

Franklin College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1998-99**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100
Website <http://www.fefc.ac.uk>*

© FEFC 1999 You may photocopy this report and use extracts in promotional or other material provided quotes are accurate, and the findings are not misrepresented.

Contents

Paragraph

Summary

Context

The college and its mission	1
The inspection	6

Curriculum areas

Mathematics	10
Business	16
English	22
Humanities	28

Cross-college provision

Support for students	34
General resources	42
Quality assurance	49
Governance	55
Management	63
Conclusions	71

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	9	60	29	2	-
Cross-college provision	18	54	24	4	-

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

Student Achievements

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

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

Summary

Franklin College

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

Inspected March 1999

Franklin College in Grimsby was originally established as a sixth form college in 1990. It has since expanded and diversified its provision to include over 1,000 part-time students many of whom are adults. The self-assessment report made good use of a range of performance indicators; its production involved staff at all levels. A governors' committee was established to validate the outcomes of the self-assessment process. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report, although in the case of three cross-college and two curriculum areas they judged that either insufficient emphasis had been given to some of the weaknesses or that some strengths had been given too much weighting. Inspectors identified some additional weaknesses. Between writing the self-assessment report and the inspection, the college had completed much of the action plan for general resources. Grades given in those lesson observations undertaken by the college were significantly higher than those awarded by inspectors.

The college offers school-leavers and adults a range of general education and vocational courses. Provision in three FEFC programme areas was inspected; four grades were awarded. Aspects of cross-college provision were also

inspected. The quality of teaching is good; 68% of lessons were judged to be good or outstanding. Students' achievements are outstanding in some subjects, for example, GCE A level further mathematics and business studies; in other areas they are closer to national averages. Support for students is effective; careers education is timely and well resourced. Significant improvements have been made to the college estate. IT facilities are outstanding. Through self-assessment, teachers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. A comprehensive handbook supports the work of governors who operate in an open way. Financial management is good and staff are effectively deployed. Links with external agencies and educational providers are productive. The college should: address some declining trends in students' achievements; promote more student activity in group tutorials; further develop staff appraisal and the assurance of quality of cross-college services; improve the attendance of governors and the operation of some key committees; improve aspects of communications and the use of management information across the college.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Mathematics	2	Support for students	2
Business	2	General resources	1
English	3	Quality assurance	3
Humanities	3	Governance	3
		Management	2

The College and its Mission

1 Franklin College was established in 1990 as part of the reorganisation of secondary education in Grimsby, then part of the County of Humberside. The urban area of Grimsby and Cleethorpes, now part of the county of North East Lincolnshire, has a combined population of 162,000. The major industries are food processing, fish sales, and car imports and exports. The commercial port of Immingham is nearby and there is a significant amount of industry on the south bank of the river Humber comprising mainly chemical and petro-chemical plants. The current unemployment rate in the area is 8.6% compared with an average of 5.9% for the Yorkshire and Humberside region as a whole and a national average figure of 4.8%.

2 The college has nine partner schools for the 11 to 16 age group, six of which are within Grimsby, two in Cleethorpes and one in Lincolnshire. The college draws students from all of the schools in the area, including the four 11 to 18 schools in Cleethorpes, three of which are within 2.5 miles of the college. Grimsby College, a large general further education college situated close by, provides a full range of general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses alongside its vocational provision. Franklin College is one of the four members of the Humberside sixth form colleges' consortium and a member of the Yorkshire and Humberside sixth form colleges' network which consists of 11 colleges. The participation rate in post-16 education for full-time students in the area is 60%. In 1998, the proportion of students leaving schools in North East Lincolnshire with five or more GCSE subjects at grade C or above was 33.3%, which is significantly below the national average of 46.3%.

3 Since the last inspection, the college has substantially increased the number of part-time students from 426 to 1,044. Numbers of full-time students have also risen from 911 to 921.

Provision includes 36 GCE A level courses, 23 GCE advanced supplementary (AS) courses, 19 GCSE courses, general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) programmes at foundation, intermediate and advanced level and a range of short courses. The college is an associate college of the University of Hull. A number of higher education courses are taught at the college including some by Franklin College staff. The college is the local centre for the Open University, the area's music peripatetic service and the youth orchestra.

4 The curriculum of the college is organised through four faculties, each of which is led by a faculty director. Support for students is organised through four teams of tutors each led by a senior tutor. The senior managers are: the principal, the vice-principal who manages the curriculum and quality assurance, an assistant principal who manages business and resources and a further assistant principal who manages student services and human resources. In July 1998, the college employed 58 full-time equivalent teachers and 33 full-time equivalent support staff.

5 The primary aim of the college, as stated in its mission statement, is to provide 'education and training of quality and purpose'. The college seeks to ensure appropriate learning opportunities for students, irrespective of age, ability or attainment. It bases its provision on the principles of 'open access, individuality, progression, breadth, participation, challenge and excellence'. A key aim is to work with other providers and agencies to support a comprehensive, coherent and integrated system for education and training in the area, and by so doing to improve local access to higher education and training. It seeks to participate with and contribute to the local community, businesses and industry, and actively develop links with Europe.

Context

The Inspection

6 The college was inspected during the week beginning 1 March 1999. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and information about the college held by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors used data on students' achievements drawn from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1996 and 1997. The college submitted its own data on students' achievements for 1998 which were checked by inspectors against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. These data proved generally reliable when checked against these sources. The inspection was carried out by seven inspectors and an auditor for a total of 35 days. Inspectors observed 57 lessons, assessed students' work and examined college documentation. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff, students, and representatives from the local training and enterprise council (TEC),

Humberside Partnership Careers Service, schools and other community partners.

7 This college was one of 30 in the current cycle of inspections which agreed to participate in the joint Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and FEFC assessment of careers education and guidance. The joint assessment was guided by the inspection framework, with careers education assessors contributing to judgements made by inspectors. The emphasis in this report on careers education and guidance will help colleges and careers services to improve the quality of the careers education and guidance they offer and help the DfEE to disseminate good practice.

8 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the 48 lessons and nine group tutorials observed, 68% were judged to be good or outstanding and 4% less than satisfactory. This compares with averages of 65% and 6%, respectively, for all lessons observed during 1997-98.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	5	14	10	0	0	29
GCSE	1	7	2	0	0	10
GNVQ	1	2	0	0	0	3
Other	3	6	4	2	0	15
Total (No.)	10	29	16	2	0	57
Total (%)	17	51	28	4	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 (%)	19	46	29	6	0	100

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

Context

9 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed (including group tutorials) and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1997-98.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Franklin College	12.5	77
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98	10.4	77

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

Curriculum Areas

Mathematics

Grade 2

10 The inspection covered provision in mathematics from numeracy to GCE A level. Fourteen lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college. However, the college self-assessment report failed to identify some weaknesses in teaching and learning and overestimated the strengths in students' achievements.

Key strengths

- thorough planning and management of the curriculum
- much good teaching
- effective use of homework
- outstanding GCE A level further mathematics achievements
- the wide range of provision

Weaknesses

- rudimentary development of students' ability to articulate mathematical ideas
- falling GCE AS retention and achievement

11 The GCE A level mathematics course has attracted growing numbers of students over the last three years; much smaller numbers take GCE AS courses. A group of more able students take a double GCE A level in mathematics and further mathematics. A large GCSE programme caters for the many students wishing to improve their existing grade; a basic numeracy qualification is offered mainly to foundation level students on vocational courses. Separate GCSE courses are provided for adults in the evening and for 'young mums' at a local centre. This year, extra mathematical support sessions have been delivered three days a week, on a 'drop-in' and referral basis. The self-assessment report

identified the wide range of provision as a strength but did not fully evaluate the effectiveness of the provision below GCE A level which meets the needs of the many students with widely differing previous achievements in mathematics.

12 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement in the self-assessment report that mathematics courses are well planned and well managed. The GCE A level schemes use good-quality commercial learning materials, including student workbooks linked to mathematical investigations, practical work, reviews and tests. Detailed records of students' progress are kept. Homework is regularly set and quickly returned; marking is very detailed, greatly assisting students to evaluate their progress. Individual members of staff have clear responsibilities for managing the different aspects of provision. There are regular staff meetings and appropriate development plans.

13 Of the lessons observed, three were outstanding, seven good and the remainder satisfactory, closely matching the profile for sixth form colleges nationally in the 1998-99 FEFC inspectorate report *Mathematics in Further Education*. The self-assessment report identified the strengths in teaching but the internal lesson observation grades awarded by the college were considerably higher than those awarded by inspectors. Lesson preparation for GCE A level was thorough, assisted by the prescribed teaching scheme. In the better lessons, teachers explained mathematical ideas clearly and supported individual students effectively. They used question-and-answer sessions well to consolidate students' understanding of important concepts. Some teaching was less imaginative. For example, teachers made little use of the overhead projector to illustrate ideas visually and did not provide activities which would enable students to develop their ability to express and debate mathematical ideas. Although arrangements are made to enable students to use mathematical software in the

Curriculum Areas

college's information technology (IT) facilities, no specialist classrooms have computers. The self-assessment report identified the absence of classroom computers but not the weaknesses in teaching.

14 Most students' achievements are good. Although the college enrolls an unusually wide range of students, the GCSE retention and pass rates are close to the national average for sixth form colleges. Many GCSE students improve on their previous performance by at least one grade. Pass rates at GCE A level consistently exceed sixth form college averages. Value-added measures which compare actual GCE A level performance against predicted grades based on GCSE achievements at entry show that many students exceed expectations. Results for the small group of further mathematics students

are outstanding with 100% pass rates over the last three years, including a high proportion at higher grades. The college attributes the lower retention rate in 1997-98 to students taking the course over an extended period. Retention and pass rates for students studying GCE AS courses have fallen over the last three years to below the average for sixth form colleges. The college self-assessment report recognised, but over emphasised, the strengths in students' achievements.

15 Teachers are well qualified. They work productively as an enthusiastic team and display confidence in their subject. There is a group of dedicated classrooms, attractively maintained with mathematical posters and notices. Most students purchase graphical calculators for use in lessons. Course texts are issued to students.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE mathematics	2	Expected completions	159	240	198
		Retention (%)	76	80	81
		Achievement (%)	40	46	37
GCE AS mathematics	3	Expected completions	7	34	22
		Retention (%)	86	85	73
		Achievement (%)	100	54	44
GCE A level mathematics	3	Expected completions	87	111	129
		Retention (%)	91	83	81
		Achievement (%)	87	89	94
GCE A level further mathematics	3	Expected completions	7	17	17
		Retention (%)	86	88	59
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100

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

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 2

16 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering business studies and business IT. The self-assessment report was comprehensive and inspectors agreed with most of the strengths stated in the report, but they identified a few additional weaknesses. Good progress is being made to address the weaknesses identified in the action plan.

Key strengths

- well-planned and well-managed courses
- purposeful teaching
- responsive course development in business IT
- good-quality learning materials in GCE A level and GNVQ courses
- good or improving pass rates in GCE A level, GCSE and business technology courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient reference to current business practices
- poor note-taking and organisation skills of some GCE A level students
- poor pass rates on GNVQ intermediate courses

17 The college offers GCE A/AS level, GCSE and GNVQ intermediate courses in business studies, and has more recently developed a wide range of business IT courses at the main site and at a nearby school. Enthusiastic course management and productive teamwork support curriculum development. The review and evaluation of business studies courses is thorough: managers compare course and student outcomes against a range of benchmarks. The co-ordination of the increasing number of part-time teachers in

business IT is effective. Good opportunities are provided for all full-time students to develop their IT skills. Curriculum managers and business technology teachers work well together to devise appropriate materials and to assess students' work. For example, some students following GCE A levels in foreign languages study text processing in French, German or Spanish. The effective use of IT as a learning tool is evident on GNVQ intermediate courses.

18 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching and learning are planned effectively. Of the 12 lessons observed, inspectors judged most to be good. Teaching is purposeful and thorough. In business studies lessons, teachers provide high-quality handouts which are well used in the classroom and for revision. Assignment and case study briefs are carefully designed to take account of the needs of students of different abilities and enable them to complete the work. The self-assessment report recognised that the college has not sufficiently developed its own teaching materials for business IT. Teachers use text books and past examination papers for class exercises but make insufficient reference to current business practices by, for example, drawing on students' work experience. Overall, links with local businesses are underdeveloped.

19 Feedback to students about their work is regular and constructive. Teachers provide detailed written comments on coursework and a clear evaluation of the standards achieved. The course notes of a significant minority of students are untidy: note-taking skills are poor and spelling and grammatical errors remain uncorrected. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Teachers take great care to build the confidence of adult students and many progress to higher level courses.

20 Students' achievements are mostly good or improving. In GCE A level business studies, the pass rates in 1997 and 1998 were 98% and 96%, respectively; considerably above the

Curriculum Areas

national average for sixth form colleges. In GCSE business studies, successful completions improved from 40% in 1997 to 60% in 1998. Pass rates for the small number of students on GNVQ intermediate business have been below the national average for the past three years. In business IT, achievements are generally above national averages and improving. For the large number of students completing stage 2 in integrated business technology, pass rates improved significantly between 1997 and 1998. Stage 3 integrated business technology was introduced in 1997-98 and 88% of the 31 completing students were successful. Achievements on word and text processing courses at all levels showed significant

improvement in 1998 with 72% of completing students achieving a qualification. Retention rates overall are around the national average for the sector.

21 Specialist classrooms are well furnished and have relevant and attractive displays, including examples of students' work. The IT centre provides a learning environment of good quality which is capable of accommodating multiple groups of students. Teachers and students are occasionally distracted by the range of different activities occurring simultaneously in the suite, particularly when students are starting or leaving lessons.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
Word and text processing	1/2	Expected completions	113	127	75
		Retention (%)	85	57	63
		Achievement (%)	71	58	80
GCSE business studies	2	Expected completions	11	16	16
		Retention (%)	73	63	94
		Achievement (%)	38	40	60
GNVQ intermediate	2	Expected completions	26	11	10
		Retention (%)	81	73	80
		Achievement (%)	53	63	50
Integrated business technology	2	Expected completions	50	335	363
		Retention (%)	80	76	74
		Achievement (%)	45	65	85
Word and text processing and integrated business technology	3	Expected completions	17	34	98
		Retention (%)	88	94	72
		Achievement (%)	73	42	75
GCE A level business studies	3	Expected completions	54	63	64
		Retention (%)	80	78	81
		Achievement (%)	67	98	96

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

Curriculum Areas

English

Grade 3

22 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in GCE A level English literature, English language and GCSE English. They broadly agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report which was revised following the analysis of 1997-98 data on students' achievements.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- careful monitoring of students' progress
- effective assessment of students' work
- good pass rates in GCE A level English language

Weaknesses

- below average achievement on GCE A level English literature and GCSE English language courses
- low retention rates on GCE A level English language
- lack of a systematic approach to curriculum planning and monitoring

23 Of the lessons observed, most were good. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that lessons are carefully structured to develop students' skills; teachers routinely check students' understanding. In the best literature lessons, students were confident about demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of different texts. The interventions from teachers were discreet and skilful as students explored the use of literary genres in unconventional texts. In one GCSE class, students showed unusual flair in discussing a difficult poem. Teachers value students' opinions and use them to inform their planning. Increasing use is made of materials and activities which take more account of the needs of students with differing abilities. For

example, a 'focus' group formed to discuss the needs of potentially higher achievers has resulted in the adoption of teaching methods which are aimed particularly at extending the knowledge of such students. This need was identified in the self-assessment report. In the weaker lessons, teachers did not always involve students sufficiently in the work and sometimes failed to sustain their interest. They failed to develop question-and-answer sessions into the more extensive debate which can be so productive for students' learning.

24 Teachers keep students' progress under constant review. They monitor attendance and achievement regularly and hold formal reviews with students twice a year. Students' potential performance in relation to their achievements at GCSE is considered when counselling students and setting achievement targets. Students' written work is promptly and conscientiously marked. As the self-assessment report indicated, teachers' comments are detailed and help students to improve their work. Teachers discuss written assignments with students. Preparation for examinations is good. In one lesson, when returning assignments based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a teacher addressed a general weakness in students' writing by directing students in a scene from the play. The students' understanding of dramatic impact was clarified and consolidated through practical demonstration of the action, humour and intonation involved in the scene.

25 Teachers work well together at curriculum level. Staff responsibilities are understood and taken seriously. Part-time teachers are integrated well with the area and a new teacher is well supported. Arrangements for the moderation of students' work and standardisation of marking are effective. Schemes of work, usually prepared by individual teachers, are insufficiently detailed. They lack reference to specific learning objectives and to intended students' activities. Many elements of good practice by individual teachers are not

Curriculum Areas

adopted generally. Meetings between staff are held regularly although they are not minuted systematically and action plans are not reviewed regularly. Performance indicators are monitored but not always evaluated thoroughly.

26 Pass rates for GCSE English and GCE A level English literature have been below the national average for sixth form colleges during two of the last three years. In 1998, 67% of GCSE students improved their previous grades by at least one and 21% by two or more grades. Although retention is good and improving, only 33% of GCE A level literature students achieved grades A to C in 1998, an outcome postdating the self-assessment analysis of achievements. On this course, students do not achieve the grades predicted by their GCSE grades on entry. Pass rates for GCE A level language are good,

although retention is less satisfactory. Teachers have taken steps to improve retention and, at the time of the inspection, no withdrawals had taken place from the current course.

27 Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Three are external examiners for courses offered at the college. Texts used in lessons are well chosen and broad ranging; there is particularly good use of contemporary literature. In the library, there is a good stock of videos but the range of fiction books is traditional and not extensive enough to encourage students' wider reading. The department does not monitor students' use of library materials. Classrooms are well furnished and attractively decorated with displays of students' work.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE English	2	Expected completions	110	139	124
		Retention (%)	78	83	81
		Achievement (%)	56	51	47
GCE A level English language	3	Expected completions	*	20	32
		Retention (%)	*	70	72
		Achievement (%)	*	85	96
GCE A level English literature	3	Expected completions	139	181	149
		Retention (%)	81	83	88
		Achievement (%)	88	95	84

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

*course not offered

Curriculum Areas

Humanities

Grade 3

28 Inspectors observed 10 lessons covering GCE A/AS level and GCSE in psychology, religious studies, sociology and general studies. The strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors accorded with those in the self-assessment report. However, the college underestimated the significance of the weaknesses in students' retention and achievements.

Key strengths

- much lively and interesting teaching
- well-planned courses
- high value-added scores at GCE A level
- good resources for learning

Weaknesses

- some insufficiently demanding learning activities
- low rates of retention
- declining pass rates at GCE A/AS level

29 The college offers a suitable range of subjects and levels in humanities, including GCE AS provision for adults in psychology and sociology, and GCSE classes for 'young mums' at a nearby centre. GCE A level general studies is taken by about half the college's GCE A level students as a one-year course in the second year of the GCE A level programme. The course is taught by a small team of teachers who co-ordinate their work effectively. The two lessons during the week are supplemented by written assignments. As the self-assessment report indicated, course planning in all the subjects inspected is detailed, and supported by comprehensive and helpful documentation. The teaching programme is supplemented by relevant extra-curricular activities; for example, general studies students visit art galleries in

London and psychology students carry out research in a local university library.

30 In many of the lessons, teachers promote lively discussion and ensure that students' interest is sustained. Aided by the teacher's skilful questioning, a general studies group held an informed and intelligent debate about genetically modified food. Teachers in all subjects make use of high-quality learning resources. For example, in psychology there are worksheets which provide detailed information and enable students to structure their ideas appropriately. In some lessons, teachers set tasks which were not sufficiently demanding. For example, students spent too much time copying from overhead transparencies, or listening to the teacher reading through handouts. Teachers sometimes allowed discussion to become too diverse, and failed to draw sufficient links between anecdotal evidence and psychological or sociological theory. In some lessons, the teacher gave students insufficient opportunity to develop arguments or interact with each other. The low attendance rates in general studies classes was noted in the self-assessment report. Appropriate emphasis is placed on study skills, and teachers often see students outside class time to give them additional support with aspects of their work.

31 Most students are responsive in class. In a sociology lesson, they worked well together in pairs and groups, preparing presentations which they gave to the rest of the class. Students in all subjects are familiar with the use of IT, including the internet, and use it confidently in their assignments. The quality of some written essays is good, showing students' ability to use specialist language and skills of interpretation and analysis. Students of religious studies are able to analyse and evaluate complex philosophical arguments. Some essays are marred by poor powers of expression. Teachers' marking is thorough and provides students with helpful and encouraging feedback, a strength mentioned in the self-assessment

Curriculum Areas

report. Teachers sometimes ask students to mark their own or other students' work, using mark schemes and model answers, in order to help them understand the examination board's requirements.

32 Examination pass rates at GCE A/AS level in 1998 were at or below the national averages for sixth form colleges, and were in all cases lower than those for 1997. Many of the students in this curriculum area have relatively low GCSE grades on entry; over the last three years, they have consistently achieved significantly higher GCE A level grades than those predicted by their GCSE scores. However, as the self-assessment report acknowledged, a significant number of students fail to complete their courses. Of those

who started a two-year GCE A level course finishing in 1998, only 70% completed and only 54% passed. Pass rates on the GCSE sociology course are consistently above the national average.

33 Teachers are well qualified and have experience as examiners. They are well supported by technician and clerical staff. Teaching takes place in specialist classrooms which have good facilities for storage and display. Some of the classrooms used for general studies are too small for the size of the groups. Equipment such as overhead projectors and video players is easily accessible. The materials in the learning resource centre are extensive and up to date.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE social studies	2	Expected completions	22	13	15
		Retention (%)	64	77	100
		Achievement (%)	71	80	67
GCE A level general studies	3	Expected completions	71	140	109
		Retention (%)	90	86	88
		Achievement (%)	42	95	83
GCE A level psychology	3	Expected completions	38	76	69
		Retention (%)	74	74	71
		Achievement (%)	96	94	78
GCE AS psychology	3	Expected completions	42	37	44
		Retention (%)	76	70	70
		Achievement (%)	41	94	48
GCE A level sociology	3	Expected completions	25	35	40
		Retention (%)	60	63	60
		Achievement (%)	100	100	88
GCE AS religious studies	3	Expected completions	*	*	13
		Retention (%)	*	*	85
		Achievement (%)	*	*	64

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

*course not running

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

34 Inspectors agreed broadly with the strengths in the self-assessment report but identified one additional weakness. The college has taken effective action to remedy a number of weaknesses. Inspectors observed nine group tutorials.

Key strengths

- productive schools liaison activities
- systematic monitoring and review of students' progress
- extensive counselling services
- timely and appropriate careers guidance
- well-resourced student services centre
- extensive work experience opportunities
- comprehensive enrichment programme

Weaknesses

- some ineffective group tutorials
- underdeveloped support for part-time evening students

35 The college and partner schools work together productively to ensure that pupils have access to relevant information, advice and guidance about their future options. Liaison is assisted by clear lines of communication between staff in each institution. An extensive links programme includes college open evenings for pupils in years 9, 10 and 11 and activity days for pupils in year 10. Participation in these events has grown over the past three years. College staff attend post-16 option evenings at local schools and contribute to careers education in partner schools. The effectiveness of school liaison activities is monitored to improve effectiveness. The strengths of liaison were recognised in the self-assessment report. School staff spoke highly of the relationships with the

college and the quality and impartiality of the guidance given. Interview procedures are well developed and help staff to develop good guidance practice. Many current students valued highly the summer 'taster' programme which allows them, before enrolling, to sample a range of subjects and be introduced to the college. It enabled them to make the transition to college more confidently. An open evening is held for prospective adult students to provide information and guidance about relevant courses. The provision of information and guidance points in the community raise the profile of the college and encourage wider participation.

36 Tutor groups for full-time students provide the focus for personal, educational and vocational guidance and support. Students have two group tutorials each week following a centrally-planned programme. In weekly briefing sessions, senior tutors inform personal tutors about relevant issues for inclusion in tutorials. The briefing provides a channel for systematic referral of individual students' problems. In tutorials, students are introduced to a range of resources which will support their study and receive, at entry, a comprehensive student handbook. A well-presented weekly bulletin alerts students to appropriate information and the content of tutorials. Personal tutors systematically monitor and review progress through student progress records which use as performance indicators attendance, punctuality, commitment and achievement. Although those students interviewed did not value all of the group tutorial activities, they spoke highly of the support they received from subject and personal tutors. Nine group tutorials were observed and the grades awarded ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory. The majority were only satisfactory. In a number of the tutorials the tutor failed to motivate or interest students and did not give them enough opportunities to take part in appropriate activities or contribute to discussion. These weaknesses, resulting in the

Cross-college Provision

objectives of a well-planned tutorial programme not being met for all students, were not recognised in the self-assessment report.

37 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that additional personal issues are sensitively addressed by counselling services provided by trained staff and trained student listeners. The chaplaincy is fully integrated with student services, extends the range of support and is part of the counselling team. Counselling activities and referrals from any source in the college to relevant external agencies are centrally recorded and monitored by the senior tutor. Welfare officers in the students' union and resources in the student services centre comprise other sources of advice on personal matters. The chaplaincy offers counselling support to part-time evening students. The college has a policy on spirituality developed with the chaplaincy.

38 As the self-assessment report recognised, since the last inspection there has been progress in the development of support for students with additional learning needs. Cross-college screening of full-time students identifies additional learning needs; all students with an identified difficulty are contacted by the learning support co-ordinator. A small learning support team is effectively deployed to provide additional support needs. Currently about 60% of those diagnosed as benefiting from support opt to receive it. Value-added data which are used to measure the effectiveness of learning support demonstrated that those receiving support who undertook GCE A levels performed better, relative to their GCSE scores, than students in the college as a whole. The needs of adult students on daytime courses are also identified but no system is in place for part-time evening students.

39 Full-time students receive timely and appropriate careers education and guidance through a successful partnership between the careers service and the college. There are

comprehensive up-to-date careers resources in an accessible student services centre which cover the full range of students' progression goals. Students are supported by responsive advice from careers and college staff in the centre. The college has prioritised appropriate training for tutors to address the weakness, identified in the self-assessment report, of insufficient guidance for students seeking employment. Careers interviews are efficiently handled and highly valued by students. Regular meetings of careers and college staff inform the tutorial programme and alert careers staff to the guidance needs of students who are at risk of leaving. A well-planned, rigorously monitored programme of short work experience placements is available to all full-time students to help them with their career planning. It is highly regarded by students and recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report. The college is currently working towards achieving quality standards in careers education and guidance in the college.

40 All full-time students can participate in a wide range of enrichment activities. The programme offers opportunities for them both to develop new interests and to complement curriculum studies. Opportunities for sport and the performing arts are particularly extensive; IT and modern foreign languages tuition, and European exchange opportunities are also available. Students produce and perform plays in two college theatres and there is an active college orchestra.

41 Support for part-time evening students is less well developed. For example, induction arrangements are unsatisfactory. Students do not receive the college charter and student handbook, and they have little awareness of college services including the open access resource centre and library. The college recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report and is working towards improving arrangements.

Cross-college Provision

General Resources

Grade 1

42 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. By the time of the inspection, much of the action plan had been implemented.

Key strengths

- significant improvements to the estate
- a welcoming and attractive environment
- well-maintained site
- good social and recreational facilities for students
- excellent IT facilities
- well-equipped and well-managed resource centre
- an integrated approach to the management of learning resources
- good access for wheelchair users throughout the college

Weaknesses

- no opening of learning resource centre in the evenings

43 The self-assessment report documented the improvements to the college's accommodation and estate since the last inspection. Over £2 million has been invested in new media studies, photography, student services, management and administration suites, as well as a new staff room and IT services centre. During the current academic year, significant improvements have been made to the teaching accommodation for art, music, biology, history, and GNVQ foundation curriculum areas. Extensions have been added to the refectory and learning resources centre. The students' lounge in the refectory contains internet facilities. These improvements represent the achievement of action plan targets in the self-assessment report. Effective campus security has been achieved

through surveillance, video cameras and an alarm system. Car parking facilities have been extended to include spaces for 350 vehicles.

44 The college's accommodation is of a high standard. Students and staff express positive views about the quality of their working environment. The general areas of the college are clean and well maintained. Nearly all rooms are carpeted, providing a pleasant learning environment. Corridors contain attractive displays, including high-quality art work by students. For those students with restricted mobility, access to classrooms and other college facilities is good. The sizeable refectory is popular with students, and an additional fast food bar is open for most of the college day. Extensive sporting facilities include a sports hall, gymnasium, two football pitches, a hockey pitch and tennis courts, and some recently refurbished changing rooms. Of the two performing arts theatres, one is extensively used by the local community. Specialist staff work bases allow related groups of curriculum staff to work comfortably together; all the bases contain networked IT facilities.

45 The timetable has been recently amended in order to optimise the use of classrooms during the college day, and space utilisation studies show that room deployment is efficient. However, the self-assessment report acknowledged that some areas of the college, for example the gymnasium, theatre and sports hall are underused. A 10-year planned maintenance programme is in place. Funding has recently been secured to assess the potential for the joint use of facilities with the nearby further education college. As the self-assessment report acknowledged, a small number of classrooms are inappropriate for the size of the classes being taught.

46 The college has invested considerably in IT facilities, which are of high quality. Students have good access to modern computers running industrial standard software with internet facilities. A large IT centre, containing some

Cross-college Provision

100 computers, was opened in the autumn of 1996. It is extensively used during the college day, in the evenings and for family learning on Saturday mornings. An extension to the learning resource centre provides a further 30 computers, and others are available to students in curriculum areas and in the student social area. The ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students is 1:6.5, which compares favourably with that in the sector as a whole. There is a good level of technician support. All computers are networked, and an extension to the network has been established at a nearby secondary school where computers are available for community use.

47 The college has recently devised an integrated strategy for IT, learning resources, reprographics, audiovisual aids and communications across the college. The strategy has already resulted in improvements in the management of resources. Staff responsible for the various elements form a communications and information learning technology team. Their work is co-ordinated by a communications and information learning technology manager, who keeps up to date with curriculum developments through membership of the curriculum management team. A user group has been established, bringing together representatives from curriculum areas, students and members of the communications and information learning technology team.

48 The college's learning resource centre is a pleasant environment in which to study, and staff and students speak highly of the service it provides. It has 138 study spaces, and some 10,000 items, including 60 periodicals and over 120 videos. The bookstock is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. The centre has good facilities for viewing and listening, including three language laboratory booths. It provides a useful photocopying, binding and laminating service to students. Links with curriculum areas are effective. Learning resource centre staff work closely with curriculum areas to identify

needs, update materials and give feedback on their usage. They issue a twice-yearly news sheet to update staff about new purchases and other developments. Subject areas also have book collections, though these are not listed in the main catalogue. All students receive an introduction to the library. Students' use of the learning resource centre is carefully monitored, using a computerised system. The learning resource centre is not open to students using the college in the evenings or on Saturday mornings.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

49 The college's assessment of its quality assurance procedures is based on secure evidence. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. However, some of the strengths were given too much weighting and a few weaknesses were not identified.

Key strengths

- well-planned and implemented self-assessment process
- use of wide-ranging statistical evidence to support judgements about quality
- good awareness, on the part of teachers, of strengths and weaknesses in provision

Weaknesses

- declining trends in some measures of students' achievements
- incomplete staff appraisal processes
- undeveloped performance indicators for cross-college services

50 The college has implemented several improvements to its quality assurance system since the last inspection. A committee of the governing body, the quality assurance committee, has been established to validate self-

Cross-college Provision

assessment outcomes. The range of performance indicators used to evaluate teaching and learning has been extended and a system for the observation of teaching and learning established. However, in important areas of the college's provision, achievements have not improved. For example, GCE A level pass rates have been close to the national average for sixth form colleges over the last three years. The points score per GCE A level entry (where grade A=10, E=2) has declined since the last inspection from 5.2 to 4.8. Measures of performance which compare GCE A level grades with GCSE scores on entry, although still positive, have also declined. The self-assessment report did not link judgements on quality assurance to students' achievements.

51 The college has produced a self-assessment report for each of the last two years. It conforms to the headings of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. The reports are the result of a well-structured process which includes extensive training and guidance and contributions, in the form of separate component reports, from many groups of college staff. These reports are well presented and judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of the provision are clearly made. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that a wide-ranging set of performance indicators is used to identify strengths and weaknesses. For example, judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are based on the views of students, student attendance, retention and pass rates, and value-added analysis. These data are compared with benchmarks such as college and national averages. Action plans follow each section of the report, identifying issues, targets for improvement, the person responsible and deadlines for implementation. Progress towards targets is assessed mid-year. The results of questionnaires completed by students, and the college's response, are not displayed for students to see. Targets for retention and achievement are being established for the first time this year.

52 The college charter is updated annually. The self-assessment report noted that there are few measurable performance indicators in the charter. The college's quality assurance procedures evaluate college performance against charter commitments. Students make few complaints and although those that are made are given careful consideration, no overall report is made about the operation of the college's complaints procedure. The quality of many cross-college services is monitored through the self-assessment processes. However, as the self-assessment report noted, some have yet to establish indicators by which their performance can be measured. The internal verification procedures to assure the quality of assessment on GNVQ courses are a strength.

53 Through self-assessment, teachers have a good knowledge of the key strengths and weaknesses of provision in their areas of work. They talk clearly about the issues raised and resulting action plans. For example, new schemes of work and revised policies on assessment have been implemented as a result of adverse achievement or comments from students. In many cases, these issues and changes have been recorded carefully in annual course reports, curriculum area self-assessment reports or team minutes. In other cases, however, there is no recorded evidence. The move to self-assessment at curriculum area level has meant that some course teams no longer write reports on individual subject areas. Of those that are written, some are exemplars of good practice providing a thorough analysis of provision.

54 Recently-revised induction procedures for new staff include checklists of activity, meetings with key staff, and a six monthly review of performance. New staff appraisal procedures are not fully established. Staff performance is reviewed through a process of task observation which, for teachers, takes the form of lesson observation. Most full-time and many part-time

Cross-college Provision

teachers have now been observed. The outcomes resulting from internal observation are used to inform self-assessment judgements. However, the college's grading profile was substantially higher than that determined by inspection. Task observation for support staff has yet to be undertaken. The second strand of appraisal, a professional review of performance with a senior member of staff, has still to be implemented. Staff development activities are linked to college strategic aims, issues arising out of the observation of teaching, or self-assessment. There is a range of appropriate activity and each event is evaluated.

Governance

Grade 3

55 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report but they judged that the college had placed insufficient emphasis on a number of the weaknesses. Inspectors also identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- comprehensive handbook for governors
- close monitoring of financial performance of college
- open style of operation
- active participation in validating the college's self-assessment report

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of strategic objectives by corporation
- underdeveloped systems for training of governors and clerk
- poor attendance at corporation and some committee meetings
- deficiencies in operation of some key committees

56 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is adequate. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

57 The corporation has 19 members, six of whom are women. There is a recent vacancy. Membership includes a co-opted local head teacher and two parents. Governors have a range of appropriate skills, although a formal skills audit has not been undertaken. The search for new governors is the responsibility of the membership committee. Both nomination by existing governors and public advertisement are used to identify suitable candidates. At present, a number of candidates are waiting to fill future vacancies on the corporation. A code of practice on the induction of new governors has been approved, which includes the provision of an extremely comprehensive governors' handbook. The handbook incorporates a number of fact sheets on topics such as college funding. Training sessions on aspects of the college have been introduced at the start of corporation meetings, but no formal training programme has resulted from a recent analysis of training needs. Governors have started to evaluate their own performance through a questionnaire which also informed the self-assessment report. However, they have not set any quantifiable indicators for their performance.

58 The corporation meets at least termly and, as noted in the self-assessment report, governors appreciate the support provided by the clerk to the corporation. The clerk has not, however, attended any formal training events in order to keep updated on governance issues. Detailed standing orders determine the conduct of meetings. The corporation is committed to openness and has a policy on access to corporation business. Agendas, minutes and

Cross-college Provision

supporting papers are available for public scrutiny and access to corporation and committee meetings is permitted with the consent of the relevant chair. This policy is publicised on a noticeboard placed in the college reception area. All governors and staff with significant financial responsibilities have completed declarations of interest, which are updated annually. The register of interests is also open to public inspection. The self-assessment report identified these strengths in governance. The code of conduct requires updating to bring it into line with current best practice.

59 The corporation has the following committees: audit; finance; membership; personnel; quality assurance and remuneration. Attendance at corporation meetings and some committees is poor. For example, the average attendance at meetings of the corporation and the finance committee over the last 12 months was 67% and 59%, respectively. Attendance levels are not reported to the corporation, nor has an attendance target been set. The low levels of attendance have led to the inaccuracy of a number of committee meetings; other meetings have required rescheduling in order to obtain a quorum. The self-assessment report did not recognise the weaknesses arising from poor attendance. The operation of certain committees is not fully in accordance with their remits. For example, the audit committee failed to review either the 1996-97 or 1997-98 annual internal audit reports, or the 1997-98 annual internal audit plan, before their submission to the corporation. Governors carefully monitor the financial performance of the college at the monthly meetings of the finance committee. In addition, the management accounts are forwarded each month to all members of the corporation.

60 The governors' quality assurance committee has a wide-ranging membership, including staff, students, and external members; it has recently taken on a remit to agree targets

for students' achievements. As noted in the self-assessment report, the committee performs a valuable function with respect to its validation remit. It is currently considering how to improve its effectiveness in the light of some poor levels of attendance.

61 Governors are aware of the issues facing the college and play a role in determining the college's direction. For example, in autumn 1998 they undertook a review of the mission. They receive reports on the college's progress in implementing aspects of the strategic plan at committee meetings, but there is insufficient reporting to the full corporation of the progress made towards the overall achievement of strategic objectives. The self-assessment report recognised the need for governors to improve their monitoring of the achievement of targets. Oversight of the educational performance of the college is not fully effective. Governors visit the college for events such as open days and presentation evenings but, as acknowledged in the self-assessment report, links between governors and curriculum areas are not always effective. The minutes of corporation meetings do not give sufficient evidence of extensive debate about educational matters.

62 There are good working relationships between governors and senior managers. The chair and principal meet regularly. Governors have recently introduced appraisal arrangements for senior postholders. At the time of the inspection, only the appraisal of the principal had been fully completed. There is no annual appraisal of the clerk. Policies have received corporation approval, but governors' monitoring of the implementation of some key policies, such as health and safety, is inadequate. There is no programme for the reviewing of policies. Governors are addressing these weaknesses.

Cross-college Provision

Management

Grade 2

63 Inspectors agreed with the majority of the strengths and weaknesses of management in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- effective budgetary control
- effective deployment of staff and other resources
- wide range of links with external agencies and educational providers
- clear strategic planning process
- use of value-added measures to monitor students' progress

Weaknesses

- aspects of communication across the college
- little use and understanding of the management information system at curriculum level
- lack of rigour in monitoring of operating plans

64 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The small finance team is adequate for the needs of the college. Monthly management accounts, produced in accordance with required deadlines, incorporate a detailed commentary, and a cashflow to the end of the financial year. There is, however, no rolling 12-month cashflow forecast. The financial position is closely monitored by senior management. Formal financial performance indicators have not been determined. As noted in the self-assessment report, the college has reduced its average level of funding from £22.04 per unit in 1995-96 to a projected level of £17.19 per unit in 1998-99, whilst producing operating surpluses in each

year since its incorporation, and exceeding recruitment and funding targets. Senior managers have recently implemented an action plan to remedy a projected shortfall in non-FEFC income. The college has had difficulty in reducing its dependency on FEFC funding.

65 The budgetary process is comprehensively documented. Budgets for consumables and minor equipment are delegated to budget holders, who receive monthly reports of actual and committed expenditure against those budgets. The college monitors staffing budgets carefully and employs staff efficiently and effectively. The budget document presented to the finance committee for review does not include a supporting balance sheet or cashflow. The college's financial regulations are largely up to date, but some information is duplicated and the format of the regulations limits their ease of use. The reports of both internal and external auditors indicate that the college has a sound system of internal control.

66 Senior managers are clear about the issues facing the college. Staff consider senior managers to be supportive. Managers are mainly grouped into members of three teams: curriculum management, business development or student services. Each team is led by a senior manager, and the majority meet weekly. The roles of most managers are clear. However, senior management recognise the need to improve the contribution of faculty directors to strategic decision-making in the college. There is good teamworking within curriculum areas, but curriculum area co-ordinators do not regularly meet as a team with their faculty directors.

67 A meetings calendar is issued at the start of the academic year. This ensures that staff meet regularly in different working groups. A weekly newsletter keeps staff up to date on events within the college. Termly meetings are held to secure communication with part-time adult education teachers. However, staff

Cross-college Provision

consider that they have little influence on key decisions. The college is committed to achieving the Investor in People award, but has yet to develop an action plan. A working group is considering how to improve communications. Although all staff receive a detailed staff handbook, the self-assessment report acknowledged that there are weaknesses in communication between staff and senior managers.

68 The strategic planning process is well developed. There is a clear planning cycle. Senior managers share key issues facing the college with staff at a whole-college staff meeting. The draft strategic plan is shared with all staff. Operating plans for curriculum areas and aspects of cross-college provision are linked to the college's strategic objectives, and action plans arising from the self-assessment report. In most plans, a named person is responsible for the achievement of each of the targets. However, not all action plans contain quantifiable targets, such as retention or achievement. The senior management team does not formally monitor operating plans during the year. The outcomes of course team meetings rarely include data to monitor progress against targets. The widespread use of value-added data to measure and monitor the academic performance of students is a strength. It enables senior managers to measure the college's effectiveness in meeting the needs of its students. For example, data are produced for each GCE A level student showing their actual performance over time against that predicted from their GCSE entry score. Remedial action is taken to address unsatisfactory performance.

69 The college has developed its own management information system. It meets the needs of external reporting requirements, such as returns to the FEFC which are completed promptly. Staff are able to request a wide range of reports, such as enrolments and examination results. They have direct access to a computerised database. However, reports

produced for day-to-day management such as timetables are not always up to date or reliable. There is no formal management information system user group, nor is the potential of management information fully realised by staff. The self-assessment report acknowledged the need to increase staff understanding of the system. Reports on student attendance are not yet available to staff through an electronic system. However, paper-based records are reliable. Data on students' achievements supplied to inspectors proved largely reliable, although the process of validation was protracted.

70 The self-assessment report identified the college's effective links with its community and external agencies. Relationships with the local TEC are productive. The college works hard to collaborate with other partners. For example, the college was the lead partner in securing funding from the DfEE in June 1998 to develop an IT centre of excellence linked to the University of Industry initiative. The project involves establishing a central resource at the college and remote learning access points at locations away from the main site to support the development of skills for employment. Arrangements are in place with schools to reduce duplication in curriculum provision. For example, school pupils study GCSE music at the college. The college works closely with the adult education service. In the summer of 1998, it ran a basic skills summer school staffed by tutors from the service. Saturday morning 'Technokids' sessions for four to 14 year olds run alongside IT courses for adults. In partnership with the local council, the college provides teaching at a 'young mums' unit. There is little provision currently for small and medium-sized enterprises. Links with the nearby further education college are in the early stages of development. Promotion and publicity materials are regularly reviewed. They provide clear information.

Cross-college Provision

Conclusions

71 The self-assessment report represents the culmination of a properly structured process, involving extensive training and guidance for staff at all levels, lesson observation and the use of a wide range of performance indicators. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses listed, although in the case of three cross-college and two curriculum areas, they judged that either insufficient emphasis had been given to some of the weaknesses stated or that some strengths had been given too much weighting. Some additional weaknesses were identified by inspectors. In the case of general resources, provision had improved after the self-assessment report was written, due to the substantial completion of the action plan. Grades given in those lesson observations undertaken by the college were significantly higher than those awarded by inspectors.

72 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 1998)

Age	%
Under 16	0
16-18 years	48
19-24 years	8
25+ years	44
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1998)

Level of study	%
Foundation	37
Intermediate	16
Advanced	46
Higher education	0
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	1
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	263	433	35
Business	69	179	13
Hotel and catering	5	0	1
Health and community care	18	48	3
Art and design	114	84	10
Humanities	441	236	34
Basic education	11	64	4
Total	921	1,044	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 17% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1998)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	52	3	3	58
Supporting direct learning contact	0	3	0	3
Other support	27	3	0	30
Total	79	9	3	91

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£3,135,000	£3,191,000	£3,383,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£19.77	£17.82	£17.68
Payroll as a proportion of income	74%	70%	69%
Achievement of funding target	120%	133%	105%
Diversity of income	6%	6%	7%
Operating surplus	£3,000	£8,000	£9,000

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
1	Expected completions	184	208	817	190	151	145
	Retention (%)	64	66	84	68	87	76
	Achievement (%)	56	67	88	86	66	75
2	Expected completions	578	718	935	57	132	190
	Retention (%)	70	74	81	65	80	77
	Achievement (%)	94	48	62	97	71	74
3	Expected completions	–	1,209	1,646	–	140	125
	Retention (%)	–	83	86	–	75	66
	Achievement (%)	87	82	89	86	57	61
4 or 5	Expected completions	–	0	0	–	0	18
	Retention (%)	–	n/a	n/a	–	n/a	61
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100
Short courses	Expected completions	6	21	555	22	46	155
	Retention (%)	100	86	82	82	98	68
	Achievement (%)	100	33	80	44	43	63
Unknown/unclassified	Expected completions	91	88	31	29	11	2
	Retention (%)	60	90	68	79	55	0
	Achievement (%)	100	85	75	100	n/a	n/a

Source: ISR

–ISR data not collected

n/a not applicable

FEFC Inspection Report 62/99

**Published by the
Further Education Funding Council**

Website <http://www.fefc.ac.uk>

© FEFC June 1999