

Dewsbury College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1997-98**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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Grade Descriptors

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision, curriculum areas and lesson observations, for colleges inspected during 1996-97, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	9	59	30	2	–
Cross-college provision	18	51	27	4	–
Lesson observations	19	42	31	7	1

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report.* Grades were awarded using the guidelines in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement.*
Sample size: 122 college inspections

Retention and Pass Rates

Where data on students' achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in two ways:

- as a retention rate, which is the proportion of students who completed a course in relation to the number enrolled on 1 November in the first year of the course
- as a pass rate, which is the proportion of students which passed examinations in relation to the number entered. Pass rates for GCE A level are quoted for grades A to E unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for GCSE courses are quoted for grade C or above unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for vocational and professional awards are for successful completion of the full award.

Summary

Dewsbury College

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

Inspected January 1998

Dewsbury College is a general further education college in West Yorkshire. The college produced a self-assessment report in preparation for inspection. Inspectors agreed with many of the college's judgements on the strengths of its provision, but considered that the college was not always sufficiently thorough in identifying weaknesses.

The college offers a range of courses in all 10 of the FEFC's programme areas. Provision in five of these areas was inspected, together with all aspects of cross-college provision. The college has strong and productive community partnerships. Some teaching, particularly in health and social care, English and modern foreign languages, and computing, is of good quality. Overall, students' achievements are satisfactory. Mechanisms for internal communications and cross-college working are effective. Support for students is outstanding; students receive suitable advice before entry, an appropriate induction, and regular reviews of their progress. Substantial improvements in accommodation and learning resources have been made since the last inspection; much of the accommodation is now of a high standard. Staff

development is effective and aligned with training needs. There are major weaknesses in management and in the governance of the college which need to be addressed urgently. If it is to improve the quality of its provision the college should also: improve the quality of some teaching; address the poor retention and achievement rates on some courses; continue to improve the analysis of course reviews; deal with shortcomings in the management information systems; improve quality assurance arrangements; and continue to improve the quality of the accommodation.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science	4	Support for students	1
Computing and information technology	2	General resources	2
Engineering	3	Quality assurance	3
Health and social care	2	Governance	4
English/modern foreign languages	2	Management	4
Adult basic education	3		
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3		

Context

The College and its Mission

1 Dewsbury College was formed in 1987 when Dewsbury and Batley Technical and Art College merged with the Wheelwright Sixth Form College. It provides a range of courses in further, higher and continuing education, as well as training programmes for employers. The college is situated in the district of north Kirklees, at the centre of the West Yorkshire conurbation. The main campus is located half a mile from the centre of Dewsbury, a former textile town of 50,000 people. The Batley School of Art and Design has a separate campus in Dewsbury and another in Batley, a former textile town of 40,000 inhabitants, two miles from Dewsbury. The college also offers provision at the Batley Business and Technology Centre, at over 20 community venues across north Kirklees and at two Muslim girls' schools. It is an associate college of the University of Huddersfield.

2 The metropolitan borough of Kirklees has a population of 370,000. Within it, north Kirklees, an area of small towns, has a population of 147,000. Most of north Kirklees is designated by the European Community as an assisted area. Nearly 40% of its districts are in the top 15% most deprived districts in the country. The last available survey of north Kirklees showed 3,764 firms employing 50,183 people, with only 20 companies employing more than 250 people. Although manufacturing is declining, it is still the major employer followed by public services, health, education, distribution, hotels and catering. Apart from two major local manufacturing companies most employment is in small to medium-sized enterprises, many offering low paid, low skill work. While unemployment among the white population is near the national average, the unemployment rate among local Asian communities is almost 25%. The proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in north Kirklees ranges from 9% to 35% overall, but from 2% to 98% in different districts.

3 The educational achievements of school-leavers in the college's catchment area are below the levels found in Kirklees as a whole, and nationally. The percentage of school-leavers achieving five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades C or above in north Kirklees is 28.5%, compared with the national average of 45%. The participation rate of students in full-time education in north Kirklees after the age of 16 is 54% for boys and 63% for girls, both below the national average for England of 71%. Secondary education is provided in north Kirklees through five 11 to 16 schools working in partnership with the college, and seven 11 to 18 schools. Sixteen further education colleges in Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds and Wakefield are all within 12 miles of the college.

4 The college is organised into four faculties: academic studies and learning support; art and design; business and technology; and people and services. It has a wholly owned company providing training for employers in information technology (IT) and internet services. The college offers courses in all of the Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC's) 10 programme areas. In 1996-97, the college had nearly 11,000 enrolments of whom 17% were full-time students. At July 1997, the college had 231 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 190 full-time equivalent support staff.

5 The college's mission is to provide excellence in learning and development. Its main corporate aims for the next three years are:

- to provide further, higher and continuing education for the people of north Kirklees, West Yorkshire and beyond
- to foster a culture of lifelong learning in the area
- to become a significant force in the economic and social regeneration of the area
- to maintain and develop the reputation of the Batley School of Art and Design as a national centre of excellence.

Context

The Inspection

6 The inspection was originally planned for November 1997. The college requested a postponement in order to give it time to prepare a recovery plan, implement a redundancy programme and install a new academic management structure. With the agreement of the FEFC the inspection took place during the week beginning 19 January 1998. The inspection team had previously analysed the college's self-assessment report, an update to that report and information held by other divisions of the FEFC. The college submitted data on students' achievements for the three years 1995 to 1997 which were validated by an inspector against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. It was notified of the sample of its provision which was to be assessed approximately four months before the inspection. Thirteen inspectors and two auditors spent 54 days in the college. Meetings were held with governors, managers, college staff and students. Inspectors consulted representatives of the Calderdale and Kirklees

Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), local schools, the local education authority (LEA), the local authority and those involved in single regeneration and European funded projects. Inspectors observed lessons, examined students' work and college documents.

7 Of the 93 lessons inspected, 53% were rated good or outstanding, and 13% were less than satisfactory. This profile compares unfavourably with the averages of 61% and 8%, respectively, for all lessons observed during 1996-97, according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report*. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was 70%, compared with the sector average of 77%, according to the same report. The highest attendance was in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (81%) and lowest in adult basic education (63%). The average class size was nine students a class. The average recorded class size in the chief inspector's annual report for 1996-97 is 10.8. The following table shows the grades awarded to the lessons inspected.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	2	3	5	0	0	10
GCSE	0	1	1	3	0	5
GNVQ	1	6	4	0	0	11
NVQ	0	2	3	1	1	7
Other vocational	7	17	10	4	1	39
Other	2	8	9	2	0	21
Total	12	37	32	10	2	93

Curriculum Areas

Science

Grade 4

8 Inspectors observed 12 lessons across the range of science provision. Inspectors agreed with a number of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report, but considered that some weaknesses were understated.

Key strengths

- outstanding link provision with special schools
- good opportunities for students to improve their key skills
- high standard of accommodation and learning resource materials

Weaknesses

- schemes of work limited in range and comprehensiveness
- use of a narrow range of teaching and learning methods
- students' underachievement in some external examinations
- students' poor experimental techniques
- unsatisfactory attendance rates
- poor learning experiences in combined groups
- few curriculum links with industry

9 Science provision in the college includes general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) in biology, chemistry and physics, the BTEC national diploma in science and GCSE science at both single and double award levels. Science staff also teach on vocational courses in other areas, for example, care. Good provision is made for science students to improve their key skills in IT, mathematics and English. However, significant weaknesses in the organisation and management of the curriculum

are not identified in the self-assessment report. The college has decided to combine a number of teaching groups, bringing them either into one laboratory or to adjacent rooms within the science centre. While the ability to combine groups is identified as a strength by the college, in practice it has led to an unsatisfactory learning experience for a number of students. In one combined lesson, the teaching of one part of the group was disrupted by noise coming from the students in the other part, who remained unsupervised for 25 minutes while carrying out practical work. An outstanding link course with local special schools led to the college receiving the Beacon Partnership Trust Award for general science.

10 The quality of teaching is often poor. Only two of the 12 lessons observed were graded as good or outstanding, and six were less than satisfactory. Course documentation is inadequate. The majority of schemes of work are little more than syllabus outlines. Where lesson plans are produced they are not always well structured. The findings of inspection conflict with the statement in the self-assessment report that a wide range of teaching and learning methods is used. Many students are exposed to a repetitive diet of dictation and dull whiteboard work, which fails to maintain their interest. In a few lessons, teaching was enthusiastic and relationships between staff and students were good. In one lesson the work was particularly well managed, providing a variety of activity for the students who were challenged, encouraged and supported. Industrial links are not used as a resource to enrich learning.

11 The quality of work in student assignments is variable. A number of students produce work of poor quality and fail to make use of their previous learning. Students do not always keep an adequate record of their work. In the laboratory, some students displayed poor experimental techniques and, although health and safety procedures are in place, poor practice is not always corrected. Retention and

Curriculum Areas

attendance rates are below national averages in some areas. On a number of occasions students arrived up to 20 minutes late for a lesson without explanation. Pass rates in GCE A level science have shown improvement over three years. However, those for 1997 show that no student achieved more than a grade C, and no student achieved a grade above that predicted on the basis of qualifications at entry. Most students are successful in progressing to higher education. The college recognises in its self-assessment report that results on other courses were disappointing.

12 Accommodation for science is of a high standard. The laboratories are spacious, well furnished and enlivened by good displays of work. An impressive feature is the use of a corridor wall to feature articles on contemporary science from newspapers and magazines. Inspectors agreed with the college's identification in its self-assessment report that the science centre is a strength. It is well resourced and contains satellite facilities, five new multimedia machines and a range of learning materials. However, students make little use of the area for private study.

Examples of students' achievements in science, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A/AS level	Retention (%)	56	56	86
	Pass rate (%)	62	72	78
GCSE	Retention (%)	53	74	81
	Pass rate (%)	29	38	29

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Computing and Information Technology

Grade 2

13 Provision in computing and IT is good. Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering part-time and full-time courses in computer literacy, software packages, GCE A level, general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) in IT and the national diploma in computer studies. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, although they considered that some weaknesses had been overlooked.

Key strengths

- teachers alert to the individual needs of students
- good pass rates on many courses, and excellent pass and retention rates on the GNVQ foundation course
- well-managed programmes
- a wide range of provision
- comprehensive support for IT across the college

Weaknesses

- little use of visual aids
- low pass rates on a few courses
- poor retention rates on some courses

14 Computing and IT courses meet the needs of a wide range of students. Attendance times are convenient for adults returning to study and courses are also offered in centres at a distance from the college. Pupils from a local school attend the college for part of their GNVQ IT course. New internet courses are being launched. The college is leading an externally funded project, run in conjunction with other colleges in the region, to develop IT training for local small and medium-sized businesses. Courses are well managed; timetabling, record-

keeping and scheduling of students' assignments are efficient. Course reviews, however, make insufficient use of students' views. Specialist staff support teachers across the college in their use of IT in teaching by carrying out surveys, offering advice, teaching IT as a key skill to students and providing staff development.

15 Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers use schemes of work effectively but lesson plans are not always prepared. Teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of their students. Many students take part in group work and give presentations which develop their interpersonal skills. Practical work in IT rooms is assisted by good-quality learning materials and effective support for individual students enabling them to work at their own pace. The self-assessment report accurately describes the strengths but not the weaknesses in teaching. Some teaching is unimaginative and teachers do not make enough use of visual aids, and multimedia resources.

16 Students' achievements are good. On most courses, those students who complete and enter examinations achieve high pass rates, often well above the national average. Pass and retention rates are particularly strong on the GNVQ foundation course in IT. However, the college's self-assessment report does not fully identify the weaknesses in students' achievements. For example, on some courses retention rates are below the targets set by the college, and a considerable number of students leave before achieving their qualifications.

17 Teachers have opportunities to keep up to date by participating in a scheme which provides them with mentors from industry. Provision of both hardware and software is good, and in the current year there has been considerable upgrading of computing equipment to reflect software development in the industry. Accommodation is of high quality. Noticeboards are, however, often absent or bare and little use is made of students' work or other materials to create visual interest.

Curriculum Areas

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
Advanced vocational computing courses (full time)	Retention (%)	83	53	70
	Pass rate (%)	100	100	94
Intermediate vocational computing and IT (full time)	Retention (%)	89	65	58
	Pass rate (%)	65	89	74
GNVQ foundation IT	Retention (%)	+	88	83
	Pass rate (%)	+	73	73
Computer Literacy and Access to Information Technology (part time)	Retention (%)	*	*	63
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	81

Source: college data

+course not running

*reliable data not available

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 3

18 Inspectors observed 12 lessons. These covered electronics and motor vehicle studies, the only aspects of engineering the college offers. Inspection findings agreed with many of the statements in the report but some strengths are overstated, or have insufficient evidence to substantiate them. A few weaknesses have been overlooked.

Key strengths

- good retention and pass rates on a number of courses
- rapid action taken in response to poor achievements on some courses
- enrichment of the students' experience through additional activities
- well-organised portfolios of students' work
- the accreditation of prior learning for employees at their place of work

Weaknesses

- shortcomings in teaching
- some poor achievements, including poor attendance
- insufficient level of technician support in motor vehicle engineering
- poor condition of the motor vehicle stock
- untidy accommodation in the motor vehicle area

19 The portfolio of courses in engineering is small. There are few part-time courses. However, the college has maintained reasonable opportunities for progression by, for example, offering a foundation level course in manufacturing, GNVQ intermediate in electronics and a national diploma in electronics. Motor vehicle staff are increasingly

involved in accrediting prior learning and experience for employees at their place of work, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Students' programmes are enriched by additional courses in languages, partly to prepare them for well-established exchange visits with European partners. Course documentation and record-keeping are satisfactory, and careful records of students' progress are maintained.

20 In some effective lessons, teachers test students' understanding by frequent questions directed to individuals, and set short tasks to make sure that students understand what they have been taught. However, much of the teaching lacks momentum and is not sufficiently challenging to maintain students' interest. Practical assignments are set at an appropriate level and align well with course requirements. This is recognised in reports from external verifiers. Assignment documentation is thorough and consistent within each course.

21 The portfolios of students' work are well presented; their content reflects the standard expected for their programme of study. Portfolios of job-cards which motor vehicle students complete while on work placement or in college workshops provide sound evidence of the tasks they have completed. Some levels of retention and pass rates are good, relative to those given in the FEFC curriculum area survey, *Engineering*, April 1996. In 1997, 12 of the 13 students who enrolled on the national diploma in electronics completed their course. All students who enrolled on the part-time GCSE in motor vehicle studies completed the course. Pass rates on intermediate level courses are good overall; for example, over 91% on one of the motor vehicle courses. The college is aware of the poor achievements on other courses and is taking steps to improve them by changing the courses offered and improving course management and the way students' progress is monitored. However, the self-assessment report does not always identify the weaknesses in

Curriculum Areas

students' achievements. For example, in 1997, only three of the 11 students enrolled on the motor vehicle course at foundation level completed their studies, and only five students passed their electronics servicing course from an original enrolment of 24. Attendance was poor overall in the motor vehicle lessons observed.

22 In electronics, specialist resources are good and specialist rooms satisfactory for their purpose. Equipment for teaching vehicle

bodywork and mechanical and electrical systems is good. Motor vehicle workshops are spacious for the number of students involved. However, they are untidy and filled almost to capacity with older cars, many of which are in various states of disrepair; even the more modern vehicles are in a neglected state. Classrooms for motor vehicle studies are untidy and contain redundant equipment and materials. Technician support in the motor vehicle area is insufficient.

Examples of students' achievements in engineering, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
National diploma electrical engineering	Retention (%)	75	69	92
	Pass rate (%)	78	44	83
GNVQ intermediate engineering; motor vehicle mechanic and electronic	Retention (%)	71	87	75
	Pass rate (%)	78	75	89
Motor vehicle foundation – Open College Network	Retention (%)	57	70	27
	Pass rate (%)	50	71	100
C&G electronic servicing; motor vehicle body/paint – Open College Network	Retention (%)	84	82	76
	Pass rate (%)	86	49	56

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Health and Social Care

Grade 2

23 Inspectors observed 18 lessons across the college's provision of childcare and health and social care. They agreed with the college's overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

Key strengths

- most teachers skilled at setting challenging tasks for students
- students well supported throughout their programmes
- work placements effectively linking theory to practice
- assignments at an appropriate level and carefully marked
- pass rates well above national averages
- good progression routes through to higher educational levels

Weaknesses

- uninspiring teaching in a significant minority of lessons
- IT not sufficiently integrated
- poor retention on many courses
- little monitoring of students' progress during the course

24 There is a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in childcare, social care and health studies, providing good progression opportunities from foundation level to higher education. Part-time courses are offered at times that meet the needs of mature students and employers; some are offered on a modular basis to allow students more freedom in choosing how they will study. Students are given the opportunity to upgrade their GCSE grades in mathematics and English alongside their vocational studies. Recent initiatives include the teaching of GNVQ advanced health

and social care in two local Muslim girls' schools, and the development of an assessment centre for a consortium of local authorities covering national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in childcare and education. Courses are generally well managed, though some course teams are not fully effective in setting and monitoring targets.

25 The majority of lessons are well planned and structured, although aims and objectives are not always shared with students. Teachers use teaching methods that effectively extend students' understanding. In one class of adults new to study, the teacher encouraged students to explain their views more clearly by effective questioning. This strengthened students' language skills and vocabulary as well as helping them develop their understanding of appropriate concepts. Well-organised work experience placements are a notable feature of all full-time courses. These are monitored effectively and link theory to practice. Teaching in a minority of lessons was uninspiring; students were not encouraged to contribute to discussion or given the opportunity to extend their learning through group work. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Teachers' feedback on students' work is detailed and helps students to improve their performance. Students are well supported through regular timetabled tutorials. However, there is insufficient monitoring of individual students' progress and related action-planning. IT is underused as a resource in lessons.

26 Pass rates are well above national averages on the majority of courses. For example, three courses in health studies and childcare had 100% pass rates. Student assignments are neatly presented and use well-chosen case studies to illustrate theoretical aspects. A major weakness identified by the college and confirmed by inspectors is the poor retention rates on many courses.

Curriculum Areas

27 The accommodation is of a good quality. Most student groups have their own base rooms, but some rooms are too small for current group sizes. There is little space for students to display their work. Students have adequate access to the IT study centre. The library stock is inadequate for the number of students on health and social care courses.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
CACHE diploma in nursery nursing	Retention (%)	94	86	81
	Pass rate (%)	97	83	68
National diploma in childhood studies	Retention (%)	100	81	80
	Pass rate (%)	100	100	100
National certificate in childcare and education	Retention (%)	79	88	94
	Pass rate (%)	100	100	100
National diploma caring services (social care)	Retention (%)	93	60	62
	Pass rate (%)	88	100	79
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	Retention (%)	63	67	60
	Pass rate (%)	79	83	93
GNVQ foundation health and social care	Retention (%)	+	+	40
	Pass rate (%)	+	+	100

Source: college data
+course not running

Curriculum Areas

English/Modern Foreign Languages

Grade 2

28 Inspectors observed 17 classes across the full range of provision. Their findings agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- appropriate use of a wide range of teaching methods
- effective schemes of work and structured lesson plans
- regular monitoring of students' progress and effective action-planning
- good results at GCE A level
- well-managed provision and a wide range of courses at all levels
- high quality of accommodation and resources for English

Weaknesses

- ineffective teaching in a significant minority of lessons
- low attendance rates
- unsatisfactory student learning experiences arising from the combining of classes

29 English courses are provided from basic through to degree level. Key skills and communications on vocational courses are taught by English teachers, providing a consistent specialist approach across the college. A wide range of languages is offered both inside the college and in the community. These include some languages less commonly found in further education colleges such as Japanese, Greek and Russian, which attract over 300 enrolments each year. French, Spanish and Italian are offered on vocational courses, for example, on

public services and leisure and tourism courses, to support work experience links with European partner institutions. However, only French is available at GCE A level. The curriculum area is well managed. There are regular and well-documented team meetings for college-based provision, but language teachers in centres away from the college's main sites often feel isolated.

30 The majority of lessons are well planned. Schemes of work ensure thorough coverage of the curriculum. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods and make effective use of teaching aids. Full-time students on the main sites benefit from support which takes account of their individual needs and is based on diagnostic assessment at the start of their studies. This applies to all courses from pre-GCSE to advanced level. Regular monitoring ensures that students are aware of their progress. Action-planning is a strong feature. In a significant number of lessons, students were not given enough opportunities to contribute and the teaching lacked sparkle. The self-assessment report overestimates the quality of teaching. To maintain provision, language classes such as GNVQ Spanish and some evening classes include students who are studying at different levels. At times, this leads to students experiencing few opportunities to speak and practise the foreign language.

31 At GCE A level, a number of students gain higher grades than those predicted on the basis of their qualifications at entry. In GCSE English, even though the numbers entered are high, the pass rate is the same as the average for all students in further education sector colleges. Although over 60 students have enrolled on a communications skills course in the last two years, retention is poor and the pass rate is 55%. Students do not always express themselves confidently and some are reluctant to participate in discussion or other learning activities and do not work effectively on their own. This weakness is not clearly identified by

Curriculum Areas

the college's self-assessment report. On adult languages courses accredited by the Open College Network, over 200 students achieved full or partial credits with pass rates of over 89% in 1996 and 1997. Attendance rates remain low, with only 67% of students present in the classes inspected. In a meeting with English and languages students, students stated that about one-third had had their study programmes disrupted due to recent college restructuring.

32 About one-third of the language tutors are native speakers. There are only three full-time language teachers. The English resource centre provides a pleasant working environment, and includes high-quality printed resources produced by the college. There is no similar arrangement for language students.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A/AS level English and languages	Retention (%)	74	71	71
	Pass rate (%)	80	72	75
GCSE English	Retention (%)	75	85	83
	Pass rate (%)	66	60	68
Adult languages – Open College Network levels 1 to 3	Retention (%)	+	87	77
	Pass rate (%)	+	89	91

*Source: college data
+course not running*

Curriculum Areas

Adult Basic Education

Grade 3

33 Inspectors observed 11 lessons. These covered the full range of adult basic education provision, delivered both on the college's premises and off site. Inspectors generally agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report, though they considered that some weaknesses were understated.

Key strengths

- good arrangements for initial guidance, assessment and induction
- appropriate assessment and feedback to students about their work
- positive action to widen participation in the community
- high-quality teaching accommodation and learning resources

Weaknesses

- failure to take sufficient account of students' needs
- poor attendance rates
- significantly weak retention rates across the programme area
- inadequate review and reporting of performance at programme level

34 In 1996-97, there were more than 1,200 enrolments on a wide range of courses which included basic skills, access to further education and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The college has good links with the local community and is taking positive action to encourage enrolments from students over the age of 25 and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Evidence from the inspection substantiates the judgement in the self-assessment report that this is a strength of the college. For example, at one centre Asian

women follow a course which integrates computer literacy with basic English to enable them to help their children with school work; students were able to use portable computers in a high-quality learning environment.

35 Teaching is sound. Teachers have clear objectives for courses and lessons. They provide good initial guidance, assessment and induction for students. Classroom activities are well managed and provide a wide variety of learning activities. Whole-group and individual teaching is generally effective. However, some teachers do not provide work which takes sufficient account of students' individual learning needs and which, in some cases, is not challenging enough for the students. On a few courses, teaching is planned in response to the requirements of the scheme of accreditation rather than the needs of learners.

36 Students attending classes are highly motivated. However, overall attendance is poor and averaged 63% in the classes inspected. This confirms the judgement made in the self-assessment report. Students' work is of an appropriate standard. It is effectively assessed by teachers and useful feedback is provided to students. Less than 60% of students completed their courses in 1996-97. This was not fully recognised as a weakness by the college in its self-assessment report, although efforts are now being made to improve the monitoring of attendance and the retention of students. The achievement rate of those students who completed their courses in 1996-97 was 85%.

37 Management of the curriculum has been effective in introducing a new framework for accreditation and progression. Standard documentation is now in place, for example, with regard to students' records. Other aspects of curriculum management are weak. For example, there is insufficient analysis and reporting of performance at programme level. Targets for retention and achievement have only recently been set. Data on students' achievements were only available for 1996-97.

Curriculum Areas

Little information exists on the progression and destinations of students.

38 There are too few teachers with specialist qualifications for teaching basic skills or ESOL. Teachers use IT, and audiovisual equipment effectively to support learning. For example, one ESOL class was located in a language laboratory. This allowed students to use high-quality equipment to improve their language skills. Teaching accommodation is of good quality. Inspection evidence confirms the college's own judgements on specialist resources.

Examples of students' achievements in basic education for 1997

Course grouping	Retention (%)	Number achieving learning goals of those enrolling (%)
Return to learn	52	45
Skillbase	71	65
Adult access	34	18
ESOL	55	49

Source: college data

Note: courses accredited by the Open College Network

Curriculum Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Grade 3

39 Inspectors observed 11 lessons across the range of the college's programmes designed specifically for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The inspection findings are in broad agreement with the judgements included in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good opportunities for students to develop confidence
- carefully planned lessons
- a strong emphasis on health and safety issues
- careful monitoring of students' progress
- good retention rates

Weaknesses

- insufficient sharing of the purpose of lessons with students
- few opportunities for progression to vocational areas
- complicated documentation for recording students' achievements
- specialist learning materials not always available
- students not always engaged in relevant activities

40 The emphasis in lessons on individual development and on students learning on their own enables students to develop their self-confidence. Most lessons are well planned, as the self-assessment report recognises. Supporting handouts are good. Learning is strengthened by good relationships between teachers and students, and sound class

management. For example, in one lesson run in a multi-skills craft room, students were set tasks that used their joinery skills. They negotiated with the teacher their individual tasks and the activity that would follow. Teachers emphasise health and safety issues appropriately. However, they do not always set work which is appropriate to the needs of the individual. Students do not always understand the purpose of the lesson or activity.

41 Attendance is good; retention rates vary between 85% and 100%. Students are well motivated and work hard at the tasks set for them. Many use specialist vocational resources and equipment competently. Students' progress is carefully monitored. However, the documents and procedures for recording students' progress are too complex and unsystematic. Opportunities for students to gain nationally recognised vocational qualifications are underdeveloped.

42 The self-assessment report noted that the restructuring of the provision has resulted in a number of improvements including the development of a well-planned curriculum. Inspectors agreed with that view. Course co-ordinators and tutors work well together. Regular staff meetings lead to specific points for action. The school links programme is of good quality and provides opportunities for college staff to assess pupils who intend to progress to the college.

43 The specialist accommodation for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provides facilities for students to learn the skills they need to live independently, including cookery and craft activities. The multi-skills workshop is well equipped. Students also have access to mainstream specialist vocational accommodation in catering and IT. The separate location for the specialist accommodation hinders progress towards inclusiveness. The main refectory is not easily accessible to students.

Curriculum Areas

44 Few teachers have recent or specialist qualifications relating to the teaching of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A team of learning support assistants, managed by a care manager and teachers, provides personal care and mobility support, independent travel programmes and general classroom support. The support staff do not have experience or qualifications in learning support, though many have NVQ level 2 qualifications in care. The progress of some students who have visual impairments or poor literacy skills is hindered because appropriate learning materials and specialist support is not always available.

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 1

45 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's judgement that support for students is outstanding.

Key strengths

- generous support provided by teachers as need arises
- prospective students well informed about the college and its courses
- an innovative learning skills programme followed by the majority of students
- the effective counselling service
- the beneficial contribution made by the student support and guidance services
- wide ranging and supportive programme of guidance for progression
- a comprehensive and well-structured tutorial programme
- effective additional learning support delivered with sensitivity

Weaknesses

- failure of some teachers to record students' progress effectively in tutorials

46 Students speak positively of the welcoming and friendly atmosphere of the college. The student services unit situated at the main entrance includes a suite of interview rooms which provide privacy. Support is comprehensive and covers admissions, guidance, counselling, student accommodation, welfare and benefit advice. Professionally qualified counsellors have extensive links with external agencies. Specific cultural and language support in Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and Katchi is available. The students' union benefits from the services of a youth worker who actively supports its activities, such as those designed to raise awareness of drug-related issues. The day

nursery provides excellent childcare facilities for students.

47 Inspectors agreed with the college's statement in its self-assessment report that prospective students are well informed about the college and its courses. Printed information is comprehensive and of a high standard. Liaison with schools is effective. Prospective students value 'taster' days and open evenings and the opportunities to workshadow art and design students. A central admissions service provides impartial guidance. Further interviews are arranged for those who are unsure what they want to study. Enquiries and applications are followed up efficiently and applicants receive helpful advice. Monitoring the progress of prospective students from enquiry to enrolment has yet to be fully implemented.

48 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's judgement that induction of new full-time students is well planned. Students are given clear information about the requirements of their course, the college and its facilities. They receive a student handbook, a copy of the student charter and a course handbook. For part-time students, induction is included in the first lesson of their course. Guidance notes and staff development help staff deliver induction. Course co-ordinators and teachers adapt the induction process to suit their specific requirements.

49 The college has instigated a more systematic approach to the provision of additional learning support since the previous inspection. Arrangements are thorough and well organised. Full-time and substantive part-time students are screened to assess their skills in numeracy, writing and literacy during induction; other part-time students can opt for screening. Most full-time students follow a seven-week programme which aims to develop their learning skills, and those identified as in need of learning support attend a surgery to establish an appropriate programme of help. For example, in health and social care,

Cross-college Provision

mathematical tasks were related to practices adopted by the care industry; even those students who had poor records of attendance at school reported that they enjoyed the activity. The college provides good support for students with dyslexia. Overall, this provision is a strong feature of the college.

50 The comprehensive tutorial programme has clear guidelines. Most students meet their personal tutor weekly. A scheme of work for tutorials identifies a range of activities to be undertaken, including action-planning, developing records of achievement and careers sessions. Individual action plans record progress and set targets for future improvement. However, some teachers do not see the benefit of formally recording a student's general progress. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. In other areas such as GCE A level studies, students can take accredited modules, including those on managing finances and preparing for either higher education or employment. Good practice in tutorials is identified by the cross-college co-ordinator and shared through well-planned staff development.

51 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that careers advice and guidance was

a strength. Links with the Calderdale and Kirklees careers service partnership are productive. Careers officers contribute effectively to the student induction and tutorial programmes, and provide impartial advice on higher education and employment opportunities. Students have access to speakers for careers guidance, including people from minority ethnic groups who provide effective role models. Positive steps have been taken to encourage students who would not normally have gone to higher education to do so. The college encourages parents' involvement when their sons or daughters apply to higher education. There are comprehensive guides for adult applicants to higher education. In addition, the college has its own careers and guidance adviser with particular responsibility for adult students. New government initiatives are promoted, and job searches and voluntary work result in individual action plans to help students gain employment.

52 The college records the destinations of full-time students who achieve their intended qualifications. The following table gives these as a percentage of those completing their courses in 1997. Overall, the destinations of 90% of full-time students are known.

Students' destinations in 1997

Provision	Number of students	Higher education %	Further education %	Employment %	Other %	Unknown %
Two-year vocational	330	47	11	28	8	6
One-year vocational	527	15	49	15	8	13
GCE A level	68	59	7	15	6	13
GCSE	15	0	93	0	0	7

Source: college data

Cross-college Provision

General Resources

Grade 2

53 Inspectors' judgements correspond closely to those in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report is detailed and reflects the improvements to general resources since the last inspection in 1994.

Key strengths

- good-quality accommodation
- effective cleaning and maintenance programmes
- well-managed libraries on all three sites
- high-quality resource centres for mathematics, science and English
- extensive facilities for IT
- good access to most parts of its buildings for students with restricted mobility

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory room utilisation
- inadequate level of library stock
- poor heating and ventilation controls in some areas

54 The college occupies three main sites: the main campus in Halifax Road, and the sites at Wheelwright and Batley. All include Victorian listed buildings. At the time of the last inspection in 1994, substantial sums had been spent to refurbish many of them to a high standard. Since then, some poor accommodation has been demolished and further substantial refurbishment of a listed building at Batley has been undertaken. A new sixth form centre and a Muslim prayer room have also been created. However, college figures show that utilisation of accommodation remains low. The self-assessment report recognises this problem. Most accommodation is now good or excellent, but some significant

areas in Halifax Road lack effective heating and ventilation controls. Classrooms are bright, attractive and well furnished. Good-quality areas for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been created in space released by closing other provision. There are realistic work environments for catering, travel and business studies. Some parts of the Halifax Road site are of poor appearance and have access difficulties. For example, access to the nursery is steep and narrow, some of the engineering workshop and corridor areas are drab and cluttered, and space between and to the rear of buildings is unattractive. A maintenance programme is updated annually. Minor incidents of vandalism are addressed by regular monitoring and repairs. There are high standards of cleanliness.

55 Each site has library provision. The libraries at the Halifax Road and Batley sites are in refurbished buildings. They are attractive and well equipped, with computers and a wide range of periodicals and videotapes. However, the bookstock is low, with only eight items and an annual spend of £6 for each full-time equivalent student. Since the last inspection, named library staff have established links with faculties to improve liaison with teachers. Library staff are well qualified. The college has spacious and well-equipped resource centres for English, mathematics and IT, and students speak highly of the service they provide. Each contains a substantial range of learning materials, is well staffed and has long opening hours. The college's self-assessment report recognises a need to review and co-ordinate learning resources provided by the resource centres and libraries. Staff and students use the central reprographic service, and surveys show that they consider that it provides a good service. The college is well equipped with modern computers and software. Overall there is a ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students of 1:8.8, and a comprehensive communications network covers all sites.

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Many computers are available for use on a 'drop-in' basis. Some software and hardware have recently been upgraded. Inspectors agreed with the strengths of the resource centres and IT equipment identified in the self-assessment.

56 Since the previous inspection, the college has improved the quality of social areas. There is now a student common room at Batley and an area run by the student union at Halifax Road, where there is also a separate common room for adults. A small second refectory has been added to the existing one at Halifax Road. However, these social facilities are overcrowded at times. Staff accommodation has improved and some technician accommodation has been created in space separate from stores and classrooms. The reception area at the main entrance is welcoming. Although there is a multi-gym room and a gymnasium, few students participate in recreational activities. Access to most parts of the college for students who use wheelchairs is good. However, they cannot yet use the entrance to the main Halifax Road refectory. The college has increased safety and security by installing barriers across some approach roads, better fencing and some use of closed-circuit television.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

57 Inspectors considered that some of the weaknesses in quality assurance were not given sufficient weight in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- strong commitment to continuous quality improvement
- the college's quality policy understood and supported by staff
- the setting of well-developed, precise and high-quality standards

- staff development activities well organised and aligned with training needs
- involvement of the whole college in the production of the self-assessment report

Weaknesses

- little use of lesson observations in monitoring quality
- underdeveloped application of quality procedures to support services
- limited use of performance indicators
- the failure of management information systems to support quality assurance
- inadequate depth of analysis in course reviews

58 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college gives continuous attention to quality. Regular reviews of the performance of course teams are carried out using the college's system of 'quality logs'. Quality assurance task groups have revised the quality standards and piloted a new process for programme area review. An active academic standards committee of the academic board ensures that staff understand the need for quality assurance.

59 In the self-assessment report the college claims that its quality assurance arrangements lead to improved performance. The report includes little evidence for this. However, some examples were found during the inspection. For example, messages in a suggestions box in the learning resource centre helped staff to improve students' borrowing rights. The college has a developed a collection of clear, precise and demanding quality standards; some for teaching and learning are particularly well written. However, the extent to which all standards are achieved is not monitored. Lesson observations have been piloted in health and social care; the college recognises the need to introduce lesson observations as part of the quality assurance process for all curriculum areas.

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60 Curriculum quality review is well established. Course reviews and reports are completed at three stages during a course. Surveys of students' and employers' perceptions provide supporting information. However, course teams do not receive timely and accurate management information. In review documents, course statistics data are not always entered, and comparisons between course success rates over previous years and other performance indicators are sometimes missing. This important weakness was highlighted in the self-assessment report. Action-planning to improve students' retention is poor on some courses; the college has now established a working group to consider retention issues. Records of action following reviews are not always clear.

61 The student support unit has developed customer surveys and the learning resource centre its own quality standards. Both monitor their performance. However, quality assurance arrangements do not cover all aspects of the college's work in sufficient depth. Reviews of the work of support services are not always appropriate for the activities they undertake. For example, teams are not required to comment on their performance in relation to targets. The self-assessment report confirms that quality standards for some support services are neither fully implemented nor monitored.

62 The college's charter is monitored mainly through surveys of students' perceptions. It includes a clear explanation of how to make a complaint and gives useful guidance to students on the kinds of complaints that can arise and how they will be considered. The self-assessment report claims that the charter is a strength. However, it is short on entitlements, expansive on students' responsibilities and unclear on what standards students can expect. It is published in English and on audio tape.

63 Staff development is carefully planned. It is closely linked to the outcomes of staff development reviews, quality monitoring processes and the strategic plan. The quality

logs give course co-ordinators an opportunity to propose staff development activities which will help improve the quality of their courses. A summary for the whole college has led to a focus on industrial updating as a staff development priority for 1998. The college achieved the Investor in People award in 1997.

64 The college undertook its first self-assessment in preparation for the inspection. The production of the self-assessment report involved a large number of course and support service teams and included consultation with industry and another further education college. Teaching and non-teaching staff received training on how to carry out a self-assessment. The corporation and the academic board discussed the report before it was submitted to the FEFC. A weakness of the report was that the evidence for judgements often consisted of the source document rather than the evidence itself. The action plan has been affected by changes to the college's financial position since the report was written. However, an update to the self-assessment report was useful in supporting the inspection, particularly in curriculum areas.

Governance

Grade 4

65 The corporation appointed an external consultant to undertake an assessment of governor activities. The resulting conclusions formed the basis of the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed partly with the analysis of strengths and weaknesses but felt that the significance of the weaknesses was understated; that some of the strengths only identified a commitment to change rather than its achievement; and that the report failed to recognise the seriousness of the position regarding the financial health of the college.

Cross-college Provision

Key strengths

- close involvement of governors in revising the mission of the college and in strategic planning

Weaknesses

- failure of the corporation to ensure the financial health of the college
- failure of audit committee to secure improvements in the college's internal control system
- ineffective financial monitoring by the finance and general purposes committee
- failure of the corporation to ensure sufficient financial expertise in the senior management team

66 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is weak. The corporation does not substantially conduct its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also does not substantially fulfil its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. The college's financial situation demonstrates that the corporation has not fulfilled its responsibility to ensure the financial health of the college.

67 The full corporation met eight times in 1997. Its work is supported by three principal committees: finance and general purposes; staffing and personnel; and audit. There are also search and remuneration committees. Although the committee structure is appropriate, two key committees have not functioned effectively. The audit committee is ineffective as it has failed to act on the conclusion reached by the college's internal auditors in 1996, and more strongly in 1997, that internal control arrangements were inadequate. In this respect, the corporation has failed to meet its responsibilities under the financial memorandum. The finance and general

purposes committee has not been effective in monitoring the finances of the college though inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report which states that the committee's ability to monitor financial performance has been impaired by the poor quality of management and financial information it received. In 1995, the finance and general purposes committee decided to defer a recommendation by external consultants that they should appoint a director of finance as part of a management restructuring exercise. An appointment was eventually made in May 1997. The finance and general purposes committee has met monthly since August 1997 and now receives regular management accounts. However, it did not receive any financial information in respect of 1997-98 until December 1997.

68 The corporation makes a positive contribution to the college's strategic planning cycle. It played an active part in revising the college mission at a day conference held early last year as a preface to the current strategic plan. It also considered faculty development plans at another conference later in the same year. Both events were well attended. The self-assessment report identified that there was a need for the corporation to give greater priority to discussing curriculum and quality issues. Inspectors agreed with this conclusion. In future, the corporation intends, for example, to consider academic board minutes at the start rather than near the end of corporation meetings. Members have recently completed a questionnaire which considers ways of improving communication with college staff and widening their knowledge of curriculum areas. During the inspection, a number of members expressed concern over the operation of the corporation, referring to the inadequate discussion of some key issues such as college finances and student records. Corporation minutes confirm a presentation from the deputy principal about students' achievements in 1997. Measurable objectives for appraising the

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performance of the chief executive are agreed between the remuneration committee and the chief executive, who, in turn, makes recommendations to the committee about the appraisal and development of other senior staff.

69 The corporation is properly constituted and has increased its membership since the last inspection from 15 to 17. Two co-opted members have been added to widen community representation. There are currently three vacancies, and the corporation is seeking a replacement for one of the co-opted members from the community, who recently resigned. The self-assessment report highlights the range of skills and experience that governors bring, including experience of small and large businesses, personnel, and marketing. No member has a legal background. An accountant joined the corporation in May 1997. Five of the governors are women including the vice-chair. A new chair was appointed in October 1997. The outgoing chair is the chief executive of the TEC, and in that capacity gave formal approval to the college's strategic plans on the recommendation of TEC staff. The corporation's code of ethics and register of interests are currently in the process of being updated. Standing orders have been recently approved. The clerk, a former assistant principal of the college, was reappointed in April 1997 on his retirement.

Management

Grade 4

70 The self-assessment report was produced in the summer term 1997. At that time the college was unaware of the scale of its financial problems. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report where these did not refer to financial matters. Inspectors concluded that some of the strengths were given undue weight and the significance of the weakness relating to management

information was underestimated in the college's self-assessment.

Key strengths

- effective mechanisms for communications and cross-college working
- well-structured policy documents
- strong commitment by the college to work with its local communities

Weaknesses

- the poor financial position of the college
- lack of reliable management information
- failure to make timely and accurate returns to the FEFC
- slow implementation of action agreed with internal auditors
- ineffective use of management targets and forecasts

71 Failure of the college to produce accurate management information has contributed to the current difficult financial position. The self-assessment report recognised this weakness but has not placed sufficient emphasis on the impact that it had on planning, forecasting, and curriculum management. For example, the majority of class registers seen during the inspection were described as temporary; data had not been transferred to the central information system. Students who had been absent for many weeks were not shown as withdrawn.

72 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is weak. Financial forecasting is poor. The most recent financial data at the time of the inspection were the management accounts for November 1997. These show a projected year-end deficit although the financial implications of a

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redundancy programme had yet to be finalised. At the time of the inspection, the college was in negotiation with the FEFC about a possible revised funding allocation from 1994-95 onwards. The impact of this review on the financial position of the college shows that the college had operating deficits in 1995-96 and 1996-97 and required a large overdraft facility from its bankers.

73 The college has not used management targets or forecasts effectively to control developments. Until 1997-98, part-time teachers were appointed without sufficient consideration of the financial implications. In 1996-97, the part-time teaching budget was significantly overspent. After a major refurbishment of one of the college buildings in 1995 the college's internal auditors stated that the work had been undertaken with insufficient needs analysis. They further concluded that they could not place reliance on the college's internal control systems nor on college management to implement agreed recommendations from their report. The last set of statutory accounts finalised by external auditors relates to 1993-94. These significant weaknesses are not mentioned in the self-assessment report. The college was able to provide accurate achievement data to the inspection team for most of its full-time courses by referral to records held by teachers rather than those held centrally. An administration and information manager has been recently appointed to the college and a senior manager has been delegated to produce reliable data of course numbers and costs. These appointments, along with the appointment of the director of finance, have led to the introduction of improved financial control, accounting and reporting systems which have yet to have their full impact on the college.

74 The college failed to meet its units target in two of the last three years, although the 1996-97 units target appears to have been met. It introduced targets for critical indicators such

as retention for the first time in 1997-98, and these are now monitored at course level. Since incorporation, important information routinely required by the FEFC has been returned late.

75 At the time of inspection, the college had just completed the selection of 60 posts to be made redundant. This process has had an appreciable effect on the standards of teaching experienced by students, and its effect was apparent during the inspection. Students complained to inspectors about the effects of abrupt changes of teachers. Poor teaching was observed from some newly appointed part-time teachers.

76 Staff at all levels and governors were involved in the production of the college's strategic plan. This included a re-examination of the college's mission statement and objectives. In the current year, the planning process has been overtaken by the need for the college to produce a recovery plan. The current strategic plan does not include predicted student numbers or a financial forecast and thus does not fully comply with FEFC guidelines. However, the recovery plan submitted to the FEFC includes a financial forecast and predicted student numbers. It also contains a number of ambitious assumptions about changes to college operations, for example, an increase in the average class size from the current figure of 13 to 18 students.

77 Inspectors agreed with the college's claim that communication channels in the college are generally successful in disseminating information and views, enabling good practices to be shared, and in deciding actions on whole-college issues. They include newsletters, whole-college meetings, and a detailed meetings schedule for college committees and teams. Groups of staff from across the college meet each other regularly in numerous formal and informal working groups. Individual staff understand their roles and the line management arrangements. The academic board is effective in advising the principal on academic matters.

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Membership of the board includes teaching staff, support staff and student representatives though these members are not always successful in bringing the work of the academic board to the attention of their fellow staff or students.

78 College policies are comprehensive and clearly written. They include named persons or groups responsible for the policy and its monitoring, dates for consideration for revision, and separate procedures where appropriate. The deputy principal chairs an effective cross-college equal opportunities group. This group and the quality assurance manager, who is also the equal opportunities co-ordinator, produce an annual action plan and monitor progress towards its achievement regularly.

79 Inspection findings confirmed the self-assessment report's judgement that the college plays an important role in a number of partnerships in its catchment area designed to improve participation in education and training. For example, it has implemented schemes funded by the single regeneration budget and European Social Fund. Most of the college's partners seen by inspectors considered the college to be a 'flexible' and 'listening' institution. It provides introductory certificated vocational courses for local pupils which are valued by their schools, though head teachers stated that there had been some problems in liaison with curriculum managers.

Conclusions

80 Despite the newness of the self-assessment process, the inspection team found that the self-assessment report provided a helpful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. Some of the key strengths and weaknesses identified in the report were confirmed by the inspection team. Weaknesses identified by the college, however, were frequently described in terms which suggest they had less significance than that placed on them by the inspectors, and some strengths were overstated by the college. There

was less agreement on the grades for aspects of cross-college provision.

81 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 (July 1997)

Age	%
Under 16	2
16-18 years	17
19-24 years	17
25+ years	64
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1997)

Level of study	%
Foundation	27
Intermediate	29
Advanced	19
Higher education	3
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	22
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	197	1,905	25
Agriculture	38	65	1
Construction	0	9	0
Engineering	93	206	3
Business	307	950	15
Hotel and catering	97	349	5
Health and community care	318	1,430	20
Art and design	451	212	8
Humanities	254	1,046	15
Basic education	89	557	8
Total	1,844	6,729	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1997)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	152	79	0	231
Supporting direct learning contact	75	0	0	75
Other support	112	3	0	115
Total	339	82	0	421

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	*	*	*
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£19.83	£20.14	£19.51+
Payroll as a proportion of income	*	*	*
Achievement of funding target	101%	84%	*
Diversity of income	*	*	*
Operating surplus	*	*	*

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

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96)

*data not finalised

+provisional data

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	84	102	113
	Average point score per entry	3.5	3.5	3.2
	Position in tables	middle third	middle third	bottom third
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	263	173	274
	Percentage achieving qualifications	63%	80%	87%
	Position in tables	bottom third	top third	top third
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	134	128
	Percentage achieving qualification	*	69%	57%
	Position in tables	*	top third	middle third

Source: DfEE

Note: the majority of the college's students are 19 years of age or older

The achievements of these students are not covered in published DfEE performance tables

*1994-95 intermediate vocational results not available

Students' achievements

		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Advanced academic	Pass %	63	75	67
	Retention %	68	65	83
Intermediate academic	Pass %	53	52	60
	Retention %	64	79	82
Advanced vocational	Pass %	96	93	94
	Retention %	82	71	72
Intermediate vocational	Pass %	78	78	81
	Retention %	77	77	72

Source: college data

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