

Luton Sixth Form College

REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1998-99

THE
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COUNCIL

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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.

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Grade Descriptors

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

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

Luton Sixth Form College

Eastern Region

Inspected April 1999

Luton Sixth Form College was established in 1966 as the first sixth form college in the country. The self-assessment process is thorough and robust and it has led to a detailed and comprehensive self-assessment report. The report built on the well-established annual course and college performance review procedures. Staff, managers and governors were involved in the self-assessment process. Inspectors found the self-assessment report helpful in planning and carrying out the inspection. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Since the self-assessment report was written, the college has made progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the report.

The college offers courses in eight of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. Provision in three of the areas was inspected. Teaching is well planned. Students' performance in most subjects is better than that predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE scores. An effective system based on value-added criteria is used to monitor and support students' progress. The quality of provision in business is outstanding, and in mathematics and science, and humanities, it is good. Students receive exceptionally good individual support and excellent careers education and guidance. The college has particularly good links with local schools. Corporation members are committed to

furthering the strategic development of the college and to ensuring the college's success. The strategic planning process is effective. The college is excellently managed. Managers consult widely with staff, students and the community. Course management is effective. The college promotes equality of opportunity successfully. The quality assurance arrangements are thorough. Accommodation is of a high standard and IT facilities are outstanding. The college should improve: students' low retention and achievement rates on some courses; the quality of some group tutorials; the provision of reports to budget holders; the arrangements for reporting the business of relevant committees to the corporation. In addition, the college should: ensure that the range of teaching approaches is broad enough to meet the needs of all students; further develop the quality assurance arrangements for non-teaching areas of work.

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

| Curriculum area | Grade | Cross-college provision | Grade |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Mathematics | 2 | Support for students | 1 |
| Physical sciences | 2 | General resources | 1 |
| Business | 1 | Quality assurance | 2 |
| Social sciences | 2 | Governance | 2 |
| | | Management | 1 |

The College and its Mission

1 Luton Sixth Form College is located on a single site in a residential area of north-east Luton. It was established in 1966 and was the first sixth form college in the country. There are also three general further education colleges in Bedfordshire and Luton. Luton has good road, rail and air links. Economically, the area is associated with manufacturing industries, particularly the automobile industry. Service industries such as distribution, banking and business services, hotels and catering are growing. The unemployment rate for Bedfordshire and Luton is about 5% but in some areas of Luton rises to 12%. Some areas of Luton are among the 15% of areas in the country which have been identified as the most deprived. Nearly 40% of the college's students are recruited from these areas.

2 In Luton, there are 11 high schools for pupils aged 11 to 16 and one Roman Catholic school for pupils aged 11 to 18. The majority of the college's students are recruited from these schools. In 1997, the percentage of 16-year-old pupils in Luton gaining five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects at grade A to C was 34%, well below the average for Bedfordshire of 46%. In 1997, about 65% of students in Luton remained in full-time education after the age of 16, below the average for Bedfordshire of 71.5%. In 1998, approximately 50% of the college's students were from minority ethnic backgrounds and this proportion compares with about 36% in the high school population of Luton. The college has productive links with local schools and manages the Luton Curriculum Network which was established to promote co-operation on curriculum matters with schools. The network organises staff development events and activities for students such as mathematics, science and technology masterclasses.

3 The college was a founder member of the Bedfordshire and Luton Federation for Further and Higher Education which develops and

promotes these sectors of education in the area. The Federation comprises the four further education colleges in Bedfordshire and the University of Luton, and has been successful in a number of bids for development funding for information technology (IT), widening participation in further education and widening access to higher education. A lifelong learning partnership between the four colleges, the Luton and Bedfordshire local authorities, the careers service and the Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise, has been established to build on the work of the federation. The college has a close working partnership with the University of Luton and teaches a number of the higher education modules for the university. These include some aspects of providing teaching qualifications for classroom assistants and media performance modules for university students.

4 In November 1998, the college had 2,267 students of whom 81% were full time. Of the college's students, 84% are in the 16 to 18 age range. Of all the students, 2% are studying at foundation level, 21% at intermediate level, and 76% at advanced level. Approximately 63% of full-time students study general certificate of education advanced/advanced supplementary level (GCE A/AS level) subjects. The college provides courses in eight of the 10 programme areas of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Forty GCE A/AS level and 12 GCSE subjects are offered. Since the last inspection, the college has extended its provision of courses leading to vocational qualifications. Courses leading to general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) are offered in art and design, science, health and social care, leisure and tourism, performing arts, IT and business. A national diploma in performing arts and a post-GCE A level foundation art and design course are also offered. All students take qualifications in using IT as part of their programme of study. The college has diversified its provision by introducing training for local businesses in IT and extending its range of evening classes.

Context

5 The college management team comprises the principal, deputy principal, two assistant principals, the director of resources and the director of personnel and community relations. The curriculum is managed through nine curriculum areas. The college employs 172 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 73 are full-time equivalent support staff.

6 The college's mission is to respond to the educational, cultural and social needs of the individual and the community through its programme of full-time and part-time general education, vocational and leisure courses for young people and adults.

The Inspection

7 The college was inspected during the week beginning 26 April 1999. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and information about the college held by other directorates of the 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 against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. Data on students' achievements are reliable. The inspection was carried out by 10 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 41 days. Inspectors observed 45 lessons, examined students' work and evaluated college documentation. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff and students.

8 The 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.

9 The following table shows the grades awarded to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the lessons inspected, 71% were judged to be good or outstanding. This is below the national average of 73% for sixth form colleges inspected in 1997-98, but above that for colleges in the sector inspected during 1997-98. Only one lesson was judged to be less than satisfactory.

Context

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

| Programme | Grade | | | | | Totals |
|--|-------|----|----|---|---|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| GCE A/AS level | 10 | 12 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 31 |
| GCSE | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| GNVQ | 1 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Total (No.) | 11 | 21 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 45 |
| Total (%) | 24 | 47 | 27 | 2 | 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*

10 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected is at the average for sixth form colleges. The average class size was 14.6 compared with an average of 12.3 for sixth form colleges.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

| | Average number of students | Average attendance (%) |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Luton Sixth Form College | 14.6 | 84 |
| 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

11 Eleven lessons in mathematics were observed. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- well-managed and effectively-organised courses
- carefully-planned lessons and much good teaching
- effective use of introductory materials to prepare students for courses
- good range of learning resources for mathematics
- consistently high achievement rates on GCE A level courses
- careful monitoring of students' progress

Weaknesses

- insufficiently varied teaching methods
- little systematic application of IT in lessons
- students' poor achievements on GCSE courses
- insufficient individual support for some GCSE students

12 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that mathematics courses are thoroughly planned and effectively organised. Courses are well managed. Subject files are comprehensive and there is effective record-keeping. Students are provided with informative course handbooks, which prepare them well for the requirements of each course. Students use these documents effectively as reference material throughout their studies. There are strong links with local schools. An annual mathematics masterclass for year 11 pupils is organised jointly with schools to promote interest in mathematics.

13 Mathematics teaching is planned thoroughly. The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons, students demonstrated and extended their understanding of underlying mathematical principles and theory in lively discussion. Teachers use question and answer techniques well and draw on their own and students' experiences effectively to promote interest. However, in a few classes there is insufficient variety of appropriate teaching methods to ensure that all students are fully involved in the learning activities and that their needs are met. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Homework is regularly set and marked. It is returned promptly with constructive comments to help students to improve their performance. There is a programme of regular testing to monitor students' progress. Detailed records of marks are kept and students are informed regularly of their progress. There is insufficient support for some GCSE mathematics students. The college has identified this weakness and is taking action to remedy it.

14 As the self-assessment report acknowledged, learning resources to support the teaching of mathematics are good. Handouts and learning materials in the GCSE workshop are of a high quality. An extensive database of worksheets for GCE A level mathematics is available on the college intranet. Appropriate mathematics software is readily accessible but mathematics staff seldom make use of it in their teaching. Departmental sets of class textbooks are supplemented by multiple copies held in the library. Mathematics classrooms are spacious and well furnished and have a distinctive subject identity. Students use the mathematics resource base as a study area and staff provide some extra learning support there at set times of the week.

15 The standard of students' responses in class and of written work is good. Students develop appropriate mathematical skills. However, there are few opportunities for students to use and extend their IT skills in

Curriculum Areas

mathematics classes. The self-assessment report noted that over the last three years, the proportion of students achieving grades A to E and A to C in mathematics and further mathematics has been above the average for sixth form colleges. There has been 100% pass rate in further mathematics over the last three years and the majority of students gained high grades. The college's value-added data show that most students achieve grades which are above those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE scores on entry. Students taking GCE A level mathematics in one year are less successful. Pass rates on the GCE AS mathematics course are slightly below the

national average for sixth form colleges. Over the last three years the number of students achieving grade A to C in GCSE mathematics courses has been at least 10% below the national average. In 1998, of the 254 students entered for the intermediate level mathematics examination, only 81 improved their grade to a C or above. Approximately half the students taking foundation or intermediate level GCSE mathematics courses fail to improve on their previous grade. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report and the department is seeking ways of remedying it. Students who take the Numberpower course achieve excellent results.

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

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| Numberpower | 1 | Expected completions | 47 | 24 | 48 |
| | | Retention (%) | 77 | 100 | 71 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 83 | 92 | 97 |
| GCSE mathematics | 2 | Expected completions | 569 | 512 | 325 |
| | | Retention (%) | 81 | 79 | 78 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 33 | 25 | 32 |
| GCE AS mathematics | 3 | Expected completions | 42 | 24 | 28 |
| | | Retention (%) | 71 | 79 | 57 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 40 | 58 | 50 |
| GCE A level mathematics | 3 | Expected completions | 179 | 173 | 194 |
| | | Retention (%) | 78 | 71 | 70 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 91 | 93 | 90 |
| GCE A level further mathematics | 3 | Expected completions | 11 | 10 | 11 |
| | | Retention (%) | 82 | 80 | 100 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 100 | 100 | 100 |

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

Curriculum Areas

Physical Sciences

Grade 2

16 The inspection covered courses in GNVQ science at intermediate and advanced level and GCE A level courses in chemistry, geology and physics. Twelve lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- effective course planning
- exemplary practice in the development of communication skills
- advanced students' demonstration of high levels of intellectual ability
- good retention and pass rates
- well-equipped and fully-used resource base
- strong links with schools

Weaknesses

- ineffective management of a few classes
- below average retention rates on some GCE A level courses
- some underdeveloped aspects of curriculum management

17 The college has large numbers of students on GCE A level physical science courses. These are organised flexibly on a modular basis to enable students to work at their own pace towards the qualification. This flexibility in course design is used to particularly good effect in geology. Recruitment to the GNVQ advanced course is falling and only a small number of students progress from GNVQ intermediate to GNVQ advanced level. The good links with local high schools are noted in the self-assessment report and a joint masterclass for about 90 pupils from the 11 local high schools has been run at the college for the last two years.

18 Course planning is effective. Detailed schemes of work identify clearly how theory and practical activities and IT are integrated. Students' assignments are well planned. Record-keeping on GNVQ advanced is thorough. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that course documentation on GNVQ intermediate and GCE A level physics is less well developed. Steady progress is being made to rectify this weakness. Some course teams are not managed as efficiently and effectively as others and there is insufficient sharing of good practice between them.

19 In the best lessons, students display a high level of intellectual ability. Students on advanced courses engage in scientific debate with their peers. Students' participation in practical investigations show an appreciation of scientific methods. Innovative teaching on GCE A level courses promotes the development of communication skills. In a chemistry lesson, students discussed alternative answers to a homework question in small groups and gave short presentations to the rest of the class on key features of alcohol chemistry. They then strengthened their learning by working on their own using a handout. In some lessons, learning materials were not of an appropriate level for the course and teachers used too narrow a range of learning activities. The self-assessment report noted these weaknesses in teaching. It did not acknowledge, however, that in a few lessons, there were some instances of unsatisfactory classroom management, such as poor use of time and the failure to ensure that all students were fully involved in learning activities. In general, students' work is carefully marked to an appropriate standard. Insufficient constructive feedback is given to students in some subjects.

20 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the science resource base is a significant strength. It is well equipped with computer hardware and software, books and other reference materials. Students value the

Curriculum Areas

resource which is well used as a study area and for research for assignments. There is a good provision of library books and journals. Most laboratories and preparation areas are pleasant with excellent storage facilities. Technicians provide good support to students and staff.

21 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that students' achievements are a strength. Retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses are above the national averages. A high percentage of GNVQ students achieve merit and distinction grades at advanced level and a significant proportion progress to higher education.

Over the last three years, students' GCE A level geology results have been consistently above the national average for sixth form colleges. In 1998, GCE A level physics results improved and were above the national average. The value-added factor in students' results in GCE A level science is significant. For example, in chemistry and particularly in geology, students obtain much better results than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. The self-assessment report, however, failed to attach sufficient importance to the unsatisfactory retention rates on some GCE A level courses.

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

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|---------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| GNVQ intermediate science | 2 | Expected completions | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| | | Retention (%) | 94 | 83 | 82 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 76 | 87 | 71 |
| GNVQ advanced science | 3 | Expected completions | 24 | 18 | 13 |
| | | Retention (%) | 83 | 83 | 69 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 78 | 80 | 100 |
| GCE A level chemistry | 3 | Expected completions | 100 | 92 | 115 |
| | | Retention (%) | 80 | 75 | 70 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 68 | 80 | 83 |
| GCE A level geology | 3 | Expected completions | 46 | 48 | 32 |
| | | Retention (%) | 78 | 67 | 84 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 94 | 91 | 96 |
| GCE A level physics | 3 | Expected completions | 69 | 48 | 56 |
| | | Retention (%) | 88 | 77 | 77 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 70 | 73 | 93 |

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

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 1

22 The inspection covered GCE A level business studies and courses leading to GNVQ business at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. Eleven lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report but considered that the college had given insufficient emphasis to students' outstanding results on the GNVQ courses.

Key strengths

- comprehensive and well-structured schemes of work
- much good teaching across the curriculum area
- outstanding pass rates and good retention rates on GNVQ courses
- the high quality of students' written work
- students' success in progressing to further and higher education

Weaknesses

- the poor use of IT by some students and staff

23 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that course documentation is thorough. Teachers have developed well-structured schemes of work to a common format. These identify clearly the teaching and learning approaches, the resources required and what students are expected to learn. Assignments are well designed. Assignment briefs give helpful guidance and relate theory to current business practice. Students develop communication and IT skills effectively through assignments. Links with employers are well established and productive. There are carefully planned work

placements on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses. A good range of visiting speakers and external visits helps to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding of current business practice.

24 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is a high standard of teaching across the curriculum area. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of teaching and learning approaches, develop productive working relationships with students, and sustain students' interest. In one GNVQ advanced lesson, students were asked to produce promotional material for an end-of-year event. The tasks were challenging and thought provoking and required students to work in groups. Students worked well together, and activities were carried out in a positive and business-like manner. In a GCE A level business studies lesson, the teacher made effective use of questions and answers to explore the concept of investment appraisal. Students took part in group discussion, and demonstrated a collective sense of interest and enjoyment. In a minority of lessons, activities were insufficiently varied to take account of the different abilities of students. This weakness was acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

25 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced, and undertake professional development to improve their business knowledge. Students have good access to modern computer equipment and software. A well-equipped business resource base enables students to carry out research for their assignments and to develop skills of enquiry. In a few lessons, teachers missed the opportunity to reflect good business practice. For example, they did not use wordprocessed handouts and some overhead transparencies were not well presented.

26 Students' written work is of a high standard. Most GNVQ students' portfolios are well organised. In a few cases, assignments were hand written and poorly presented.

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Students' assignments on GNVQ and GCE A level courses demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject, an ability to research and evaluate evidence, and good use of IT. GCE A level business studies students develop their IT skills by studying for a computer literacy and information technology certificate and some also achieve a more advanced information and business technology qualification. Students' achievements on GNVQ programmes are outstanding, and consistently above the national average for sixth form colleges. Over the last three years, pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses have been consistently high. The pass rate on GNVQ advanced was

well above the national average in 1996 and 1998. A high percentage of GNVQ students achieve merit and distinction grades. Retention rates on the GNVQ foundation and advanced courses are well above the national averages. The college's value-added analysis of students' performance shows that GCE A level business studies students have achieved grades which are higher than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. The self-assessment report underestimated the high level of students' achievements. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is good progression from GNVQ courses to further and higher education.

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

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| GNVQ foundation | 1 | Expected completions | 25 | 29 | 37 |
| | | Retention (%) | 72 | 90 | 73 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 83 | 81 | 78 |
| GNVQ intermediate | 2 | Expected completions | 99 | 84 | 74 |
| | | Retention (%) | 90 | 81 | 82 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 74 | 76 | 84 |
| GNVQ advanced | 3 | Expected completions | 74 | 78 | 78 |
| | | Retention (%) | 73 | 76 | 74 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 89 | 53 | 90 |
| GCE A level business studies | 3 | Expected completions | 207 | 193 | 187 |
| | | Retention (%) | 82 | 67 | 71 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 83 | 79 | 85 |

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

Curriculum Areas

Social Sciences

Grade 2

27 The inspection covered GCE A level law, government and politics, psychology and sociology and GCSE law, psychology and sociology. Eleven lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- well-managed and systematically planned courses
- stimulating teaching
- emphasis on social and moral issues
- the high pass rate in GCE A level government and politics
- a wide range of appropriate learning materials

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most courses
- some poor results on GCSE courses

28 Social science courses are well managed. Staff have regular team meetings. There is careful monitoring of progress on actions taken following previous meetings. Schemes of work are detailed and shared by teachers. They include useful information about what is to be taught, the resources required and what students are expected to learn. Lesson plans are used effectively. The aims and objectives of lessons are stated clearly. In lessons, teachers make appropriate use of previously learned topics. Students' progress is regularly and carefully monitored and students' records are well organised. Coursework is carefully planned and is set in accordance with the syllabus requirements. In general, teachers mark students' work carefully and correct factual inaccuracies, spelling and grammatical errors. However, they do not always provide enough

written comments to help students improve their performance.

29 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is a wide range of learning activities and much good teaching. Teachers promote their subjects enthusiastically and motivate large groups of students of varying abilities to give of their best. Students are encouraged to participate in discussions which challenge them to think and draw on their own experiences. On GCE A level courses the lively pace of lessons was demanding and students extended their knowledge and skills. In lessons, teachers make good use of discussion and debate to involve all students. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that students are given useful study guides which help them to work successfully on their own. Video-conferencing in government and politics and observational studies of zoo animals in psychology have been used effectively to motivate students and to help sustain their interest. Effective methods are used to teach students complex, technical language. A strong feature of teaching is the attention paid to controversial topics. Social and moral issues are sensitively taught, as noted in the self-assessment report. Debates on ethical issues are handled carefully and responsibly. For example, in lessons on world religions or mental health, students demonstrated a mature and sensitive approach to potentially contentious topics and discussed them sensibly and constructively. In a few lessons some students became inattentive during group work. Students improve their subject knowledge by using networked computerised packages.

30 Accommodation for social sciences is conducive to learning. Base rooms are spacious and well equipped and have relevant displays and illustrations of students' work. There is a good range of books and other learning materials although some of it is dated. An appropriate range of current periodicals is available. This is augmented by a

Curriculum Areas

comprehensive bookstock in the library which contains more advanced texts. Students develop a high level of communication skills and make good use of their IT skills in their assignment work. However, inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is further scope for the use of IT on some courses.

31 Students' achievements across the range of social science courses vary considerably between outstanding and poor. Over the last three years, the pass rate in GCE A level government and politics has been consistently high and in 1998 was 100%. Pass rates in GCE AS law and GCE A level sociology have fluctuated widely over the last three years. In 1997, the pass rate in GCE AS law was above

the national average for sixth form colleges. There has been a steady improvement in the GCE A level psychology pass rate and in 1998 it was in line with the national average. The retention rate on most GCE A level social science courses is below the national average. Overall, the college's value-added data show that most GCE A level students achieve grades which are better than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE scores on entry. Students' poor achievements in GCSE law and psychology were acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The proportion of students who gain grade C or above in GCSE sociology, is consistently above the national average but the retention rate is poor.

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

| Type of qualification | Level | Numbers and outcome | Completion year | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| GCSE (law, psychology, sociology) | 2 | Expected completions | 155 | 114 | 109 |
| | | Retention (%) | 69 | 75 | 78 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 57 | 29 | 35 |
| GCE A level government and politics | 3 | Expected completions | 90 | 92 | 64 |
| | | Retention (%) | 81 | 71 | 75 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 82 | 91 | 100 |
| GCE AS law | 3 | Expected completions | 26 | 19 | 21 |
| | | Retention (%) | 65 | 53 | 67 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 56 | 90 | 64 |
| GCE A level psychology | 3 | Expected completions | 137 | 151 | 143 |
| | | Retention (%) | 77 | 72 | 69 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 64 | 82 | 88 |
| GCE A level sociology | 3 | Expected completions | 65 | 86 | 115 |
| | | Retention (%) | 77 | 76 | 65 |
| | | Achievement (%) | 65 | 83 | 77 |

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

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 1

32 Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report. The college is taking action to rectify the few weaknesses it has identified.

Key strengths

- extensive liaison with schools
- comprehensive pre-entry advice and guidance
- well-planned induction procedures
- high levels of support for individual students
- close monitoring of students' attendance and progress
- effective arrangements for additional learning support
- the wide range of welfare and counselling support services
- excellent careers education and guidance

Weaknesses

- the uneven quality of group tutorials

33 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that pre-entry advice and guidance to prospective students is effective. The college has well-established links with schools in Luton. These include the regular contact which the college's pastoral section leaders and career specialists maintain with the schools. Presentations to year 11 pupils are well received by pupils and their teachers. A wide range of publicity materials and activities is used to promote the college. There is a high attendance at open days and 'taster' sessions. The attractive and informative 1998 full-time prospectus won a national award for improvements in design.

34 Admission and enrolment procedures are clear and fully documented. All applicants to full-time courses receive an interview and considerable care is taken to ensure that students are enrolled on the course most appropriate for them. As the self-assessment report acknowledged, feedback from students indicates high levels of satisfaction with these arrangements. College and course induction is carefully planned and effective. A student handbook provides valuable general information on college procedures and student services.

35 The personal tutorial system is well managed and effective and this was acknowledged in the self-assessment report. All full-time students have a personal tutor, who is normally one of their teachers. Tutors' responsibilities are explicitly stated in the comprehensive tutors' handbook. This also includes a yearly schedule of tutorial activities and support materials for tutors on study skills, careers and personal development. The college recognises that some of these materials are not suitable for foundation and intermediate level students and is revising them. Tutors monitor students' attendance and performance systematically using data obtained from the college's electronic attendance system and the students' performance database. A carefully-organised system of referral for students whose performance is causing concern, includes reports to parents. The tutor groups which meet weekly provide an effective means of communication between staff and students. Tutorials varied considerably in quality, and in some instances they were unsatisfactory. In some instances the students arrived late and tutors had difficulty in engaging students' interest in the tutorial activity. The self-assessment report identified the need to implement better systems for monitoring tutorials. A tutorial observation system has now been introduced.

36 As the self-assessment report recognised, additional learning support is effective. Priority

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is given to the early identification of students' learning needs and this is carried out through liaison with schools, at initial interview and during induction. Teachers and tutors work closely with the language and curriculum support team to identify students' learning needs and review how these are met.

Additional learning support is provided through a combination of 'partnership support' in which learning support tutors attend lessons and work closely with subject teachers, and also give individual students support in a well-resourced learning centre. Students' progress is monitored regularly and carefully recorded. Students value the support they receive and there is evidence of its effectiveness in enabling them to improve their performance. Appropriate support is provided for students with physical disabilities whose needs are assessed before they join the college.

37 The welfare and counselling support available to students is comprehensive. Appropriate information on financial support, health and other issues is readily available. A high level of personal support is available to students and is supplemented by an effective student support network. Students who join the network receive training in basic counselling skills.

38 The careers and higher education advice service is outstanding. The college co-operates closely with the careers service to provide an excellent range of specialist careers advice and guidance. Careers advisers are available regularly on site and are integral to the college's careers department. There is a comprehensive and effective careers education programme for full-time students. The spacious and well-equipped careers resource centre is used extensively by students on a 'drop-in' basis and it has a wide range of up-to-date IT software. A 'job-shop' is available for those students who are seeking progression to employment. Many students progress to higher education after completing their course at the college. In 1998,

of the 619 students who applied for higher education, over 500 successfully gained a place.

39 There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including a popular variety of sports activities, music, drama and dance and social events. Many clubs and societies are organised by students and include a debating society, Christian union and Muslim men's and women's groups. Student exchange visits with Denmark, Sweden and Germany are well established. The student council plays an active role in the life of the college and two youth workers provide a high level of support for its work. The council raises money for charity, organises sports and entertainment in the college and represents students' views to college management. The chair of the council is a member of the corporation.

General Resources

Grade 1

40 The college provides excellent facilities for its students and staff. Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- well-planned and well-managed development of the college accommodation
- some excellent accommodation
- effective use of accommodation
- well-managed IT resources
- excellent access to up-to-date IT facilities and the internet
- exemplary IT corporate strategy
- good library facilities and learning resources

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

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41 Since incorporation, the college has invested extensively in the improvement and extension of its buildings. A comprehensive and coherent strategy for the development of college accommodation has been well managed to provide high-quality teaching and communal facilities. The new mathematics and science block, opened in 1996, and the new refectory and reception area, opened in 1998, are excellent facilities. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that accommodation is of good quality and is maintained to a high standard. The college has extensive sports facilities including tennis courts, playing fields, and a large sports hall with a modern fitness suite.

42 The college provides a safe, pleasant and effective environment to support and enhance the work of students and staff. This has been achieved through a planned development strategy for the college site. As a security measure, all students have to use 'swipe' cards which not only let them into the buildings, but also register their arrival. The college is maintained as an attractive environment where students' work is proudly displayed. It is kept tidy, pleasantly decorated and standards of cleanliness throughout the buildings are high. Classrooms are pleasantly furnished and appropriately equipped with teaching aids including equipment for playing videos. Accommodation is used efficiently and effectively. Most teaching rooms, resources areas and staff rooms are grouped together according to subject or discipline. Staff workrooms are well equipped with networked computers. There are plans to discontinue the use of three classrooms which are in temporary buildings. A few classrooms are inaccessible to wheelchair users. The needs of students with restricted mobility are met sensitively and, where necessary, classes are relocated to meet these.

43 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are excellent up-to-date IT facilities available to students on a 'drop-in'

basis. The college's corporate objectives indicate that the further development of the college's IT facilities is a major and strategic priority. IT is an essential component of many curricular activities. The college has made a high level of investment in the provision of up-to-date IT resources. Over 300 computers are connected to the college learning network through which students have excellent access to a wide range of up-to-date software and learning materials. There is approximately one computer for every six students. In addition to the 10 IT teaching rooms computers are available for students to use in the learning resource centre and three curriculum resource bases. Feedback from students indicates high levels of satisfaction with IT facilities. The college's clear IT policy has successfully led to the development of IT facilities for teaching, learning and administration. The policy is being developed further into a comprehensively documented information and learning technology strategy. The college has its own website and access to the internet is an integral part of the college's information and learning technology strategy. As the self-assessment report stated, the internet is easily accessible to students and staff although there is scope for ensuring that it is always used appropriately and effectively. Staff have a good access to IT equipment with one computer to every two members of staff. The IT facilities are well managed by technical staff who ensure that failure of equipment or networks is quickly rectified. Plans are well advanced to upgrade the administrative network to integrate it with the academic network and library system. A video-conferencing facility is used to link the college to local schools, colleges and companies.

44 Since the last inspection, the library and resource bases have been amalgamated to enable more effective co-ordination of learning resources. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the learning resource centre provides a wide range of learning materials which reflect the multicultural

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diversity in the college and support a wide range of interests. The extensive range of resources includes videotape recordings, audio cassettes, 50 CD-ROMs, over 80 periodicals and 30,000 books. The learning resource centre is well organised and managed by experienced and well-qualified staff. Students make extensive use of the facilities and express high levels of satisfaction with them. Although there are over 180 workplaces in the learning resource centre, including an area for group work and a quiet area, it is crowded at peak periods. Library staff have effective links with some curriculum areas. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment finding that the library computer system does not enable an adequate analysis of library use to be made.

Quality Assurance

Grade 2

45 Since the last inspection, the college has developed further its arrangements for quality assurance. Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report and identified weaknesses which the college had not identified.

Key strengths

- comprehensive and rigorous self-assessment
- robust monitoring of the implementation of action plans
- the thorough analysis of the value-added factor in students' achievements on GCE A level courses
- the commitment to the continuous improvement of the quality of provision and services
- extensive staff development linked to corporate objectives

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped quality assurance arrangements in some non-teaching areas
- no appraisals for a significant number of staff
- insufficient sharing across the college of good practice in teaching

46 The college has a firm commitment to the continuous improvement of its provision and this is reflected in its key strategic objectives. Quality assurance arrangements are based on comprehensive and rigorous self-assessment which cover all areas of the college's work. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the self-assessment arrangements build on and extend the well-established annual evaluations of performance at course and college level. The standard of service that students and staff can expect to receive from student services functions is well documented and there is effective monitoring of the extent to which it is achieved. In other non-teaching areas, quality assurance arrangements are less well developed. The college recognised in its self-assessment report, that service standards and measurable targets for their achievement have not yet been established for many of the support areas. Questionnaires about the college's provision do not cover the quality of facilities and services in non-teaching areas adequately. The self-assessment report failed to acknowledge that there are no systematic procedures to gather the views of employers and parents of students aged 16 to 18 about the college and its courses.

47 The thorough process of course monitoring and evaluation which was highlighted at the last inspection has continued. Extensive data are used to inform course reviews. Students' views are systematically gathered using a range of questionnaires throughout the year. These are augmented by feedback from the student council and student representation at course panel meetings. Students' attendance data are

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recorded and meticulously checked. Since 1990, the college has used value-added information to provide an effective basis for monitoring students' performance on GCE A level courses. The GCE A level points score achieved by those students taking two or more GCE A levels has improved in each of the last three years. Overall, students are achieving better results than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE grades. Value-added data were included as part of the evidence for judgements on students' achievements in the self-assessment report. Staff have confidence in the data and course teams use them effectively as a performance indicator to monitor year-on-year improvements. College-wide performance targets for students' achievements and progression were set for the academic year 1997-98. Target-setting for improvement at course level has recently been completed.

48 The college produced its second self-assessment report in 1998. The self-assessment process is well planned, rigorous and effective. The governors' review committee has been actively involved in all stages of the production of the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report includes an informative section on the developments and progress the college has made since the last inspection. Teaching and non-teaching staff contributed to the self-assessment report for their own areas of work.

49 Findings from lesson observations have been used to inform the judgements on teaching and learning in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report failed to acknowledge that insufficient use has been made of lesson observations as a means of identifying good practice and the action required to improve the quality of teaching. Evidence to substantiate the judgements in the self-assessment report is assiduously checked. The college board reviews and validates all contributions to the college self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that the process is

robust. Clear action plans include the names of staff responsible for carrying action out and dates by which it has to be completed. The college provided useful updates to the action plan showing the progress that had been made. The self-assessment report failed to acknowledge that some course teams have not recorded effectively the progress made in implementing action plans. Inspectors considered that the college had understated the strength of the arrangements for self-assessment.

50 The student charter is an attractive document which was produced after extensive consultation with the student council. The charter is reviewed annually. Service standards, against which the college's performance in meeting charter commitments may be measured, are not explicitly stated. Students have a good understanding of the complaints procedures and records show that complaints are handled promptly and appropriately. The college has drawn up the draft of a residents' charter which outlines the college's responsibilities to the local resident population. At the time of the inspection, the college was canvassing residents' views on what should be in this charter.

51 A training needs analysis has been carried out to help identify staff development needs. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are extensive staff development opportunities and an adequate budget to support them. However, there has been little planned staff development for middle managers. Staff development is related to key strategic priorities and is carefully evaluated. The college has achieved Investor in People status. There are well-documented procedures for staff appraisal which is carried out on a two-year cycle. It is acknowledged in the self-assessment report, however, that many staff have not been appraised within the planned timescale.

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Governance

Grade 2

52 Inspectors and auditors agreed with many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report, but found some weaknesses which the college had not identified.

Key strengths

- the commitment of governors to the college and to furthering its links with the community
- the strategic direction provided by governors
- effective conduct of corporation business
- close monitoring of the college's performance
- effective involvement in self-assessment

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring by corporation of financial progress of building project
- inadequate reporting of some committee business

53 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.

54 The corporation has 17 members. Governors are strongly committed to the college and to maintaining and developing its links with the local community. The college acknowledges the need to attract more governors from minority ethnic groups. The corporation is seeking new governors to replace those who reach the end of their term of office in the year

2000 by making approaches to local organisations and through the placing of public advertisements. As the self-assessment report stated, governors play a key role in determining the strategic direction of the college. They have a clear view of the college's mission and regularly consider the implications of local and national issues for the college. There is an effective partnership between the corporation and the college management team, and a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and management. In its self-assessment report, the corporation judged that communication between governors and teaching staff was not as effective as it would wish. Inspectors concluded that effective action linking governors with areas of the college's work has partly rectified this weakness.

55 Inspectors and auditors agreed with the self-assessment report that although the clerk to the corporation provides a thorough induction for new governors there is no formal policy or procedure for the induction of new governors. In response to this weakness, a governor handbook has been created which contains appropriate documents for new and existing governors. Governors are made aware of training opportunities. In the 12 months before the inspection, three governors attended external conferences or training events, and 11 governors attended a residential conference organised by the college.

56 The corporation has established an appropriate committee structure which covers search, remuneration, finance and general purposes, audit and review. The committees meet with appropriate frequency. The finance and general purposes committee receives management accounts at each meeting, and reports on staffing, student numbers and funding units. The audit committee has assessed its own performance and has produced a report for the corporation. Some business, deemed by the remuneration committee to be confidential to its members, has not been reported back to the corporation.

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57 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the corporation significantly contributes to the self-assessment of the college and closely monitors the college's performance. Two governors attended a college board meeting to consider a draft of the college self-assessment report before it was considered in detail and validated by the corporation review committee. Detailed monitoring of the operating plan takes place three times a year, to check progress against strategic objectives. The corporation review committee, established in 1993, has undertaken regular and detailed monitoring of the college's academic performance, making appropriate use of value-added and benchmarking data. The committee receives regular reports from the college board on progress in implementing actions identified through self-assessment and has agreed targets for examination results in 1999.

58 As recognised in the self-assessment report, the clerking arrangements are effective. The clerk to the corporation has attended appropriate training events, reports directly to the chair of the corporation and has a separate role description approved by the corporation. Minutes provide a clear record of the business of the corporation and its committees. Agenda are distributed in good time for meetings. Effective procedures have been established for the conduct of the corporation's business. These include a code of conduct, a code of ethics and standing orders, a public interest disclosure policy and a publicly available register of interests. Staff and members of the public may attend corporation and committee meetings. Non-confidential corporation and committee papers are made available on request.

59 The financial progress of the college's recent major building project has not been sufficiently monitored by the corporation. The finance and general purposes committee received information on the project in the form of a comparison of the budget with the total costs originally estimated, but it has not been

given details of actual expenditure to date. This shortcoming was not identified in the self-assessment report. Management accounts have not included a capital expenditure statement. An estimated overspend on the project was reported to the finance and general purposes committee and the minutes of that meeting were presented to the corporation, but there is no minute recording an approval of the overspend by the corporation or a revised budget. Financial statements of the subsidiary company, set up to transact the building project, have not been considered by governors. The financial statements of the company were late in being audited and in being submitted to the FEFC for 1996-97 and 1997-98.

Management

Grade 1

60 Inspectors agreed substantially with the college's assessment of management. They attached more significance to the strengths, however, than the college did in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- the open and consultative management
- the clear management structure
- effective strategic planning
- good communication between managers, staff and the community
- effective promotion of equality of opportunity by all staff
- excellent curriculum links with local high schools
- reliable and timely management information

Weaknesses

- the failure to provide budget holders sufficiently comprehensive and timely reports

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61 The college is excellently managed. There is productive teamworking at all levels. Implementation of a revised management structure involved wide consultation with staff. The structure identifies clear reporting arrangements, has given increased responsibilities to middle managers and has strengthened the processes for decision-making and the management of curriculum areas. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities, and those of their colleagues. Course management is good and curriculum leaders monitor the performance and achievements of subject teams effectively. There is cost-effective deployment of staff. College policies are reviewed regularly. The success of management in enabling staff to work productively together in teams is a strength which was understated in the self-assessment report.

62 The college has strong and productive relationships with other educational institutions and the community. A newsletter is distributed to local residents providing information on college developments. Curriculum areas have excellent links with local high school staff. This has resulted in extensive joint curriculum development and sharing of learning materials. Close liaison with local high schools provides data which enable the college to plan its curriculum effectively.

63 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that communications between management and staff at all levels are effective. Managers have adopted an open and consultative approach and are very accessible to staff and students. The college management team meets weekly to discuss strategic and operational issues. Minutes of management team meetings are clear and are widely circulated to staff. It is explicitly stated where responsibility for carrying out action lies. A weekly bulletin is circulated to all staff. A separate bulletin is distributed to part-time staff. Managers use these bulletins effectively to disseminate news and information covering a

wide range of items including those discussed at college management team meetings. All staff have access to electronic mail and the college intranet. Staff find the half-termly full staff meetings valuable.

64 Equality of opportunity is given a high priority. Staff at all levels have a good awareness of the needs of the local minority ethnic communities, and have ensured that the curriculum meets their needs. Curriculum managers monitor schemes of work, lesson plans and syllabuses to ensure that equality of opportunity is upheld and promoted in all aspects of teaching and learning. Managers and course team leaders regularly analyse enrolments and subject achievements in terms of students' gender and ethnicity. However, there is no summary annual report to governors on the extent to which equal opportunities are promoted effectively throughout all areas of the college's work.

65 The college's strategic aims relate clearly to the college's mission. External consultants have assessed each aspect of the college's expenditure and have made comparisons with similar colleges. The information provided by consultants has assisted managers in preparing the strategic plan. Operating plans provide well-defined statements of actions required to meet strategic aims, and targets for their achievement. Staff have a thorough understanding of the performance indicators used by the college and effectively contribute to identifying targets for improving retention and students' achievements. Inspectors agreed with the finding in the self-assessment report that the monitoring of operational plans is a significant strength. Responsibilities and dates for the achievement of planned actions are clearly identified. Progress in implementing these plans is reported termly. The college has exceeded its growth targets over the last three years.

66 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that the quality of management information is very good. A college-wide

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administrative network provides staff with accurate, accessible and reliable management information. Comprehensive reports on recruitment, attendance, retention and achievements are issued regularly to curriculum managers. The information in these reports is used effectively by tutors to monitor the progress of individual students. The management information needs of staff are effectively monitored and addressed through the information strategy group. The college is taking full precautions to ensure its systems are year 2000 compliant.

67 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. The college prepares timely monthly management accounts which are considered by the college management team. These include a cashflow forecast, but the forecast is not beyond the year end. Management accounts for the subsidiary company and comprehensive reports on the major capital project have not been produced. The college's self-assessment report recognises difficulties in providing comprehensive and timely reports to budget holders. The college has taken steps to address these difficulties and plans to introduce a new financial management system this year. Timely audited final funding unit claims have been submitted to the FEFC.

Conclusions

68 The college produced its second self-assessment report in 1998. The self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. The self-assessment report was detailed and thorough in its identification of the college's strengths and weaknesses. For the inspection, the college provided useful information about the progress that had been made in implementing action plans. The data on students' achievements were robust and provided inspectors with a sound statistical base on which to base their judgements. Inspectors agreed with most of the

judgements in the self-assessment report.

They considered that some strengths had been understated and they found a few weaknesses which the college had not identified. The inspection team agreed with most of the grades but considered that one curriculum area and one cross-college area had been given too low a grade and that the grade awarded to another cross-college area was too high.

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

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (November 1998)

| <i>Age</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------|----------|
| Under 16 | 0 |
| 16-18 years | 84 |
| 19-24 years | 5 |
| 25+ years | 11 |
| Not known | 0 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1998)

| <i>Level of study</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Foundation | 2 |
| Intermediate | 21 |
| Advanced | 76 |
| Higher education | 0 |
| Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2) | 1 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: college data

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

| <i>Programme area</i> | <i>Full time</i> | <i>Part time</i> | <i>Total provision %</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Science | 596 | 164 | 34 |
| Engineering | 13 | 31 | 2 |
| Business | 307 | 72 | 17 |
| Hotel and catering | 21 | 9 | 1 |
| Health and community care | 55 | 0 | 2 |
| Art and design | 193 | 55 | 11 |
| Humanities | 630 | 103 | 32 |
| Basic education | 18 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 1,833 | 434 | 100 |

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 39% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 1998)

| | <i>Perm- anent</i> | <i>Fixed term</i> | <i>Casual</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Direct learning contact | 86 | 9 | 4 | 99 |
| Supporting direct learning contact | 27 | 2 | 1 | 30 |
| Other support | 31 | 2 | 10 | 43 |
| Total | 144 | 13 | 15 | 172 |

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

| | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Income* | £6,802,000 | £6,835,000 | £6,421,000 |
| Average level of funding (ALF) | | | |
| Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998 | £19.32 | £18.19 | £18.64 |
| Payroll as a proportion of income | 75% | 70% | 68% |
| Achievement of funding target | 110% | 113% | 104% |
| Diversity of income | 7% | 6% | 6% |
| Operating surplus | £11,000 | £94,000 | £256,000 |

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)

*gross income including section 6(5) funding

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 | 160 | 825 | 859 | 25 | 42 | 14 |
| | Retention (%) | 68 | 56 | 65 | 48 | 45 | 50 |
| | Achievement (%) | 98 | 95 | 95 | 67 | 100 | 57 |
| 2 | Expected completions | 1,402 | 1,622 | 1,540 | 72 | 73 | 70 |
| | Retention (%) | 75 | 80 | 80 | 47 | 68 | 71 |
| | Achievement (%) | 89* | 89* | 47** | 76* | 80* | 68** |
| 3 | Expected completions | – | 2,533 | 2,791 | – | 237 | 252 |
| | Retention (%) | – | 80 | 71 | – | 55 | 47 |
| | Achievement (%) | 80 | 79 | 82 | 56 | 63 | 75 |
| 4 or 5 | Expected completions | – | 6 | 20 | – | 31 | 32 |
| | Retention (%) | – | 17 | 75 | – | 3 | 44 |
| | Achievement (%) | 40 | 0 | 13 | n/a | 0 | 29 |
| Short courses | Expected completions | 5 | 50 | 123 | 14 | 288 | 199 |
| | Retention (%) | 0 | 40 | 81 | 43 | 69 | 52 |
| | Achievement (%) | n/a | 90 | 95 | 100 | 93 | 95 |
| Unknown/unclassified | Expected completions | 122 | 118 | 1,507 | 5 | 16 | 29 |
| | Retention (%) | 68 | 66 | 92 | 0 | 6 | 83 |
| | Achievement (%) | 71 | 82 | 73 | n/a | 100 | 100 |

Source: ISR

–ISR data not collected

*GCSE grades A to G

**GCSE grades A to C

n/a not applicable

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