undemanding teaching
- the poor quality of library and learning support facilities at one site

10 Provision is offered at the Green Lane, Fleetham Street and Hartlepool sites. Programmes are well managed. Communication between teachers and managers is good. Staff roles and responsibilities are clear and are well understood. Programme leaders meet their teams regularly to discuss timetable changes, student attendance and the progress of individuals. Managers use targets to improve student retention and achievement. However, their use of national benchmarking data produced by the FEFC in setting targets is underdeveloped. The recent reorganisation of staffing has created an over-reliance on part-time teachers, who cannot always contribute to curriculum planning and development, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Schemes of work are well-thought-out and lesson plans are thorough.

11 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that there is much good teaching. In a few lessons, it is outstanding. Assignment briefs are designed carefully. They introduce students to a wide range of topics, explain requirements clearly and give deadlines for completion. In the best lessons, teachers are well prepared and highly effective in dealing with students with very different abilities. Teachers have high expectations of students. In the GNVQ intermediate art and design, teachers manage lessons firmly, present challenging assignments and give clear instructions that encourage students to experiment and explore creative ideas. In a GNVQ advanced art and design lesson, students worked in the wind and rain drawing figures affected by these elements. They then worked in small groups making papier-mâché models relating to their experience while referring to their drawings. Students were highly motivated, learnt from each other and enjoyed themselves. Visits to galleries and studios are used effectively to inform students about the work of artists and designers, and the world in which they work. In a few lessons, the work set for students is not sufficiently demanding and some are unclear about what is expected.

12 Students' achievements are good, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. For example, in the past three years, over 90% of students obtained the national diploma in foundation studies. Pass rates on the GNVQ advanced art and design are also good. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate art and design were very poor in 1998. To improve performance, the college changed the management of the course, resulting in much better pass rates in 1999. Retention rates are good and improving on all courses. Students' work is of a high standard and some achieve noteworthy proficiency across a wide range of disciplines. There are many good examples of personal research, exploratory work and finished design. A high proportion of students

# Curriculum Areas

progress to more advanced college courses and to higher education. Attendance in the lessons inspected was high at 81%. The retention and achievement data for GNVQ advanced art and design provide a partial view of achievements. In 1999, several students did not complete their assessed work after receiving unconditional offers to progress to higher education institutions.

13 Accommodation is good. Most studios and classrooms are spacious, light and appropriately equipped. Large studios on each site enable foundation students to work on large-scale paintings and sculpture. Most students benefit from working alongside and sharing resources with other students operating at higher levels.

Library and learning resources on the Green Lane and Hartlepool sites are good, but are less than satisfactory at the Fleetham Street site. The availability and use of information technology (IT) has improved since the previous inspection. The range of software is appropriate. Some students at the Fleetham Street site have little opportunity to use IT outside of their timetabled lessons. Teachers are well qualified, highly committed and have extensive experience in their specialist areas. However, there is insufficient technician support at the Hartlepool site to support the extensive range of further education courses provided there.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	Number of starters	13	20	25
		Retention (%)	92	80	92
		Achievement (%)	100	44	100
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	Number of starters	76	77	79
		Retention (%)	70	73	80
		Achievement (%)	100	93	73
Diploma in foundation studies (art and design)	3	Number of starters	124	127	118
		Retention (%)	83	90	92
		Achievement (%)	99	96	92

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

# Curriculum Areas

## Graphic Design

### Grade 2

**14 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering the national diploma in graphic design, and specialist graphic options in GNVQ intermediate and advanced art and design, the diploma in foundation studies (art and design) and NCFE photography. Inspectors agreed broadly with the strengths and weaknesses recognised in the self-assessment report but identified further weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- effective team teaching and learning activities
- high pass rates and student progression to higher education
- good course documentation and assessment records
- the high standard of students' work
- good opportunities for students to learn from each other
- inspiring learning environments in studios

#### Weaknesses

- underdeveloped links with industry and use of real briefs

15 Graphic design courses and related specialist options are provided at the Fleetham Street and Hartlepool sites. These courses are managed well by a small team of full-time and part-time teachers. Course meetings are held regularly but not all staff are able to attend. Course documentation is comprehensive. Students are timetabled in studios to work alongside those studying at different levels. They also display their work around the college in summer exhibitions alongside other graphic design students. This encourages a creative environment where students learn from each other. Students' educational visits to galleries,

and to other countries, inform the content of many individual projects.

16 Most of the teaching is of a high standard. It is planned thoroughly and is appropriately varied. These strengths were identified in the self-assessment report. A particular strength is the effective team teaching. In a well-structured and successful lesson involving second-year national diploma and GNVQ advanced art and design students, teachers skilfully developed the work of individuals and groups. Students explained their ideas for designing a visual diary confidently. There is a good working atmosphere in the studios and students speak positively of the support they receive from teachers. Students are well informed of current developments in design. Those on the diploma in foundation studies (art and design) and GNVQ advanced art and design at the Hartlepool site worked well on a brief provided by the client. This involved designing an activity pack relating to four North Tyneside museums. Teachers gave effective individual tuition and explained ways of visualising ideas sequentially.

17 Overall, professional and industrial links are underdeveloped, particularly for the national diploma course. Students do not have enough opportunity to experience external designer briefings and real briefs, weaknesses not identified in the self-assessment report. Students use competition briefs to develop their portfolio but they do not participate in these competitions. Project briefs are well designed and provide opportunities for students to gain appropriate key skills. Students receive good feedback on their progress through regular reviews of portfolios and tutorials. Teachers provide students with detailed and helpful assessments. There are cross-college exercises designed to improve consistency in grading students' work.

18 Pass rates on the national diploma in graphic design are high and consistently above national averages. Retention over the past three years is below the national average, but

# Curriculum Areas

improving. Student progression to higher education is good at 87%. Students study the NCFE photography option as an additional qualification. Retention on this course is good. Students' portfolios are well presented and contain work of a high standard. Space and balance are well considered by students when developing their visual skills. Good use is made by students of specialist periodicals and other media to explore creative ideas. Typography projects are imaginative and students show a good understanding of basic principles. In second-year portfolios, drawing skills are not fully developed.

19 Students have good access to new graphic design computer facilities at both sites.

Workstations offer relevant software applications. Technician demonstrators provide good support for students. Graphics staff are appropriately experienced and well qualified. They are undertaking further staff development in the use of advanced multimedia software applications. The graphics studios at both sites are light and spacious. The design studio is enhanced by displays of students' work in progress. The self-assessment report failed to identify the poor-quality library at the Fleetham Street site. It is too small for the number of students using it. Whilst the library contains a good range of periodicals, there are insufficient graphic and design books.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
NCFE photography	2	Number of starters	*	*	24
		Retention (%)	*	*	96
		Achievement (%)	*	*	78
National diploma graphic design	3	Number of starters	12	24	31
		Retention (%)	50	71	74
		Achievement (%)	100	100	91

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

\*unable to extract results from aggregated ISR data

# Curriculum Areas

## Three-dimensional Design

### Grade 2

**20 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering most of the college's provision in three-dimensional design. These included national diploma in three-dimensional design and NCFE accredited courses incorporating spatial design, industrial design, furniture design, jewellery, stained glass and ceramics. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the findings in the self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- wide range of specialist options available to students
- well-managed courses
- imaginative and appropriately varied teaching
- well-planned, creative and challenging projects
- thorough and constructive feedback on students' work
- high quality of students' work
- good specialist machinery and equipment

#### Weaknesses

- low retention rates on part-time courses
- a fall in the national diploma pass rate

21 Students have good opportunities to develop a wide range of skills such as metalwork, woodwork, ceramics, jewellery, stained glass, interior design, furniture design and construction, and product design. Programmes are well planned and well managed. Coursework is carefully sequenced to allow students to develop appropriate specialist skills. Full-time students can select and study a wide range of additional optional subjects. Students work alongside others studying at higher levels within the same subject area. This broadens their development and helps their

progression to higher level work. Projects are carefully structured. Assignment briefs are clear and informative. For example, they include aims, objectives, timescales and assessment criteria. Students assess themselves and others, sometimes through regular and effective group critiques. They develop good analytical skills. Teachers provide constructive written and verbal feedback to students. Students are highly satisfied with their courses and the support they receive.

22 There is much good teaching, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Teachers use a suitable variety of teaching methods, including formal lectures, practical activities, demonstrations, group work and one-to-one tuition. Students are encouraged to work independently and to develop their own ideas. Teachers carefully develop students' time management skills and stress the importance of meeting deadlines. They also emphasise the value of collecting visual materials and the thorough exploration of ideas before the actual design is started. Practical lessons in studios and workshops allow students to experiment with a wide range of different materials and to develop technical skills. The design of full-time courses encourages students to use IT in developing their work. Practising designers visit the college regularly to set projects, monitor work, provide feedback and exchange ideas. Productive links with employers increase the industrial relevance of many projects. Recent commissions include, for example, the design of a salon display unit for a hairdressing products company. Students have designed and produced brightly coloured mechanical toys for children who are visually impaired or autistic.

23 Inspector's agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the quality of students' work reaches the high standard expected by teachers. Some of the full-time students' design and production work is outstanding. Students work confidently with a variety of media and specialist tools as part of

# Curriculum Areas

their practical work. They develop good freehand drawing, rendering, technical drawing and model-making skills. Students' design work shows methodical research, imaginative thinking and the incremental development of solutions to design problems. Most practical work produced by part-time students is thoroughly carried out and well presented.

24 The self-assessment report identified a number of course options in the NCFE programme where retention and pass rates are a cause for concern. Retention rates on the national diploma were below the national average in 1997 and 1998 but improved to 79% in 1999. Many part-time students leave courses early. The part-time jewellery course kept only 38% of its students in 1999. Retention rates on the interior design and stained glass courses

were also low at 55% and 57%, respectively. Of the students who completed the national diploma in 1997 and 1998, 93% achieved the qualification. However, in 1999, the success rate was below the national average. There is good progression to relevant higher education courses.

25 Specialist equipment and accommodation are of a high standard. There is a wide range of workshops and good specialist resources for ceramics, jewellery, metalwork and woodwork. Emphasis is placed on developing safe working practices. Staff are well qualified and experienced in an appropriate range of disciplines. Most are practising designers and craftspeople who bring valuable up-to-date industrial experience to teaching. Full-time students have good access to computers.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in three-dimensional design, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
National diploma in three-dimensional design	3	Number of starters	23	25	14
		Retention (%)	69	60	79
		Achievement (%)	93	93	82
NCFE jewellery (access)	3	Number of starters	*	*	13
		Retention (%)	*	*	38
		Achievement (%)	*	*	80
NCFE ceramics (access)	3	Number of starters	*	*	16
		Retention (%)	*	*	75
		Achievement (%)	*	*	75
NCFE stained glass (access)	3	Number of starters	*	*	21
		Retention (%)	*	*	57
		Achievement (%)	*	*	92

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

\*unable to extract results from aggregated ISR data



# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 2

**26 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Some of the weaknesses in the report had been addressed before the inspection. Inspectors identified some additional weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- well-managed pre-entry and induction arrangements
- comprehensive diagnosis of additional support needs
- good support for students with dyslexia
- well-established welfare and counselling arrangements
- strong individual support for students

#### Weaknesses

- shortcomings in the provision of additional learning support
- inadequate formal progress reviews and reporting by some tutors

27 Since the previous inspection, the college has improved its arrangements for recruiting students. One of the marketing team now attends careers events in most schools and sixth form colleges in the Tees Valley region. In addition, specialist teachers visit schools on request. The college has maintained the level of enquiries from schools despite a drop in the number of careers conventions promoted by the local careers service. All enquiries and applicants are logged on a database. The college contacts enquirers who do not apply and applicants who do not enrol to determine the reason and offer assistance. These thorough systems are included as strengths in the self-assessment report. All applicants for full-time courses are interviewed and their portfolios examined. The quality of the applicant's work is

often the deciding factor in the decision to offer a place, rather than their formal qualifications. The college's six open days and its summer show are widely advertised, and are successful in recruiting students.

28 Teachers on some courses ask their students to work on assignments in the summer before enrolling to aid their preparation for college work. Full-time students receive a comprehensive induction to the college and their course through group tutorial activities. Students quickly engage in coursework. Broad social and cultural issues are often addressed through the curriculum rather than through a formal tutorial programme. Part-time students receive an adequate induction to the college. Most students aim to progress to higher education and they are well supported in making applications. For students seeking employment, the college has a programme of careers education and guidance interviews developed in collaboration with the local careers service. These arrangements have been adversely affected in 1999-2000 by the changing priorities of the careers service.

29 All full-time students take two diagnostic tests as part of their induction to determine whether they require additional support to enable them to succeed. A paper-based test, tailored to specific courses identifies weaknesses in each student's literacy and numeracy skills. A second computer-based test indicates each student's preferred method of learning. Each test identifies possible dyslexia, for which the college provides excellent support. Approximately 12% of the college's annual intake of students receive such support. Students with dyslexia meet a specialist tutor regularly to check their progress. Helpful arrangements are also made for students with hearing impairment.

30 The support provided to students having difficulty with reading or writing is also thorough. However, there is an excessive delay between initial assessment and the provision of

# Cross-college Provision

support. Most students identified as needing support attend learning support sessions regularly. Tutors are kept informed of the help students receive, and the progress made. Assistants in the resource centres have received training to enable them to support students appropriately, for example, by proofreading their assignments and providing support for literacy and IT. Help with numeracy is less effective. Tutors are informed of possible student difficulties with numeracy. However, no structured support sessions are provided and there is no central monitoring of students' progress. The shortcomings in literacy and numeracy support were not included in the self-assessment report.

31 Students are well aware of the wide range of financial and welfare support available to them. The college has a hardship fund in addition to the general access funds, and provides modest emergency loans, if needed. Seventeen students are receiving government bursaries to enable them to attend the college, and 27 are receiving educational maintenance allowances as a result of the pilot scheme operating in part of the college's recruitment area. Since the previous inspection, the college has appointed a part-time student counsellor. The service provided is now well established. Early difficulties with inappropriate referrals, included as a weakness in the self-assessment report, have largely been resolved. Demands on the service have increased steadily since it was introduced in 1997.

32 Teachers and tutors provide an excellent level of personal and academic support for their students. Students praised the willingness of staff to support them in lessons and outside the formal timetable. Careful records are kept of students' performance and progress. Attendance is closely monitored. Individual students have termly meetings with their teachers to discuss the quality of their work. These meetings inform performance reviews between the personal tutor and each student.

Most personal tutors are responsible for large numbers of students and are unable to give an appropriate level of attention to each review. Records of these interviews are sometimes brief or non-existent. Few reviews include formal actions agreed with the students. Tutors' practices in reporting to parents or carers vary widely. Some are providing reports for the first time in 1999-2000, and at least one does not make any written reports.

## General Resources

### *Grade 2*

**33 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Some strengths were overstated and some weaknesses understated.**

#### **Key strengths**

- good-quality, well-maintained accommodation
- wide range of accessible modern IT
- good technical support
- effectively managed library resources

#### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate access to buildings for people with restricted mobility
- insufficient social, communal and catering facilities on some sites

34 As noted in the self-assessment report, the college has improved its accommodation significantly, addressing many of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Progress in overcoming remaining weaknesses has been delayed as the college awaited the outcome of two accommodation feasibility studies that it had commissioned. One short-term study considered how the college could vacate the Fleetham Street site, which the college hopes to achieve soon. A longer-term study appraises the benefits of other



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developments, including the potential to consolidate the Middlesbrough sites on one single site in the town centre. The college intends to publish these studies before the end of the academic year to inform a new accommodation strategy.

35 The well-managed programme of planned maintenance and refurbishment has enabled the creation of more mezzanine study areas and resource centres, strengths identified in the self-assessment report. The college has relocated some facilities to the ground floor at the Hartlepool and Green Lane sites to improve access for students but many curriculum areas and parts of resource centres remain inaccessible to people with restricted mobility. Many college procedures stress the need to ensure value for money in purchasing resources. The college uses the local authority's central purchasing system to reduce the cost of energy consumption. Support staff contribute to planning and purchasing decisions. For example, technician demonstrators with recent industrial experience contributed well to developing the college's IT.

36 Most communal work areas across the sites are well maintained. Good use is made of public areas to display students' work. Reception areas at the Green Lane and Hartlepool sites are bright and welcoming. The Fleetham Street reception area is unattractive. Catering and social facilities are inadequate on some sites. For example, the Fleetham Street site has no refectory. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report. There are no recreational or sporting facilities.

37 The college has invested significantly in the provision of IT. The availability of modern computers for students and staff is good. The ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students varies between 1:4 and 1:7 depending upon the site and subject area. The ratio of computers to full-time equivalent staff is 1:2. Around 80% of general-purpose computers can be used to search the Internet. Technician

demonstrators provide good support to students using the open access IT suites. The newly created central IT unit has improved the strategic development of IT and related maintenance. Computers are used well by students. Three of the four sites have a networked communication link. The college is introducing an intranet to improve communications further.

38 The college has good resource centres at three of its sites. However, the provision of learning resources varies between them. The Green Lane site has a well-stocked catalogue of colour slides. Facilities at the Fleetham Street site are of poorer quality. The resource centre manager works with programme leaders to identify new resources. Programme leaders are kept well informed about student use of the resource centres. The loan of books is managed effectively through an on-line booking system connecting the college's resource centres. Book loans have increased. Use of the resource centres has also increased over the past two years, partly due to the increased availability to students of IT.

## Quality Assurance

### *Grade 2*

**39 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. The college identified a number of strengths which inspectors considered normal practice. Inspectors identified additional weaknesses.**

#### **Key strengths**

- rigorous course reviews
- effective use of lesson observations to improve teaching and learning
- thorough gathering of students' views
- well-established and beneficial staff appraisal
- wide-ranging and well-managed staff development

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## Weaknesses

- over-complex reporting arrangements
- some ineffective implementation of quality assurance procedures
- insufficient use of support service performance indicators

40 The college's procedures for assuring quality encompass its further education, higher education and its cross-college support functions. Procedures are documented thoroughly but not all course teams implement them effectively. For example, there are delays in completing internal verification procedures for some courses, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. The most effective quality assurance procedure is the annual cycle of review. Monitoring of the quality of the curriculum is generally well done. The academic and standards subcommittee of the academic board systematically reviews the performance of courses and the achievement of action plans. Formal reporting arrangements are unwieldy. However, staff work hard to ensure that the system works. Many improvements have been achieved since the previous inspection.

41 The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection. The college's pilot programme for observing lessons has coincided with improved performance. The proportion of good and outstanding lessons observed by inspectors has risen from 71% at the previous inspection to 77%. This profile is considerably better than national figures for the art and design programme area. Course pass rates and retention rates are carefully monitored. A number of measures have been introduced during the past two years to raise retention. Pass rates on most courses are high, though a few course results in 1999 were poor.

42 Course reviews are thorough. The review process is informed by detailed course logbooks, which bring together a wide range of evidence,

for example, students' attendance and achievements, external verifier reports, notes of meetings and destination data. The information in logbooks is updated regularly and enables course teams to monitor and review their activities correctly. The analysis of students' achievements does not always evaluate trends in course performance. The college failed to identify, in its self-assessment report, that targets to improve recruitment, retention and achievement are not set at the beginning of courses. Comparison with national benchmarking data produced by the FEFC is rarely undertaken and few staff are aware of them. Course action plans are monitored and reviewed routinely, and most are effective. Some lack precise timescales for achievement. Few cross-college support functions have established clear performance standards other than in student services and cleaning services.

43 Students' views about the college and its courses are gathered systematically. Students complete college questionnaires three times a year but the results of analysis are not reported to them. They have many other opportunities to comment on their experiences. They can communicate views through course representatives, through tutors in tutorials and informally to teachers. Students speak positively about the college's thorough and speedy response to issues raised. The college's charter and handbook for students are informative and detailed. Students are well briefed on their rights and responsibilities.

44 The college's self-assessment report was the first it had produced and was written specifically for the inspection. Self-assessment was deferred while senior managers concentrated on major operational difficulties facing the college. A senior manager wrote the self-assessment report, taking account of team self-assessments, and shared the developing judgements with staff. The format for course reviews was amended for 1998-99 to relate to the quality standards of Council Circular 97/12,

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*Validating Self-assessment.* Inspectors largely agreed with judgements in the curriculum sections but considered that some of the strengths identified for aspects of cross-college provision were no more than normal practice. The college has reassessed its approach to self-assessment and intends to integrate the process more closely with other quality assurance procedures.

45 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that staff development is well managed and that there are a wide range of opportunities. Individual training needs are identified through formal appraisal, annual development reviews and through, for teachers, the observation of teaching and learning. They are recorded in a training plan that clearly identifies priorities. Staff development activities include study on higher level courses, working towards teaching qualifications and the upgrading of IT skills. All staff, including the principal, are appraised annually. Arrangements are effective, well documented and are viewed positively by staff. The college gained the Investors in People award in 1999.

## Governance

### Grade 3

**46 Inspectors and auditors broadly agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report. They identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- the close involvement of governors in a period of major change
- effective use of governors' skills and experience
- productive working relationship between governors and senior managers
- well-informed governors

#### Weaknesses

- operational aspects of statutory committees
- insufficiently active roles in strategic planning
- inadequate monitoring of the implementation of key policies
- insufficient support for clerking role

47 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is adequate. The board 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.

48 The board of the corporation has 20 governors, including six women. There are two vacancies. Sound progress has been made towards addressing the requirements of the modified instrument and articles of government. Between them, governors have an appropriate range of expertise including finance, personnel, local government and higher education. Two governors with a printing background contributed to the relocation of printing provision to another college through a collaborative arrangement. The board has not agreed formal targets for governor attendance or received related reports. Attendance at the board, which met five times in the previous year, is low at 68%. Governor attendance at committees is better. One governor with a poor record of attendance agreed to retire from the board in September 1999.

49 The board has helped to steer the college through a period of major change over the past two years. It has effectively overseen restructuring of the college to achieve reductions in staffing levels, and has developed plans for rationalising the college's accommodation. Governors were involved in

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developing the 1997 to 2000 strategic plan and have received annual updates. However, they do not monitor progress made against the college's strategic objectives and they have not yet begun preparing for the next update of the plan. The self-assessment report acknowledged the need for governors to be more involved at the developmental stage of strategic planning.

50 The board has established an appropriate range of committees with clear terms of reference. The search committee has decided not to advertise externally for new governors. Although the board has no criteria for reappointing governors, a number of recent reappointments have been made. The audit committee has been slow to implement an annual report and has made internal and external auditor appointments without formal approval by the whole board. Weaknesses in the operation of the search and audit committees were not identified in the self-assessment report.

51 The clerk to the board, appointed in 1992, is appropriately experienced. He is also director of personnel, corporate affairs and marketing, and acts as clerk to a range of college management committees. There is a separate job description for the clerk's role. However, the board's chair has not formally appraised the clerk, or determined the amount of time required to undertake the role effectively. Administrative support for the clerking function is not independent of the college management team. This weakness was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. The board has established standing orders and a 'whistleblowing' policy. A new model code of conduct has been approved recently. It reflects the Nolan committee's recommendations on openness and accountability. The register of interests was updated during 1999. It does not extend to senior managers, particularly those with significant financial responsibility. Board and committee minutes are posted on college noticeboards. The clerk provides other information on request.

52 Governors are well informed about national issues affecting the college. The board receives comprehensive and informative reports from the principal at every meeting. Governors have a productive working relationship with senior managers who are invited to meetings of the board and its committees to give presentations, for example, on issues such as curriculum 2000 and self-assessment. New governors receive appropriate induction and are allocated a mentor to provide additional support. Governors attend events such as 'Open Week', a major celebration of students' achievements, and fashion shows. A series of photographs, taken by students and reflecting governors' personal interests, is displayed in the reception area. Governors have little involvement with curriculum activities other than through senior managers and two staff governors.

53 Governors have attended a variety of training events, including some joint training with other college governors. However, the board has not carried out an analysis of governors' individual training needs or drawn up a structured training plan. The board pays due attention to self-assessment, establishing a group of governors and senior managers to evaluate its performance. A questionnaire was used to elicit governors' views. However, the board has not established performance indicators to assess the effectiveness of governance. The board held a thorough discussion of the college's self-assessment report before giving it their approval.

54 The board receives annual reports on students' achievements. These include comparison of the college's performance with national benchmarks for general further education and specialist colleges. However, the board does not receive interim reports on enrolments, attendance and retention. The board has recently established a standards committee in order to monitor academic performance more closely. The committee has met once and it is too early to measure its effectiveness. The board has not received

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annual reports on the implementation of its health and safety and equal opportunities policies.

## Management

### Grade 2

**55 Inspectors and auditors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, and identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- open and responsive management
- strong sense of community and shared purpose
- clear lines of accountability
- productive links with external organisations
- wide range of courses with good opportunities for progression

#### Weaknesses

- shortcomings in operational planning
- adverse effects of the high proportion of part-time teachers

56 Since the previous inspection the college has carried out a major reorganisation of its management structure, and achieved significant reductions in staffing and operational costs. The reorganisation was conducted in full consultation with staff, and was almost complete by the end of 1998-99. As the self-assessment report indicates, these changes have resulted in slippage in some of the college's plans. For example, the college has yet to ensure that some of its processes and procedures meet the needs of the new organisation. Staff welcome the new structure and comment that it has clarified lines of responsibility.

57 Staff are committed to the success of the college and have a good understanding of its aims and values. There is a strong sense of

identity and common purpose. The small size of the college means that managers and staff enjoy easy and regular personal contact.

Communication between staff on different college sites, a weakness identified in the previous inspection report, has been significantly improved by the use of electronic communications. Staff comment favourably on the approachability of senior managers, and of their responsiveness to concerns raised. The senior management team meets weekly and minutes of its meetings are posted on staff noticeboards throughout the college. The academic board, with its three subcommittees, performs an important role as the main focus for curriculum and quality matters, and acts as an additional channel of communication between managers and staff. It also provides staff with extensive opportunities to contribute to decision-making. The academic board has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the college's equal opportunities, and health and safety policies. Although relevant discussions take place at the committees, there are no annual summative reports and little analysis to assure the college that the policies are effectively implemented.

58 The strategic plan includes the college's aims and sets key targets for curriculum and cross-college aspects. The aims and targets are well understood by staff, but they are not always reflected in operational plans at college, directorate or programme level. This hinders the college's ability to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan. Whilst there is no formal cycle of strategic planning, senior managers take account of self-assessment action plans, programme logs and other relevant documentation when planning college developments.

59 The college is committed to widening participation. It offers an extensive range of continuing education courses, designed mainly for adult and part-time students, some of whom progress to full-time college courses. It enrolls



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disaffected pupils from local schools on to its mainstream college courses, and has provided them with positive experiences of success. The college responds well to the needs of other pupils in local schools. Its 'Design Experience Programmes' complement the curriculum of the schools by offering pupils firsthand experience, over three days, of a variety of specialist art and design courses. In 1998-99, 300 pupils from 25 schools took part in these programmes. The range of programmes offered by the college affords good opportunities for progression from a basic level to higher education. Of those students completing level 3 courses, 90% continue to higher levels at the college or elsewhere.

60 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the use of market research is underdeveloped. The college has developed a marketing plan, which addresses this weakness. Although the college commissions reports for specific purposes, it plans to gather more in-depth market intelligence in order to better inform curriculum development.

61 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. Although the college has generated operating deficits in recent years, it has significant cash balances and income and expenditure reserves. The college has a small but experienced finance team. The financial regulations, which were recently updated, could be improved, for example, by linking the fraud section to the college's 'whistleblowing' policy. The budget-setting process is co-ordinated by the director of finance and administration. Appropriate monitoring reports are provided to budget holders. However, management accounts are only produced each term for consideration by the finance and staffing committee, and the management team. The board has begun to receive termly financial updates recently. The management accounts do not include a 12-month rolling cashflow statement and should, to

meet best practice in the sector, be reported monthly. The 1998-99 annual internal audit report confirms that the college has adequate systems of internal control.

62 Curriculum management is effective, and programme leaders give extensive support to course teams. Course teams benefit from the timely and reliable management information provided. The self-assessment report acknowledges that the over-reliance on part-time teachers in some areas creates imbalances in workloads. Team meetings are difficult to arrange on some programmes and this impedes curriculum development. Teachers welcome the introduction of technician demonstrators to complement their work in studios and workshops.

63 The college has established productive partnerships with a range of external agencies including the University of Teesside, local colleges, the Tees Valley TEC, and other specialist art and design colleges. It is also a member of the Tees Valley Further Education Principal's Group that is committed to support the specialist nature of the college. It has also established a collaborative arrangement with Teesside Tertiary College recently to secure the provision of printing in the region. The TEC played an important part in enabling this arrangement to take place.

## Conclusions

64 Inspectors found the self-assessment report helpful in planning and undertaking the inspection. They largely agreed with the judgements about curriculum areas and with most of the judgements on aspects of cross-college provision though they considered that some of the strengths identified for cross-college provision were no more than normal practice. At the time of the inspection, actions to address some of the weaknesses identified through self-assessment had already been achieved. Inspectors concluded that the college had

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overstated the strength of two areas: graphic design and support for students.

65 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)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	11
16-18 years	40
19-24 years	24
25+ years	25
Not known	0
Total	100

*Source: college data*

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

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Level 1 (foundation)	7
Level 2 (intermediate)	22
Level 3 (advanced)	30
Level 4/5 (higher)	24
Non-schedule 2	17
Total	100

*Source: college data*

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

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Art and design	930	1,071	100
Total	930	1,071	100

*Source: college data*

## Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 28% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

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

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	37	4	11	52
Supporting direct learning contact	14	2	0	16
Other support	47	6	2	55
Total	98	12	13	123

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



# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£3,995,000	£3,929,000	£3,796,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£22.68	£20.96	£19.37
Payroll as a proportion of income	70%	66%	60%
Achievement of funding target	107%	104%	104%
Diversity of income	45%	46%	47%
Operating surplus	-£209,000	-£129,000	-£167,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

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

Payroll – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

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

Diversity of income – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

Operating surplus – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), 00/10 (1998), college (1999)

### Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
1	Number of starters	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	Number of starters	232	262	245	614	413	172
	Retention (%)	69	79	89	74	79	83
	Achievement (%)	81	98	85	65	97	92
3	Number of starters	243	288	289	84	48	67
	Retention (%)	76	75	83	63	79	61
	Achievement (%)	100	100	85	98	100	94
4 or 5	Number of starters	n/a	n/a	n/a	50	53	88
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	74	70	84
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	62	40	94
Short courses	Number of starters	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: ISR

n/a not applicable

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