

Herefordshire College of Technology

REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1999-00

THE
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COUNCIL

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

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

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Contents

Paragraph

Summary

Context

The college and its mission	1
The inspection	8

Curriculum areas

Engineering	11
Business and administration	16
Hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism	21
Health and social care	26
English, psychology and sociology	31

Cross-college provision

Support for students	36
General resources	44
Quality assurance	51
Governance	61
Management	71
Conclusions	82

College statistics

Grade Descriptors

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1998-99, are shown in the following table.

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

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

Student Achievements

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

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

Summary

Herefordshire College of Technology

West Midlands Region

Inspected October 1999

Herefordshire College of Technology is a medium-sized general further education college serving the county of Herefordshire. It recruits students aged 16 to 18 and adults for full-time and part-time courses. The college offers courses in all of the 10 programme areas funded by the FEFC. It is also a substantial provider of programmes of study that are financed by other agencies. The college prepared a detailed self-assessment report. Production of the report involved governors as well as all staff. The effectiveness of the self-assessment process varied across the different areas of the college. The inspection covered provision in five programme areas and aspects of cross-college provision. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements for curriculum areas but their grades for four of the cross-college areas were one grade lower than those given by the college.

Most teaching is of a good standard and some is outstanding. Provision in leisure and tourism has improved substantially since the last inspection, when it was a major weakness. Achievement and retention rates are above the median for general further education colleges. Support for students with restricted mobility or for students who have additional learning requirements is of a high standard. There is a well-maintained and attractive main campus.

Quality assurance arrangements are well established. Governors and managers effectively monitor the college's financial performance and financial health. There is a well-structured cycle of planning linked to self-assessment. The quality of the college's management information system has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is now of a high standard and responsive to users' needs. The college should improve: some unsatisfactory aspects of teaching, students' achievements and retention rates; inadequate careers education and guidance; the poor access to teaching areas for students with restricted mobility; the unsatisfactory maintenance budget; the inadequate monitoring of the quality and control of collaborative provision; the oversight by governors of some key areas of the college's operations; and the inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Engineering	2	Support for students	3
Business and administration	2	General resources	3
Hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism	2	Quality assurance	3
Health and social care	3	Governance	3
English, psychology and sociology	3	Management	3

The College and its Mission

1 Herefordshire College of Technology is situated in a residential area of the city of Hereford. Its main buildings were erected between the late 1950s and the early 1970s. It also occupies three late-Victorian houses on the edge of the main campus and two sites near the city centre. The specialist school of farriery will shortly move to a purpose-built centre on the Holme Lacy College campus. The college has centres in Ross-on-Wye and Leominster, each approximately 15 miles from Hereford. Courses are provided in schools and community sites across the county.

2 Four of the county's 14 secondary schools have sixth forms. The college shares a campus with Hereford Sixth Form College and Herefordshire College of Art and Design. The colleges in the county co-operate through the Herefordshire Association of Colleges. Rates of post-16 participation in full-time education are high. The number of year 11 leavers increased in 1999 and will continue to grow until 2003.

3 The college's main catchment area is the county of Herefordshire. The county is predominantly rural and sparsely populated. Of the population of 165,000 approximately 55,000 live in the city of Hereford. There are five market towns in Herefordshire. Public transport in the rural areas is poor and the time taken by students to travel to the college is often lengthy. Retired people are attracted to the area but adults aged 18 to 24 years tend to move out of the county to enter higher education.

4 In October 1999, there were 12,255 students enrolled at the college of whom 1,418 were on full-time programmes. Of the college's students, 85% are aged 19 or over, and 72% are over the age of 25. The college employs 302 full-time equivalent staff of whom 279 are on permanent contracts. The college's structure has been reorganised since the last inspection. A new principal joined the college in April 1999.

5 Hereford city has few large employers and, in line with national trends, there has been a shift from manufacturing to service sector employment. An estimated 69% of the working population is involved in service-related industry. There has been an increase in the proportion of employees working part time, especially women. Unemployment in Herefordshire has fallen steadily in recent years and, at 3.4%, is lower than regional or national averages.

6 Courses at general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate and advanced level are offered in five vocational sectors. There is a broad range of full-time and part-time vocational provision from levels 1 to 5, including national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and other awards. The college is the main provider in the county for many of the courses within its provision and is also a major national provider of courses for blacksmiths and farriers. A number of general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) subjects are also available. There is a range of foundation courses, of courses giving access to further education and to higher education, and of programmes to degree level. The college provides support and training for the unemployed. It runs three programme centres of the Employment Service and a large training organisation that recruits to government-funded programmes.

7 The college aims to implement its mission of developing individual and organisational potential:

- through the maintenance of a broad portfolio of courses that complements the rural environment of the county
- by ensuring provision of effective learning at all levels
- by widening participation, especially among adults
- by continuing to extend student support services, especially learning support

Context

- by maintaining a strong institutional financial base
- through the close monitoring of the quality of college provision.

The Inspection

8 The college was inspected during October 1999. The inspection team assessed the college's self-assessment report and reviewed information about the college provided by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors used data on students' achievements from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1997 and 1998. The college submitted its own achievement data for 1999. These data were checked by inspectors against primary sources, for example class registers and pass lists issued by awarding bodies. Eleven inspectors and an auditor, working for 50 days, carried out the inspection. Inspectors observed 60 lessons and examined students' work and a range of college documents. They held meetings with governors, managers, college staff, students and representatives of external agencies. Inspectors also consulted the Chamber of Commerce, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, about its working relationship with the college.

9 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the 60 lessons inspected, 62% were judged to be good or outstanding and 10% were less than satisfactory. This compares with averages of 65% and 6%, respectively, for lessons observed in colleges inspected during 1998-99.

Context

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE AS/A level	0	4	1	0	0	5
GCSE	2	1	0	0	0	3
GNVQ	3	8	7	1	0	19
Access to higher education	0	2	0	0	0	2
NVQ	1	4	7	4	0	16
Other vocational	4	6	2	1	0	13
Other	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total (No.)	12	25	17	6	0	60
Total (%)	20	42	28	10	0	100
National average, all inspected 1998-99 (%)	20	45	29	6	0	100

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

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

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Herefordshire College of Technology	11.6	83
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99	11.2	78

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

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 2

11 Inspectors observed 14 lessons covering the engineering provision in the school of rural crafts and construction and the school of engineering. Inspectors found some strengths and a few weaknesses that had not been identified in the self-assessment report. Some strengths were overstated and a few were found to be weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a good range of provision
- strong links between theory and practice
- high standards of practical teaching
- some high retention rates
- good links with industry

Weaknesses

- poor management of some theory classes
- some low levels of achievement
- weak curriculum management

12 The good range of provision is a strength that was not identified in the self-assessment report. There are well-established routes by which students can progress from level 1 to advanced level in most areas. The availability of various modes of attendance suit both students and employers. Full-time courses provide a broad introduction together with opportunities for specialisation. Students can study for several qualifications, which enhances their opportunities for employment. There are good links with industry: on the advice of local employers, the curriculum of part-time courses has been changed to match their requirements. Students on agricultural engineering, motor vehicle and sound engineering courses benefit from equipment that has been provided by local companies. The self-assessment report overstates the strength of curriculum management. There are weaknesses in course

documentation and records. Action plans are not clear and weaknesses in student performance are not always tackled systematically. Some part-time teachers are inadequately briefed because schemes of work lack sufficient detail. Students' individual action plans are rarely based on a comprehensive review of their performance and the targets set are not sufficiently specific.

13 In practical lessons, students' competence is effectively developed. Students are well prepared. Teachers clearly establish the relationship between theory and practice, a strength also found in the last inspection. Students' work is closely supervised and students receive clear guidance on how to improve their performance. In the best practical lessons, students are appropriately questioned to check their understanding of the related theory. Teachers give insufficient attention to shortcomings in students' recording of their work. Most theory lessons have a logical development and new concepts are clearly explained. The self-assessment report did not identify weaknesses in the management of some lessons. Students spent too much time copying notes instead of listening to the tutor, a situation made worse by the poor quality of many visual aids. Learning was more effective in lessons where there was an appropriate range of learning activities that included opportunities for students to apply what they had been taught.

14 Most teachers make good use in their teaching of their knowledge of industry. A strength of many lessons is the use of examples by teachers to show the application of theory to commercial practice. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment of the strength of the provision of specialist information technology (IT) which has recently been updated. Funds have been allocated to rectify many of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report relating to specialist equipment for motor vehicle and mechanical engineering. The motor vehicle workshops are cramped but the space available is not well organised. Sound

Curriculum Areas

engineering is based at a separate centre in Hereford where a recording studio is being developed. One of the teaching rooms at this centre is not adequate for the size of the group using it.

15 Retention rates have been mainly good for the past three years. Some programmes have consistently high retention. Retention on the national diploma in engineering was identified in the self-assessment report as relatively low for 1998 but it improved in 1999. There is high retention for the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) level 1 motor vehicle but retention for level 2 is low, depressing the overall retention rate for C&G level 2 qualifications. Not all the achievements for students completing in 1999 were known at the

time of the inspection. Most of the results that were available showed improvements, some of them substantial, in levels of achievement compared with the previous year. For example, the pass rate for C&G level 1 motor vehicle almost doubled and for level 3 sound engineering increased by about 15%. The self-assessment report acknowledged the low pass rate for the first certificate but not the poor pass rates for the national diploma and C&G level 2 computer-aided design. Most full-time students proceed to employment or further study at the end of their course.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G vocational programmes	1	Number of starters	104	397	243
		Retention (%)	84	76	85
		Achievement (%)	60	68	*
First certificate in engineering	2	Number of starters	41	19	25
		Retention (%)	98	100	88
		Achievement (%)	82	61	*
C&G vocational programmes	2	Number of starters	171	142	249
		Retention (%)	94	89	77
		Achievement (%)	50	43	*
NVQ	2 and 3	Number of starters	27	25	72
		Retention (%)	57	100	81
		Achievement (%)	63	75	*
National diploma and certificate programmes	3	Number of starters	40	48	54
		Retention (%)	75	73	78
		Achievement (%)	100	59	*
C&G vocational programmes	3	Number of starters	97	65	110
		Retention (%)	90	94	92
		Achievement (%)	41	58	*

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college 1999

*data not available

Curriculum Areas

Business and Administration

Grade 2

16 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering NVQ, GNVQ and other provision. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- a good range of effective teaching methods
- good use of current industrial practice
- high-quality learning materials
- good achievement rates
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- poor student punctuality and attendance on a few courses
- inadequate feedback from teachers on some student assignments

17 As stated in the self-assessment report, most students benefit from a range of effective teaching methods that maintain their interest. Learning materials of a high standard assist students who use the business computing workshops. In GNVQ business and NVQ administration lessons, teachers encourage student discussion by using current examples of industrial practice. Assignment briefs are clear, well written and provide students with appropriate assessment opportunities. The timing of business administration and some of the shorter IT classes has been adjusted to meet the requirements of adult students. In a few lessons students lost interest. Some teachers did not check that students were understanding the work or did not sum up the key points of the lesson. In a few cases, teachers did not indicate to students when it was appropriate to take notes.

18 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are good pass rates for GNVQ advanced business, NVQ administration level 2, short business IT courses and secretarial single subject awards. Most retention rates are high. The college recognises that students' punctuality and attendance are poor on a few courses. It has started to take action to rectify the situation. Students' work is of a good standard. Most written work is well presented and shows that students understand the topic under consideration. Portfolios are clearly referenced and well organised, with the exception of some portfolios for key skills. Most marking by teachers is precise and gives helpful feedback. However, there were some instances of feedback that did not identify how students could build on their strengths and rectify their weaknesses.

19 Courses are well planned and well managed. Course teams meet regularly and keep good records of decisions taken. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that course manuals contain all essential documentation, which is updated by teams on a regular basis. However, there is a lack of targets, performance indicators and strategies to address identified weaknesses. There are well-established internal verification systems. Each course has an internal verification map to ensure that its sampling meets awarding body requirements. Internal verifiers give comprehensive feedback to assessors and identify training requirements.

20 Teachers are appropriately qualified for the courses that they teach. Most have the assessor awards that are required for GNVQ and NVQ programmes. The school has been slow to update teachers' industrial experience but a planned programme has now been implemented. Specialist resources are good. Students have the use of industrial standard IT software. The college has recently invested in IT hardware and software resources, which have resolved a weakness that was identified in a previous self-assessment action plan.

Curriculum Areas

Business computing workshops have improved since the last inspection. Students make good use of business IT rooms. A number of teaching rooms lack displays or other means of visually promoting the subjects taught in them.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in business and administration, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Northern Council for Further Education business software applications	Entry	Number of starters	#	125	38
		Retention (%)	#	98	97
		Achievement (%)	#	69	86
GNVQ intermediate business	2	Number of starters	21	10	15
		Retention (%)	48	80	87
		Achievement (%)	30	75	70
NVQ administration	2	Number of starters	40	31	22
		Retention (%)	85	87	82
		Achievement (%)	88	56	89
Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers and Receptionists diploma in health services reception	2	Number of starters	26	27	30
		Retention (%)	85	96	87
		Achievement (%)	95	77	88
Integrated business technology II	2	Number of starters	93	172	197
		Retention (%)	85	91	86
		Achievement (%)	75	85	76
GNVQ advanced business	3	Number of starters	44	45	32
		Retention (%)	59	58	71
		Achievement (%)	80	58	86

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)
#course not running

Curriculum Areas

Hospitality and Catering and Leisure and Tourism

Grade 2

21 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering NVQ and GNVQ provision. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- well-planned, effective teaching and learning on GNVQ programmes
- the effective integration of key skills with GNVQ programmes
- good curricular support for individual students
- high retention and achievement rates
- a broad range of provision and a wide variety of study modes
- extensive enrichment activities

Weaknesses

- poorly organised practical lessons in hospitality and catering
- a narrow curriculum for NVQ hospitality and catering
- some inadequate facilities and equipment
- insufficient attention to food safety and health and safety issues

22 The college offers a wide and appropriate range of provision in hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism from NVQ level 1 to BA honours degree. There is a range of modes of attendance available that meets the requirements of industry and students and includes: full-time and part-time provision; short courses; distance learning programmes; and support for NVQ assessment in the workplace. Most full-time programmes include additional qualifications that would be of value to students when seeking employment. Inspectors agreed

with the self-assessment report that the planning and organisation of leisure and tourism programmes is particularly strong. Course teams meet regularly and carefully monitor students' progress. Development work undertaken by course teams has been used by external organisations in workshops for other colleges. Many aspects of the NVQ hospitality and catering curriculum are narrow in scope and are not relevant to the needs of employers. There is no formal provision of key skills for craft catering students.

23 Inspectors agreed that the quality of teaching and learning in leisure and tourism, a significant area of weakness at the last inspection, is now a major strength. Many aspects of the teaching in this area are outstanding. Lessons are lively and the pace is well judged. Theoretical concepts are linked successfully to practical activities. Course teams make good use in their teaching of the many tourist and leisure attractions in the area. Key skills are neatly woven into GNVQ programmes. One activity, the conversion of currencies and measures, was linked to a student study tour. There is good curricular support for individual students throughout all programmes, particularly on the intermediate leisure and tourism programme. A higher national diploma student in leisure management spoke warmly of how he had benefited from the support on the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism programme after disappointing achievements at school. However, inspectors found NVQ hospitality and catering lessons poorly organised. Teachers use inappropriate methods and, as found in the last inspection, the practical skills of students are not developed appropriately. Some teaching fails to draw on the wide and diverse character of current professional practice in cookery and food service.

24 As the self-assessment report indicates, most retention and achievement rates are good and some are outstanding. An improvement in attendance was set as a target for some student

Curriculum Areas

groups and attendance levels are now good. Student portfolios are of a high quality and many teachers provide extensive written comments. Most students use their education and training courses as a base from which to seek part-time work. Those who are successful in gaining such work benefit from the experience as well as meeting employment need in the local economy. A well-known local restaurateur was able to explain to students employed by him on a part-time basis the difference between types of edible wild mushrooms growing in the area. Although students study for a hygiene qualification they do not show strong awareness of hygiene and health and safety issues and, in some instances, teachers do not set a good example.

25 The good range of realistic work environments includes a recently refurbished restaurant and a travel shop. Old and out-of-date equipment was a weakness recognised in the self-assessment report; some had been replaced by the time of inspection. Changing rooms for hospitality and catering students are poor and lack washing facilities. Leisure and tourism students gain from the additional library resources available for higher education students. Some teachers have failed to undertake appropriate professional development and the importance required by industrial safety and hygiene standards is not reflected in staff development. A few teachers do not hold appropriate qualifications for the level of course on which they teach.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	Number of starters	24	19	23
		Retention (%)	92	68	91
		Achievement (%)	100	85	100
NVQ catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking)	2	Number of starters	41	35	33
		Retention (%)	80	71	82
		Achievement (%)	67	79	70
NVQ catering and hospitality (serving food and drink)	2	Number of starters	31	26	32
		Retention (%)	77	77	78
		Achievement (%)	88	100	75
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	Number of starters	36	28	33
		Retention (%)	81	86	76
		Achievement (%)	90	83	92
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	Number of starters	19	17	15
		Retention (%)	95	88	73
		Achievement (%)	100	100	*

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

*data not available

Curriculum Areas

Health and Social Care

Grade 3

26 Inspectors observed 14 lessons including collaborative provision. They identified a number of strengths and weaknesses that were not included in the self-assessment report. They considered that some weaknesses in the report had been understated.

Key strengths

- high levels of retention and achievement on most programmes
- the effective contribution of work placements to students' learning
- the effective incorporation of key skills into vocational lessons
- well-organised internal verification
- well-delivered first-aid courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of provision
- poor management of the NVQ care curriculum
- no monitoring in collaborative provision of the quality of teaching and learning
- insufficient liaison with employers in the statutory sector

27 The range of provision in health and social care is insufficient. There is little flexible, part-time or adult provision. As the self-assessment report states, work experience is a successful component of students' learning, a strength found in the last inspection. However, most work placements are in the private sector and there is not enough liaison with significant statutory providers. The college's collaborative activity has helped to widen participation. More than 1,000 students, including many who would not otherwise have entered further education, have enrolled for first aid and NVQ care training

in the last three years. There is no overall structure or planning of the NVQ provision. Target times for completion of NVQ qualifications are too short for most students. The self-assessment report recognises that there is no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the collaborative provision and that there are no links between the providers of collaborative provision and those managing the relevant curriculum area. Changes in curriculum management have led to some improvement but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the newly introduced systems.

28 Most lessons are carefully planned and well managed. However, lesson plans are rarely shared with students. Lesson planning for NVQ provision is weak. For example, in one lesson, opportunities to develop students' knowledge and understanding were missed and the session ended 15 minutes early. The teaching and assessment of key skills is an integral part of the programmes. For example, good use is made of work placements to provide evidence of students' capacity to work effectively with others and to satisfy the career-planning element of GNVQ. There is good liaison with learning support teachers but there has been no take up of additional learning support by collaborative provision students. A weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment is the narrow range of methods used in teaching the curriculum. Most lesson time is spent on written work and there is not enough opportunity for the development of practical and other skills. An exception, though not identified in the self-assessment report, is the teaching of collaborative first-aid provision. In these lessons, teachers use a range of appropriate teaching methods with considerable flair and students respond with enthusiasm. Assignments take account of students' different learning needs.

29 The college's self-assessment report identifies as a strength the pass rates at all levels for GNVQ health and social care courses.

Curriculum Areas

The rates are consistently above the national average for the sector. A significant number of GNVQ students achieve additional qualifications including basic food hygiene, basic counselling and sign language. In 1998-99, all students achieved the equal opportunities and research units at their first attempt. Other courses with high achievement are advanced care management where a student gained the C&G 'Student of the Year Award' in 1999, and first aid where steadily improving pass rates reached 100% in 1999. A weakness not identified is the poor achievement in NVQ care. A high percentage of NVQ students continue their course beyond the predicted completion date. These students are not included in the data for

the subsequent year, so that both numbers of students and achievement levels are distorted. Internal verification is well organised and effective in monitoring the standard of assessment. Students' work is well organised and of an appropriate standard.

30 All staff have appropriate assessor awards. Most have received insufficient training in the use of IT. Good IT facilities are available to students but there are no computers in classrooms to enable the effective incorporation of information learning technology in the curriculum. The collaborative first-aid courses are well resourced but there is little specific equipment for care courses.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	Number of starters	15	13	11
		Retention (%)	93	100	82
		Achievement (%)	64	92	89
First-aid courses	1	Number of starters	255	236	570
		Retention (%)	98	100	100
		Achievement (%)	24	94	100
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	Number of starters	31	22	24
		Retention (%)	87	82	83
		Achievement (%)	79	76	100
NVQ	2	Number of starters	62	39	34
		Retention (%)	77	82	74
		Achievement (%)	3	14	25
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	Number of starters	43	32	38
		Retention (%)	70	69	76
		Achievement (%)	82	86	83
C&G advanced care management	3	Number of starters	16	16	17
		Retention (%)	75	94	100
		Achievement (%)	100	80	100

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

Curriculum Areas

English, Psychology and Sociology

Grade 3

31 Inspectors observed 10 lessons in programmes for GCSE, GCE A level and access to higher education. They agreed with the key strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- comprehensive schemes of work and clear lesson plans
- effective learning support for individual GCSE students
- good understanding and acquisition of effective study skills by students on access to higher education courses
- some good pass rates in 1999 examinations
- effective attention to identified weaknesses in the self-assessment report

Weaknesses

- the inappropriate duration of some lessons
- the inappropriateness of the one-year GCE A level programmes for many students
- low pass rates in 1999 in sociology and communication skills
- low levels of attendance
- inadequate recording of discussions and decisions at subject level
- the poor quality of classrooms

32 Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths in teaching that were identified in the self-assessment report. Most schemes of work are comprehensive and most lesson plans set out clear aims, activities and intended learning outcomes. Teaching is often of good quality and includes an appropriate variety of classroom activities. Teachers present information logically and clearly. In GCSE classes, individual student

needs are identified and met and learning support is offered where required. Students on access to higher education courses in their responses in the classroom display good understanding and the acquisition of effective study skills. As the self-assessment report acknowledges, there are some weaknesses in teaching. For example, some classes contain students from three different groups: one-year intensive, and first and second years on two-year programmes. Teachers of these classes are not always able to provide a range of appropriate separate and defined learning outcomes for such groups. A weakness not identified in the self-assessment report is that many students are unable to cope with the demands of studying GCE A levels in one year. The length of some lessons is inappropriate, for example, four hours for an intensive GCE A level psychology lesson. Some lessons contain very few students, which means that there is inadequate interaction within the group during discussion and practical exercises.

33 There are strengths and weaknesses in students' achievements. Results in some subjects fluctuate significantly from year to year. The 1999 pass rates in GCE A level and GCSE psychology, GCE A level and GCSE English and in the access to higher education course are above the national average for the sector. A number of GCE A level students achieve better results than predictions that had been based on their qualifications on entry to the course. As the self-assessment notes, the 1999 examination results in sociology and communication skills at both GCSE and GCE A level are unsatisfactory. Retention rates are poor for all except English courses. Attendance during the inspection, at 75%, was lower than the target of 85% set for 1999-2000. Students' files and assessed work, although often of good quality, particularly for GCE A level and access to higher education programmes, sometimes reveal poor organisation, grammar and spelling.

Curriculum Areas

34 Teachers are well qualified and experienced. The introduction of a new organisational structure has begun to provide better organisation and management of the curriculum. For example, close attention has been given to resolving weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. In the recent past there was often inadequate recording of discussions and decisions at subject level.

35 Classrooms are generally uninspiring and contain very few display materials. They are in a poor state of decoration and are often overheated and stuffy. They lack some basic equipment, for example screens for overhead

projection. The supply of books and journals is adequate and there are ample supplies of handout materials. Humanities students benefit from the good college-wide development of IT, Internet and CD-ROM resources.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in English, psychology and sociology, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE English language	2	Number of starters	151	105	90
		Retention (%)	70	85	81
		Achievement (%)	41	57	80
GCSE psychology	2	Number of starters	26	36	26
		Retention (%)	62	44	50
		Achievement (%)	62	62	69
GCE A level psychology	3	Number of starters	41	30	28
		Retention (%)	83	72	61
		Achievement (%)	38	44	75
GCE A level sociology	3	Number of starters	22	23	25
		Retention (%)	64	52	72
		Achievement (%)	50	58	40
GCE A level communication skills	3	Number of starters	15	11	17
		Retention (%)	56	62	47
		Achievement (%)	50	80	29
GCE A level English	3	Number of starters	35	24	20
		Retention (%)	80	83	80
		Achievement (%)	72	53	69
Access to higher education	3	Number of starters	*	18	18
		Retention (%)	*	72	55
		Achievement (%)	*	85	100

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

*programme did not run

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 3

36 Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths in the self-assessment report. They found that a number of other strengths had been overstated and that some significant weaknesses had not been identified.

Key strengths

- outstanding support for students with disabilities and/or additional learning needs
- clear and effective procedures for responding to full-time applications
- good advice for adults on financial assistance
- thorough induction for full-time students

Weaknesses

- ineffective co-ordination of student support
- the unsatisfactory quality of some tutorials
- inadequate careers education and guidance
- inconsistent entry requirements
- some unsatisfactory aspects of the student advisory service

37 Student support services are insufficiently co-ordinated. They do not ensure a consistent and timely response to the needs of students. The college has recently reorganised the management of these services. It is not yet possible to judge the effectiveness of the changes.

38 There are good opportunities for prospective students to obtain information about college courses. Teams of college tutors attend school careers events. Prospectuses provide clear information on the courses and support available but many course leaflets are of poor quality. A telephone enquiry line provides prospective students with good contact with course teams and information on how to obtain

publicity materials. The central admissions unit deals with applications for full-time courses. The effectiveness of this speedy and friendly response to applicants that takes them through all stages of joining the college is recognised in the self-assessment report. Most staff who interview prospective students have received training in relevant skills. They make good use of standard interview guidelines and of the documents for keeping records. However, published entry requirements are not always adhered to. Advice for adult applicants on the financial aspects of studying is good but general advice for adults on their choice of course is not always effective.

39 All full-time students receive a helpful induction pack. A programme of activities and speakers introduces them effectively to college facilities and services. Induction is not offered to many part-time students. Although students sign a student-college contract, a number do not know what their entitlements are under this agreement.

40 As stated in the self-assessment report, a comprehensive range of additional support is available for students. Diagnostic assessment in numeracy and literacy is carried out for most full-time students. Students who would benefit from additional help are offered a choice of individual or group tuition. A highly skilled learning support team works very closely with most personal tutors. Together, they identify the specific needs of students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities on courses throughout the college. Detailed profiles are drawn up for each student. Individual programmes of support are then devised which draw upon a wide range of staff expertise and specialist equipment. These programmes offering excellent support are regularly reviewed.

41 The college has designed a clear tutorial programme which is fully explained in the student handbook but not effectively monitored across the college. Some tutors use the

Cross-college Provision

programme to provide excellent support. They devise agreed individual learning programmes that are carefully monitored and regularly update detailed action plans that cover students' progress and personal development. However, too many tutors do not implement the programme. As a result, some students receive poor tutorial support. For example, tutorial time on one course is used for additional teaching. On another course, individual interviews are brief and unstructured and the outcomes are not recorded. These weaknesses were not recognised in the self-assessment report.

42 There is a well-stocked careers library but no policy for careers education and guidance. Arrangements for the co-ordination of provision across the college are unsatisfactory. A number of students receive no help in considering the opportunities available to them in the future, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Arrangements with Hereford and Worcester Careers Service provide individual interviews and group sessions for specific courses. However, students and staff are unclear about who is entitled to use the service. The take-up of interviews is low. There is no effective co-ordination of applications to higher education, an area of weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Individual personal tutors help students to make choices and prepare their applications. Too much reliance is placed on the skills of these tutors in a system that is not monitored.

43 The student advisory service offers a wide range of advice and information. It has well-qualified staff and provides referrals to specialist counsellors. Many students are not aware of the service which is poorly located and not well used.

General Resources

Grade 3

44 Inspectors agreed with some judgements in the college's self-assessment report. Some aspects of provision claimed as strengths did not exceed expected practice.

Key strengths

- very supportive staff in the library and IT learning centre
- the good quality and range of specialist equipment in the learning support centre
- the availability of the Internet for students
- responsive technician support for IT
- well-maintained and attractive main campus and off-site centres

Weaknesses

- poor accessibility to teaching areas for students with restricted mobility
- the unsatisfactory structural condition of some buildings
- the unsatisfactory maintenance budget
- an inadequate library budget and poor bookstock
- ineffective links between the library and curriculum areas

45 The main college is located on an attractive campus shared with the Herefordshire College of Art and Design and the Hereford Sixth Form College. As the self-assessment recognises, the grounds are well maintained. Routes to the college are well signposted and within the campus signs provide clear directions for visitors and students. There are nine other college sites within a 2-mile radius of the main site.

46 Following criticism in the last inspection report, the college has embarked on a major building programme to replace the school of farriery with a purpose-built centre for rural

Cross-college Provision

crafts in a more appropriate rural location. New centres have also been opened in Ross-on-Wye and Leominster. The latter has recently been increased in size. A new centre for management and teacher training has been established in the centre of Hereford. The college has identified that two of the teaching blocks are in need of major structural repair. The maintenance programme planned to last 10 years has not kept pace with deterioration in the buildings.

47 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that accessibility to teaching areas for students with restricted mobility is poor. This same weakness was identified in the last inspection. Following a survey carried out by the college with the help of the Hereford Access Group, less than 10% of the accommodation above ground floor was found to be accessible to wheelchair users. This significant shortcoming has now been addressed in the college strategic plan.

48 The library has been extended to provide an improved quiet study area as well as more space for computers. There are not enough books and the library budget is inadequate for the size of the college and its range of courses. This weakness was identified in the last inspection and is included in the current self-assessment report. The college and its library have the same opening hours. There is good collaborative working with the neighbouring Herefordshire College of Art and Design, whose library is housed within the college library. The IT study centre is located on the floor above the library. It provides effective integration of IT, including links to the Internet and the library's resources. Students are well supported in these areas by well-qualified and enthusiastic staff. Redrafted policies, procedures and codes of practice are in place to support this provision but links between the library and curriculum areas are not well developed.

49 The college has invested substantially in IT equipment and in the development and support of the college network. The IT drop-in centre and the key skills learning centre are important resources which, together with the IT study centre, are well used and valued by students. There are sufficient connections to the Internet together with codes of practice and software to prevent access to inappropriate sites. Technician support for IT is good. Separate staff access to IT facilities is unsatisfactory but improvements are taking place. The learning support centre has a range of specialist equipment to support literacy and numeracy, a strength noted in the self-assessment report.

50 The student refectory is an attractive area with a wide choice of food. However, there are insufficient social and communal areas for students. Car parking facilities for students and staff are inadequate, as identified in the self-assessment report and in the last inspection.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

51 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths in the self-assessment report but considered that several others mentioned in the report constituted normal practice rather than significant strengths. The college had failed to recognise certain weaknesses and exaggerated others.

Key strengths

- well-established arrangements for quality assurance
- the effective use and monitoring of service standards
- the high quality of curriculum assessment
- the appropriate information for monitoring quality
- the close links between quality assurance and operational planning

Cross-college Provision

Weaknesses

- inadequate analysis of data on students' perceptions
- inadequate assessment of the quality of collaborative provision
- some aspects of self-assessment
- underdeveloped quality assurance arrangements for the support areas
- the poor standard of some action plans

52 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are well-developed and well-established arrangements for quality assurance that focus strongly on the needs and expectations of students and other clients of the college. Staff understand and support the college's arrangements for assuring and improving quality. The manual for quality assessment provides clear guidance on how to maintain and improve quality. A senior management group, the quality executive group, is responsible for oversight of the system.

53 The college has a range of comprehensive, carefully devised standards. These give a clear indication of the level of performance that the college seeks to achieve. Monitoring provides precise measurements of the extent to which standards are met but there are no reports or recommendations for improvements.

54 Quality assurance arrangements in non-teaching areas of the college are underdeveloped. Staff who work in support services are part of the self-assessment process but there are insufficient well-structured and regular reviews and reports on the performance of college services.

55 Curriculum monitoring and evaluation is effective. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that most staff are fully involved in monitoring and improving quality. The quality executive group carries out reviews of completed programmes of study. It also

reviews programmes that are currently running by holding meetings with heads of schools and programme teams. The college has formed a quality audit team, which is increasingly effective in carrying out rigorous assessments of curriculum areas. The audits make good use of lesson observations. The follow-up on the findings of these audits and the action taken to bring about improvement are not well documented. Informative and well-presented statistical data give good support to staff who are required to monitor and report on retention and students' achievements.

56 Perception surveys have been well designed and provide information to help staff identify areas for improvement and to confirm the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Students' views of the college are regularly and effectively sought but not subsequently analysed and reported upon adequately. Action points are not always clearly identified.

57 Staff have been fully involved in self-assessment. The effectiveness of the process of the assessment varies widely across the different areas of the college. Some course self-assessments are too brief and lack clarity. Some rely too heavily on students' opinions and lack sufficient self-evaluation by teaching teams. Many summaries, which bring together the findings from several contributory reports, identified strengths and weaknesses, but made little reference to longer term trends, or performance against targets and national benchmarks. Self-assessments by teams or subgroups made a valuable contribution to the overall assessment of some cross-college areas but in the areas of quality assurance, management, and resources the process was not sufficiently wide-ranging. The quality executive group provided a valuable focal point for the process but the moderating of the report was not fully effective.

Cross-college Provision

58 There are good links between quality assurance and operational planning. The timing of planning and quality assurance activities makes it possible to incorporate into the college annual operating plan action plans arising from self-assessment. However, most of these action plans are often not well developed and do not provide an adequate basis for monitoring progress. In some programme areas, nearly all the action points indicate a target, but do not specify the action to achieve the target. Some targets are insufficiently related to the performance of the areas to which they apply.

59 All staff are appraised annually. Appraisal interviews include discussions on the lessons observed, the strengths identified in the teaching and the areas for improvement. Appraisals do not review targets and objectives for individuals, but do identify development needs. Overall college objectives are taken into account when requests for staff development are considered. A yearly report briefly reviews the impact of the annual staff development programme but the reviews are not sufficiently well developed to bring much benefit to the college.

60 The college recognises in the self-assessment report that it does not assess the quality of teaching on collaborative provision. The initial validation process for centres is thorough and effective but there is no systematic follow-up. There are no lesson observations or curriculum links between the college and collaborative provision. There is a lack of clear targets for retention and achievement in collaborative provision. Students on collaborative programmes regularly complete perception questionnaires but these are not systematically analysed.

Governance

Grade 3

61 Inspectors and auditors considered that most of the key strengths in the self-assessment report had been overstated. Most weaknesses related to openness and board membership. They identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- committed governors
- effective monitoring of the college's financial performance and financial health
- appropriately detailed annual reports on student retention and achievement

Weaknesses

- inadequate monitoring of progress towards strategic and operational objectives
- insufficient scrutiny of governor appointments and reappointments
- inadequate monitoring of key areas of the college's operations

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

63 The board has 13 members of whom eight are independent governors. There are two women on the board. Governors are committed to the well-being of the college and levels of attendance at meetings have been good over the past year. As the self-assessment report recognises, governors are updated on national developments within the further education sector but the college has not established a

Cross-college Provision

formal training and development programme for governors. Several governors have been reappointed for a third term of office without sufficient consideration of the balance of skills on the board. A search committee has recently been established. It is conducting a skills audit of the board membership and is drawing up arrangements for filling vacancies. Governors are required to make annual declarations of continuing eligibility to serve the board.

64 The self-assessment report overstated the extent to which governors were involved in the formulation of strategic plans and the monitoring of progress made towards their fulfilment. Monitoring of strategic and operational plans occurs only through attention to financial reports and to the very general annual report from the principal that gives an overview of the college's progress to the corporation. Except for the completion of its own self-assessment report, the corporation has not developed procedures to review its own effectiveness.

65 The board has established an appropriate range of committees, although it does not have a standards committee. The terms of reference of the finance and general purposes committee and audit committee are comprehensive. The cycle of board and committee meetings is set one year in advance and key decisions required to be made during the year are identified. All meetings in the past year have been quorate.

66 Agendas and minutes of the board's business do not clearly identify documents circulated or tabled in support of each item of business. Committee minutes and supporting papers are not routinely presented to the board for their consideration, although committee chairs provide a written summary of committee activities. Auditors identified an instance where a governor had not withdrawn from a board meeting when an issue in which the governor had a direct interest was being decided.

67 The board has established a comprehensive register of interests which is updated by all governors and senior staff on an annual basis. The board has only recently approved standing orders and policies in respect of confidentiality and 'whistleblowing'. Agendas, papers and minutes are available for public inspection in the college library. The board has recently appointed an independent clerk to service all board and committee meetings.

68 The governors are well informed about the college's finances. The finance and general purposes committee considers the college's monthly management accounts. A clear accompanying narrative and comprehensive financial and non-financial performance indicators support these financial reports. Financial implications inform the decision-making process. Finance reports are also considered at each meeting of the board.

69 Annually the board receives detailed data on students' retention rates and achievements and further data throughout the year. The annual sets of data are accompanied by helpful commentary highlighting strengths and weaknesses. The most recent reports show trends in retention over three years and an analysis of the relationship between enrolments, retention rates and achievements giving a more complete picture of the college's performance. Members have discussed possible reasons for poor retention and achievement. However, there is no policy or practice to ensure that the board's concerns are followed up, and to enable the board to have systematic oversight of the college's academic performance. The corporation has recently nominated a member to attend periodically meetings of the college's quality executive group and to report back to the board. The purpose of such attendance, which has not yet commenced, has not been clearly defined.

Cross-college Provision

70 The corporation does not exercise adequate oversight in a number of other key areas. Although it receives regular reports on health and safety matters it has received only one, very recent, report on the implementation of the college's equal opportunities policy. The college's significant level of collaborative provision carries risks, both to the flow of funds and potentially to the college's reputation as a provider of education. The corporation has not given sufficient attention to the college's collaborative provision. There are few links between the corporation and curriculum areas. There has been little discussion about student matters. There is currently no staff or student governor. Governors have recently arranged for college staff and students to meet them for discussion prior to board meetings, a move that has been well received by staff and governors.

Management

Grade 3

71 Inspectors agreed with some judgements in the self-assessment report. A number of strengths were overstated or represented normal expectations. Inspectors found additional weaknesses not mentioned in the report.

Key strengths

- clear management structures and lines of communication
- an open management style
- good linkage of an effective planning cycle to self-assessment
- effective financial reporting and monitoring
- regular monitoring of operational objectives by senior managers
- a high-quality, responsive college management information system

Weaknesses

- the variable quality and lack of criteria for success of operational plans
- some weak aspects in the management of curriculum and support for students
- a lack of specific targets at course level
- inadequate control of collaborative provision
- uncertainty over the eligibility of funding claims for student support services
- no comprehensive strategy to maintain financial health
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities

72 The management team comprises the principal, vice-principal, finance and administration director and four directors responsible for curriculum, operations, personnel and quality assurance. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that lines of communication are clear. Middle managers receive regular briefings from senior managers and rapid responses to requests for decisions. The college management team meets weekly. Meetings have clear agendas and action points are minuted.

73 The college has a well-planned annual cycle of strategic and operational planning linked to self-assessment. Staff receive a useful synopsis of the strategic plan to help them to understand the mission and the strategic direction of the college. All staff have the opportunity to be involved in operational planning. College-wide targets for retention and achievement are set and then translated into specific targets at school level. Targets have also been set at course level but only for some courses. Senior managers carefully monitor the achievement of operational objectives and targets with middle managers. Operational plans are uneven in quality and many action

Cross-college Provision

points lack specific criteria by which progress can be measured. Where specific targets have been set, there is evidence of improvement in performance. The college's rates of student retention and achievement are showing steady improvement. Achievement rates are generally above the average for general further education colleges.

74 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. The finance and administration director is a full member of the college management team and the finance team is appropriately resourced and skilled. Budgets are allocated according to detailed course contribution calculations. Budget holders receive appropriately detailed monthly reports. Comprehensive monthly management accounts are prepared in good time and are regularly considered by the college management team. Management accounts include a comprehensive range of financial and non-financial performance indicators and are supported by clear narrative. Reporting could be improved by including additional details regarding collaborative provision and college company activities. The financial system is considered sufficient to meet the needs of the college.

75 An increasing proportion of the college's funding provision relates to additional support units. The costs allocated to this provision, used in calculating the claims for funding, appear to be in some cases outside the definition of eligible additional support costs. The college may have overstated the costs eligible for funding. The college has depended on collaborative provision to secure growth and meet FEFC unit targets. The college's internal auditors have raised significant concerns regarding the college's control and monitoring framework for this provision. The college contracts some of its control functions to a third party. This contravenes FEFC criteria. The college has recently revised its strategy on collaborative provision. It has withdrawn its provision from more distant centres outside the county.

76 As recognised by the self-assessment report, the college has accumulated a high level of reserves and has good levels of solvency. The strong focus on financial health has maintained these reserves despite reductions in the average level of funding. This policy has resulted in under-investment in the college's infrastructure and a significant proportion of the reserves are to be directed to meet maintenance costs. The college is facing increasing pressure to maintain its current financial health. There is no comprehensive strategy to mitigate the risks of not achieving unit targets or to provide for other potential liabilities.

77 Communications are good. There is a clear cycle of meetings at school, course team and cross-college level. The principal has an open management style that is highly valued by staff. Regular news bulletins, principal's memos and meetings with staff help the flow of communication.

78 The college has useful systems for monitoring the achievement of FEFC units and identifying areas of high cost. This information enables it to make rapid adjustments to meet overall unit targets. Staffing is carefully managed and monitored. Effective personnel policies are in place. The role of programme leaders has not been clearly defined. Programme leaders have not received training to assist them in carrying out their role. As the self-assessment report partially acknowledges, there are weaknesses in aspects of the management of a number of curriculum areas. Inspectors also found significant weaknesses in the management and co-ordination of support for students.

79 The college has good and developing external links. It has been responsive to the needs of the community and of employers. Representatives of external agencies praised the college for its supportive and outgoing approach. Links with the local community are strong. The college is a member of a number of collaborative college groups. Links between curriculum areas and employers vary from excellent to patchy.

Cross-college Provision

80 As the self-assessment reports states, the college has invested significantly in its management information system since the last inspection. College returns to the FEFC meet deadlines. The system produces reliable, user-friendly reports on a regular basis and on request. Managers find these reports helpful and can request reports tailored to their particular requirements. The system is not yet completely developed, as managers do not have on-line access.

81 The self-assessment report made no reference to equal opportunities. The equal opportunities policy has been revised recently. An equal opportunities subcommittee of the academic board has been established recently. However, there has been little formal monitoring of the policy and no reports were prepared on equal opportunities until July 1999.

Conclusions

82 The college's self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning and conducting the inspection. Inspectors agreed with a number of the judgements in the report. They concluded that the report overlooked some strengths and a number of weaknesses and that there was a tendency to overstate or understate several judgements. The college's grades for the curriculum areas were similar to those of the inspection team. In one curriculum area inspectors considered that the college was too generous. Inspectors agreed with only one of the cross-college grades and gave lower grades for the remaining four areas.

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

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (October 1999)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	12
19-24 years	13
25+ years	72
Not known	2
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (October 1999)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation)	28
Level 2 (intermediate)	19
Level 3 (advanced)	17
Level 4/5 (higher)	4
Non-schedule 2	32
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	105	1,238	11
Agriculture	329	450	6
Construction	62	312	3
Engineering	119	832	8
Business	187	1,873	17
Hotel and catering	126	1,310	12
Health and community care	222	1,265	12
Art and design	15	737	6
Humanities	183	2,508	22
Basic education	70	312	3
Total	1,418	10,837	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 5% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (October 1999)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	120	23	0	143
Supporting direct learning contact	78	0	0	78
Other support	81	0	0	81
Total	279	23	0	302

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£8,305,000	£7,888,000	£8,528,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£17.57	£15.43	£16.20
Payroll as a proportion of income	67%	70%	67%
Achievement of funding target	125%	100%	103%
Diversity of income	32%	22%	33%
Operating surplus	-£504,000	-£584,000	-£600,000

Sources: Income – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

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

Payroll – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

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

Diversity of income – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Operating surplus – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
1	Number of starters	278	473	620	456	690	671
	Retention (%)	89	87	84	85	82	87
	Achievement (%)	69	47	70	56	55	79
2	Number of starters	770	838	647	784	896	832
	Retention (%)	84	80	83	84	78	79
	Achievement (%)	51	59	75	50	50	72
3	Number of starters	390	464	470	667	760	806
	Retention (%)	81	73	78	82	79	81
	Achievement (%)	73	65	69	61	63	73
4 or 5	Number of starters	0	1	0	236	180	79
	Retention (%)	n/a	100	n/a	89*	92	90
	Achievement (%)	n/a	0	n/a	71	69	61
Short courses	Number of starters	480	1,065	1,140	3,518	9,090	5,917
	Retention (%)	96*	99	96	98	99	97
	Achievement (%)	58	90	64	66	87	85
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	494	496	140	1,360	1,103	431
	Retention (%)	89	89*	84	88	82	88
	Achievement (%)	68	68	47	67	76	80

Source: ISR

*ISR data may not be reliable

n/a not applicable

FEFC Inspection Report 09/00

Published by the
Further Education Funding Council
Website www.fefc.ac.uk
© FEFC January 2000