

# Wyke Sixth Form College

REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
**1999-00**

THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL

***THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL***

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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 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

## Wyke Sixth Form College *Yorkshire and Humberside Region*

### Inspected January 2000

Wyke Sixth Form College was established in 1988 on the western edge of Hull. It is one of two sixth form colleges in the city, which also has a large general further education college. Since the last inspection, the college has produced two self-assessment reports. The process is consultative, and involves both teaching and support staff. The latest report is succinct and provided a useful basis for undertaking the inspection. Inspectors agreed with all of the curriculum grades except one, which insufficiently recognised some weaknesses in students' achievements. They awarded lower grades than those proposed by the college for support for students, general resources and governance. In particular, the self-assessment of governance was insufficiently rigorous and failed to identify a number of significant weaknesses.

The college offers courses in eight of the 10 programme areas funded by the FEFC, although provision in engineering and basic education is small. Inspectors awarded four grades in three programme areas. Of the lessons observed, 54% were judged to be good or outstanding, which is a considerably lower proportion than the national average of 71% for sixth form colleges in 1998-99. In the areas inspected, students' achievements are outstanding in music,

photography and textiles; they are good in GCE A level English literature, German and Spanish. Support for full-time students is wide-ranging; their academic progress is regularly reviewed. Teaching accommodation is furnished to a good standard. A significant investment has been made upgrading IT facilities. Surveys of students' opinions are appropriately used to assess the quality of their experience at the college. Effective financial monitoring is undertaken by the governors' financial and general purposes committee. The management style is supportive and consultative; internal communication is effective. The college should improve: some unsatisfactory levels of retention and achievement; the standard of teaching in some curriculum areas; aspects of support for students; the use of accommodation; the rigour of the course review process; quality assurance arrangements; and the effectiveness of target-setting. In addition, governors should give greater attention to curriculum and quality issues, ensure that the audit committee undertakes all of its required activities, and improve attendance at corporation meetings. An appraisal scheme should be introduced for teaching staff.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science	3	Support for students	2
Visual and performing arts	2	General resources	2
English and modern foreign languages	3	Quality assurance	3
Humanities	3	Governance	4
		Management	2

# Context

## The College and its Mission

1 Wyke Sixth Form College is situated on the western edge of the city of Kingston-upon-Hull, which was established as a unitary authority in 1997. The college was opened in 1988 and serves a wide area both within and beyond Hull. It is one of two sixth form colleges in the city, which also has a large general further education college. A small general further education college and an agricultural college are located within Hull's travel-to-work area. In addition, a large number of private training providers operate in the locality. There are fourteen 11 to 16 schools and two 11 to 18 schools in Hull; three private schools with sixth form provision are also located in the city. The college has seven 11 to 16 partner schools on the west side of Hull, and draws significant numbers of students from the two 11 to 18 schools and from the surrounding area of east Yorkshire.

2 The population of the western area of Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire served by the college is approximately 150,000. About 20% of the adult population in Hull receives income support and the rate of unemployment is significantly above the national average. Unemployment within Kingston-upon-Hull is the highest within the Humber subregion. The city has the greatest proportion of persons under 25 claiming unemployment benefit in the subregion. The major sources of employment in the city are in public administration, education and health. In west Hull there is significant employment in manufacturing and in the retail sector. There has been a long-term decline in the number of jobs in fishing, food processing and skilled manufacturing. In 1998, the proportion of school-leavers in west Hull engaged in further education was just over 50%, more than twice the figure when the college was opened, but still significantly below the national average. In 1999, the proportion of school-leavers in Hull gaining grade C or above in five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects was 23%, well below the national average of 48%.

3 In October 1999, the college enrolled 934 full-time students and 462 part-time students. Full-time student numbers have remained static over the last five years; part-time numbers have increased. Curriculum provision includes 39 general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses, 17 GCE advanced supplementary (AS) courses, 23 GCSE subjects, 14 general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) and national diploma programmes. Of the full-time students, 76% study at level 3, 23% at level 2, with the remainder following a foundation programme. The curriculum of the college is organised through five faculties: arts; business; core; humanities; and science. Support for students is organised through three teams of tutors, each led by a senior tutor. The senior managers are the principal, and four vice-principals responsible, respectively, for: student and staff support; resources and finance; organisation and communication; and curriculum and quality assurance. In October 1999, the college employed 52 full-time equivalent teachers and 36 full-time equivalent other staff.

4 The college's mission is 'to provide the best education for its students' by: providing extensive educational opportunities; ensuring quality within a centre of excellence; providing a supportive and caring environment; developing a European and international framework; being entrepreneurial and innovative in encouraging more people to pursue further education; and working with the business community and local providers of higher education. Since incorporation the college has widened its provision and recruited significant numbers of part-time, adult and higher education students. It is an associate college of both the University of Hull and the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside.

# Context

## The Inspection

5 The college was inspected during the week beginning 31 January 2000. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and information about the college held by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors used data on students' achievements drawn from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1997 and 1998. The college submitted its own data on students' achievements for 1999 which were checked by inspectors against primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. The data proved largely reliable when checked against these sources. The inspection was carried out by nine inspectors and an auditor for a total of 39 days. Inspectors observed 52 lessons, assessed students' work and examined college documentation. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff, students, parents, employers, and with representatives from the local education authority (LEA), partner schools, Humberside Careers and Guidance Service, and other colleges and community partners.

6 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the lessons inspected, 54% were good or outstanding and 4% were less than satisfactory compared with the national averages for 1998-99 of 65% and 6%, respectively. The corresponding national averages for sixth form colleges for 1998-99 were 71% and 3%, respectively.

### Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	3	16	12	0	0	31
GCSE	0	2	4	1	0	7
Vocational	1	4	3	0	0	8
Tutorials	0	2	3	1	0	6
Total (No.)	4	24	22	2	0	52
Total (%)	8	46	42	4	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99 (%)	20	45	29	6	0	100

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

# Context

7 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. The average level of attendance is below the national average of 83% for sixth form colleges. The average class size of 10.0 is below the sixth form college average of 12.8.

## Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Wyke Sixth Form College	10.0	80
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

## Science

### Grade 3

8 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering courses in biology, chemistry, physics, electronics, astronomy and science and technology in society. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified an additional weakness.

#### Key strengths

- the wide range of course provision
- effective course management
- good teaching
- the high quality of specialist resources

#### Weaknesses

- learning materials which do not meet the needs of all students
- unsatisfactory achievements on a number of courses
- a low retention rate on many courses
- insufficient targeting of additional support for students

9 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college offers a wide range of courses in science. The number of students taking science subjects at GCE A level has remained stable against a national trend of declining enrolments. A popular GCSE astronomy course has been established and further GCSEs are provided in biology, chemistry, physics and science. The college offers GCE AS courses in electronics together with science and technology in society; it also provides the facility for students enrolled on GCE A level courses to take a GCE AS as an alternative. There is an extensive franchise arrangement with Hull University enabling the college to offer a range of higher education courses in science.

10 The planning of courses is carried out efficiently and provision is regularly reviewed. The management of the curriculum area is effective and responsive, ensuring that there is close co-operation between subject specialists. Detailed programmes of work are supported by a wide range of study materials produced in-house. However, while these materials are of good quality, they do not cater for students of all abilities. In particular, they do not fully support the students who are finding the course difficult or those who would benefit from more complex and advanced tasks. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report. The assignments given to students are well selected. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the marking of students' work is thorough, accurately graded and often includes feedback to students that enables them to improve the standard of their work. Record-keeping is detailed; up-to-date records on students' progress are available for all subjects.

11 Most teaching is good. The planning of lessons, based on a proforma, is invariably thorough. It is particularly effective in practical lessons where careful planning ensures that all equipment and materials are readily available. Students' practical work clearly indicates an appreciation of scientific method and of safe laboratory practice. In many lessons, teachers used an appropriate variety of teaching methods and students maintained their concentration and made good progress. In a few lessons, the teacher's introduction was too prolonged and students' attention declined. Teachers made good use of a range of teaching aids including well-selected video extracts and information technology (IT). For example, in a physics lesson, a computer was used effectively to simulate the deflection of a particle beam. Students generally work steadily at their tasks and co-operate well in practical lessons. Teachers provide extra help to their students outside lessons on an informal basis.

# Curriculum Areas

However, inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the absence of a formal system, to target those students identified as needing additional support, is a weakness.

12 On a number of courses, pass rates in GCE A level science subjects are below the national benchmarks for sixth form colleges. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. For example in physics, the national pass rate in 1998 was 90%, compared with college figures of below 80% over the last three years. Similarly in biology, pass rates have been below national figures for the last three years. By contrast, chemistry results have shown a significant improvement and are now above national figures. On all GCE A level courses in 1999, the retention rate was below 70%. Pass rates on GCSE courses vary; they are poor in biology but good in chemistry. The attendance of students during the inspection was low at 76%.

13 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that science is well resourced. The teachers are well qualified and experienced. High-quality specialist accommodation and resources are well maintained and provide a pleasant working environment. Appropriately qualified technicians provide effective support.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE biology	2	Number of starters	34	35	37
		Retention (%)	73	86	78
		Achievement (%)	20	20	21
GCE AS science technology and society	3	Number of starters	14	13	10
		Retention (%)	78	85	100
		Achievement (%)	91	64	40
GCE A level physics	3	Number of starters	38	36	28
		Retention (%)	76	55	64
		Achievement (%)	59	76	77
GCE A level chemistry	3	Number of starters	46	52	41
		Retention (%)	52	61	54
		Achievement (%)	83	84	91
GCE A level biology	3	Number of starters	68	77	65
		Retention (%)	70	67	58
		Achievement (%)	81	80	81

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

# Curriculum Areas

## Visual and Performing Arts

### Grade 2

**14 Inspectors observed 11 lessons across a range of courses in art, design, music and performing arts. They agreed broadly with the college self-assessment report but considered that some strengths were overstated and that the report failed to recognise some weaknesses in students' achievements.**

#### Key strengths

- a broad range of provision
- good, stimulating teaching
- effective links with community and professional organisations
- outstanding achievements in music, photography and textiles

#### Weaknesses

- some retention and pass rates below national averages
- insufficient resources in some course areas

15 Since the last inspection, the college has extended the range of courses it offers in the arts. These include: first and national diplomas in performing arts; the diploma in foundation studies; and GNVQ programmes in art and design. An extensive range of GCE A/AS level courses includes music, dance, theatre, and art and design specialisms. There are good opportunities for progression. Regular department and faculty meetings take place and a monthly newsletter is produced for all staff. Some effective links have been formed between arts subjects. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that arts events, organised in conjunction with community organisations, are a strength. For example, the Leap Dance Company, comprising former dance students of the college, has worked constructively with the

college and pupils from local primary and secondary schools. Good links have also been developed with other professional theatre companies. College productions and music events are well attended and raise the profile of the arts at the college.

16 Nine of the 11 lessons observed were good or outstanding. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Attendance at 82% was good. Teachers of theatre studies used a broad range of methods. For example, in one lesson students prepared an unseen extract of text for performance. One group played the piece as a drama, another as comedy. A useful discussion followed with the teacher directing questions effectively across the whole group. In music, design and performance the opportunities for live and realistic work experiences are good. In GNVQ art and design there are too few opportunities for students to fully explore different media and develop integrated project work. In general, schemes of work are closely followed, but some lesson plans are insufficiently detailed which led to some unstructured learning activities. Students' work is assessed regularly and teachers provide good written and verbal feedback. In the diploma in foundation studies course, the project briefs were well designed to allow students to develop independent critical skills.

17 Students benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities. There are, for example, many opportunities to study for additional acting awards and participate in the orchestra and chamber choir. In one lunchtime rehearsal, the choir sang music ranging from Tallis to jazz rhythms. The standard of performance was good; the style of the music was clearly presented and showed good tonality. Examination achievements are outstanding in music, photography and textiles. In these GCE A level subjects, the retention rate has also been good. Pass rates have been well above the benchmark for sixth form colleges over the last three years. The self-assessment report failed to

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recognise those achievements which do not meet national standards. Pass rates in GNVQ advanced art and design, for example, have been below national levels for the past three years. Pass rates in GCE A level dance and the diploma in foundation studies are also unsatisfactory. In 1999, the national diploma course in performing arts had a poor retention rate of 55%. In order to improve this rate, the college has taken more care in recruitment, introduced a certificate level course, and assignments which cater for a wider range of abilities. As a result, retention for the current cohort of students on the national diploma has improved.

18 A wide range of specialist accommodation is used appropriately. The self-assessment report recognises the shortage of suitable rehearsal and storage areas for music, dance and performance courses. In some practical areas the opportunities for large-scale work and three-dimensional design projects are adversely affected by resource limitations. The impact of these weaknesses on the quality of teaching and learning was not identified in the self-assessment report.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in visual and performing arts, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE photography	2	Number of starters	23	24	15
		Retention (%)	52	83	87
		Achievement (%)	75	85	82
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	Number of starters	10	10	10
		Retention (%)	80	100	70
		Achievement (%)	75	80	57
GCE A level art and fine arts	3	Number of starters	48	57	51
		Retention (%)	44	63	83
		Achievement (%)	95	81	87
GCE A level music	3	Number of starters	10	12	18
		Retention (%)	100	92	83
		Achievement (%)	90	91	100
National diploma performing arts	3	Number of starters	20	13	20
		Retention (%)	80	69	55
		Achievement (%)	88	66	91
Diploma in foundation studies	3	Number of starters	20	14	13
		Retention (%)	95	93	92
		Achievement (%)	100	77	75

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

# Curriculum Areas

## English and Modern Foreign Languages

### Grade 3

**19 Inspectors observed 13 lessons in English and modern foreign languages covering GCSE, GCE A level, GNVQ and language support tutorials. They found additional strengths and weaknesses but agreed with the overall conclusions of the self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- careful monitoring of students' progress
- a wide range of complementary enrichment activities
- good achievements in GCE A level English literature, German and Spanish
- imaginative coursework in English

#### Weaknesses

- achievements in GCSE and GCE A level English language below national averages
- a poor retention rate on a number of courses
- some insufficiently demanding learning activities

20 The college offers an appropriate range of intermediate and advanced level courses in English and modern foreign languages. For example, four foreign languages are offered at both GCSE and GCE A level and GCE A level English language and literature are offered separately and in a combined course. Students have the opportunity to study a language as a GNVQ unit in addition to their main course. Specialist teachers also provide a workshop which offers students help with the development of their communication skills. Teachers of English meet weekly. Agendas are set in advance and meetings are supplemented by a briefing sheet for staff who are unable to attend. At the time of the inspection, there was no

permanent head of modern foreign languages. This responsibility was shared between the head of faculty and a full-time teacher. Formal team meetings are held less regularly than for English staff.

21 As the self-assessment report identifies, activities which complement the curriculum are wide-ranging. For example, English students benefit from involvement in a poetry group which contributes to the annual Hull Literature Festival. Students are supported with bursaries to attend study weeks on Shakespeare and Chaucer and they contribute to debates held on local radio. Most modern foreign languages students take the opportunity to participate in work experience visits abroad. Exchanges are organised with colleges and schools in Germany, Belgium, Spain and Italy.

22 Most teaching is good or satisfactory. However, the self-assessment report makes no reference to the quality of teaching. In successful modern foreign languages lessons, teachers use the target language in a lively and colloquial manner that sustains the interest of students. In English lessons, discussion of literary texts led students to formulate judgements that showed insight. For example, a discussion about the nature of poetry and poetic form was prompted by a taped announcement which the students later discovered was a poem. This approach allowed an abstract concept to be grasped easily and discussed at a sophisticated level. Less successful lessons relied too heavily on the prolonged reading of texts in class or were dominated by the teacher. In these lessons, students contributed little and did not have the opportunity to develop their analytical or linguistic skills.

23 Homework and coursework are set regularly and marked thoroughly. Students receive helpful feedback and are aware of how they are progressing on the course. There are some examples of imaginative coursework and projects in English, a strength identified in the

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self-assessment report. GCSE pass rates are unsatisfactory in most subjects. The pass rate in GCSE English language has declined significantly since 1997. Achievements in GCE A level English language are significantly below national benchmarks for sixth form colleges. The retention rate is poor on a number of courses; it was only 50% for the GCE A level French course in 1999. The self-assessment report did not sufficiently evaluate weaknesses in student achievement and retention rates. In contrast, pass rates in GCE A level German, Spanish and English literature are good.

24 As the self-assessment report identifies, the modern foreign languages department has a dedicated and well-equipped resources room. It includes six modern computers, which are linked to the Internet, a language laboratory and satellite television. Students benefit from the contribution of foreign language assistants in French, German and Spanish.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in English and modern foreign languages, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE English literature	2	Number of starters	16	14	155
		Retention (%)	62	71	73
		Achievement (%)	70	60	42
GCSE English language	2	Number of starters	170	156	161
		Retention (%)	68	75	73
		Achievement (%)	58	39	38
GCSE Spanish	2	Number of starters	38	38	55
		Retention (%)	71	68	65
		Achievement (%)	44	58	44
GCE A level English language	3	Number of starters	143	167	129
		Retention (%)	78	71	69
		Achievement (%)	83	77	57
GCE A level English literature	3	Number of starters	52	48	50
		Retention (%)	63	81	68
		Achievement (%)	97	97	91
GCE A level French	3	Number of starters	21	32	30
		Retention (%)	57	66	50
		Achievement (%)	100	71	93
GCE A level German	3	Number of starters	16	18	17
		Retention (%)	56	61	75
		Achievement (%)	100	82	92

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

# Curriculum Areas

## Humanities

### Grade 3

**25 The inspection principally covered courses in history, geography, religious studies and philosophy. Eleven lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with the conclusions in the self-assessment report but identified an additional weakness.**

#### Key strengths

- well-planned lessons
- high levels of support for students
- good pass rates in GCSE history

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient learning opportunities for students in some lessons
- some unsatisfactory retention rates
- significantly declining pass rates in GCE A level geography and philosophy

26 The largest recruiting GCE A level subjects in humanities are history and geography. However, over the last three years enrolments have declined. Courses in religious studies and philosophy attract relatively small numbers of students. A GCE AS geology course and GCSE history are also offered. Courses are competently planned and organised with at least two teachers contributing to most courses. Schemes of work rigidly follow the examination syllabus and assignments focus almost exclusively on examination questions. Staff meet regularly in departmental and faculty groups, however, there is no coherent strategy to improve some unsatisfactory levels of retention and achievement in humanities. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report.

27 The standard of teaching is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good. The best teaching challenged students to develop the skills of independent learning, a strength

recognised in the self-assessment report. For example, in a geography lesson, students were provided with the opportunity to access the Internet. They were able to obtain a range of information about multi-national companies in order to assess their economic significance in the countries where their plants are located. In a GCSE history lesson, a video, photographs and other stimulating material helped students to analyse political strategies in Stalinist Russia. In other lessons, students were given fewer opportunities to make a contribution. Teachers often placed too much emphasis on dictation and note-taking, and too little on discussion and evaluation. Although students diligently take notes in lessons, the results are not always accurate, and were seldom checked by staff. Teachers sometimes failed to ensure at the end of the lesson that students had understood the key points.

28 Achievements in a number of the humanities subjects are unsatisfactory. In GCE A level geography and philosophy, pass rates have shown a significant three-year decline. Data produced by the college also demonstrate that students are achieving grades consistently below those predicted by their GCSE results. Pass rates in history are improving; they are good on the GCSE course. Retention rates in GCE A level geography and philosophy are consistently below national benchmarks for sixth form colleges. They were particularly poor in 1997 and 1998. Retention rates in history have recently declined. These weaknesses were only partially recognised in the self-assessment report. Students' academic programmes are reviewed regularly. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment judgement that teachers make constructive comments on written work. Grammatical as well as factual errors are corrected and clear guidance is given about how work can be improved. Students are also encouraged to attend additional workshops to improve the standard of their work in areas which they find difficult.

# Curriculum Areas

29 Teachers are well qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach. As noted in the self-assessment report, staff are now broadening their skills to teach on a wider range of courses both inside and outside the faculty. Students have textbooks of good quality and ready access to computers. Classroom accommodation is sometimes too small for the large groups of students recruited to the first year of some GCE A level courses which results in some cramped working conditions.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE history	2	Number of starters	18	15	15
		Retention (%)	56	80	60
		Achievement (%)	50	50	56
GCE A level geography	3	Number of starters	64	46	45
		Retention (%)	52	54	71
		Achievement (%)	97	80	66
GCE A level history	3	Number of starters	63	43	45
		Retention (%)	67	74	69
		Achievement (%)	74	75	84
GCE A level philosophy	3	Number of starters	12	9	14
		Retention (%)	50	33	64
		Achievement (%)	83	66	66

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



# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 2

**30 Inspectors observed six tutorials. They agreed with the strengths identified by the college but found some additional weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- the close liaison with partner schools
- impartial guidance to prospective students
- efficiently managed enrolment and induction processes
- high-quality careers advice and guidance
- regular reviews of students' progress
- wide-ranging support for full-time students

#### Weaknesses

- underdeveloped support for part-time evening students
- weaknesses in aspects of student support

31 The college has well-developed arrangements to support its students. Procedures are clearly documented and comprehensive guidance notes are provided for tutors. Communication between staff and students is good. Students speak highly of the support they receive. Prospectuses and information leaflets are attractive and informative and provision at the college is advertised widely. Each year three open evenings and four open days on a Saturday are well attended and efficiently managed. Part-time evening students comment favourably about the support which they receive. Nevertheless, support for these students is not well developed. A designated co-ordinator provides support when required but few of the college's facilities are open during the evenings and there is no formal entitlement to a periodic review of progress. This weakness was not identified by the college.

32 Liaison with the seven partner schools in west Hull is strong. Senior college staff maintain regular contact. They attend parent evenings at the schools, and make presentations to school year groups. Pupils visit the college and undertake, for example, subject-based practical activities. Students are interviewed in their schools. Staff at the partner schools speak positively of these arrangements. The college has found it difficult to establish similar liaison arrangements with schools outside the local authority area. Staff are available to offer guidance in the college during the period when schools' examination results arrive. Inspectors agreed that the college provides impartial advice to students before enrolment. The college keeps in touch with prospective students by, for example, sending them good luck cards before their examinations and offering opportunities to them to meet tutors. Students confirm that enrolment procedures are efficiently organised. A short induction programme helps to familiarise students with the college and its courses.

33 Daily tutorials help to maintain regular contact between tutors and students. A longer, weekly tutorial offers a pastoral programme which includes an appropriate range of topics, for example careers education and guidance, health education and study skills. The programme is run by senior managers. Tutors are provided with useful learning materials to help them with their teaching. Inspectors judged that the quality of the provision in the tutorials was satisfactory, but often failed to make appropriate demands on students. The attendance and progress of students is closely monitored. Tutors are provided with frequent and regular reports from teachers and take action where appropriate. Subject teachers write termly reports about each student. They comment on general progress, attendance and punctuality and, for GCE A level students, compare progress against grades predicted for GCE A level that have been calculated from

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GCSE results. Tutors produce reports which summarise overall progress. Students appreciate being able to record their own perceptions about their progress. Parents are informed of progress at three consultation evenings. However, those reports read by inspectors, did not pay sufficient attention to giving an order of priority to the targets that could help students to improve. Also the reports did not review progress against actions that had previously been agreed between students and their teachers and tutors.

34 A recent project analysed factors which help to identify students who are at risk of leaving the college early. Many of its recommendations have been implemented. For example, a foundation course has been introduced, and increased attention has been given to students who apply late or change their course. Where possible, students who leave the college prematurely are interviewed. Subject retention rates, which improved two years ago, did not improve last year and remain at a low level. However, fewer first-year advanced level students have left the college so far this year than at a similar stage in the last three years.

35 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that students benefit from extensive arrangements to support learning. Interviews and screening tests in numeracy and literacy help to identify full-time students who require support. Foundation course students and those whose first language is not English, receive appropriately intensive support. Others join workshops which contain suitable learning materials. Individual teachers are informed about the activities undertaken by many of these students. However, college records do not give a clear view of the uptake or of the effectiveness of the provision. Students with mobility or other disabilities are provided with appropriate support. A confidential counselling service is well used. Financial assistance is available to help students where particular cases of hardship are identified.

36 Careers guidance, provided in partnership with the Humberside Careers and Guidance Service, is good. There is an extensive range of activities. Careers officers attend many of the college's activities and offer individual guidance by appointment. A successful annual careers convention, held at the college, is attended by a wide range of companies and other institutions. Resources to support the service are good. There is a wide-ranging enrichment programme which includes work placement, and social and sporting activities.

## General Resources

### *Grade 2*

**37 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report but they identified some additional weaknesses.**

#### **Key strengths**

- good-quality general teaching accommodation
- a comprehensive maintenance programme
- good-quality IT facilities
- convenient access for students with restricted mobility
- a modern, well-equipped theatre

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient space in some classrooms
- low utilisation of some accommodation
- sports facilities of poor quality

38 The college is situated on an attractive single site located in a residential area. The main teaching block which was built in the 1950s as a secondary school was remodelled and three new wings were added in 1988. The college also uses 13 demountable classrooms which offer a comfortable working environment. Adjoining playing fields are shared with an

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adjacent school. There are sufficient car parking facilities. The campus provides a safe and secure environment.

39 Accommodation is furnished to a good standard and is generally clean and tidy. Many corridors and classrooms contain attractive displays of students' work. Most classrooms are equipped with overhead projection equipment. Audiovisual equipment is managed centrally to maximise its availability. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that wheelchair users have good access to all parts of the college.

There is a comprehensive planned maintenance programme which is updated annually. A staff common room is well used. General teaching rooms are managed centrally to help ensure efficient usage. Some specialist teaching areas and the lecture theatre have low utilisation; others house groups that are too large for the size of the room. The accommodation strategy, although not the self-assessment report, recognises these weaknesses.

40 The library has a broad range of stock items including CD-ROMs, audio and videotapes. It is managed by a qualified librarian supported by a part-time assistant. Use of the library is carefully monitored. The library currently has 12,000 books. An adjoining resource centre is well used. It contains 21 computers that provide access to the Internet and a range of CD-ROMs. In some curriculum areas, for example the arts, the bookstock is not adequate to meet the needs of all students. The range of periodicals is limited. Overall expenditure, including the allocation for departmental textbooks and other learning materials is good, averaging close to £25 for each full-time equivalent student.

41 The college has recently made a significant investment in IT facilities. The ratio of full-time students to computers is good at approximately 6:1. There are 154 computers for students' use, all of which are modern. A wide range of software is available and all computers are

networked. Several IT rooms, in addition to the resource centre, provide 'drop-in' facilities for students. At busy times, there is insufficient access to IT facilities, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. An IT steering group, chaired by the principal, is responsible for an effective and comprehensive IT development plan in which computers are replaced every four years and network servers every three years. A separate user group discusses operational matters and its views are reported to the steering group.

42 The college has a good-quality theatre, which is used by a variety of student groups and stages regular public performances. This valuable resource was appropriately identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. The college operates its own refectory which offers good value and choice to students. It is open for most of the day but at peak times is overcrowded. There is an adjacent students' common room. There are insufficient sports facilities at the college. A gymnasium is used by sports and drama students but is of a poor standard; some students complain that it is often dirty. The college uses a range of outside facilities for some of its sports activities.

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## Quality Assurance

### Grade 3

**43 Inspectors agreed with most of the college's judgements about quality assurance, but felt that some strengths had been overstated. Additional strengths and weaknesses were identified.**

#### Key strengths

- the rigorous monitoring of students' opinions
- good opportunities for individual staff development
- a well-regarded appraisal system for support staff

#### Weaknesses

- a low level of commitment to quality assurance
- insufficiently comprehensive arrangements for quality assurance
- a lack of rigour in the course review process
- the absence of an appraisal system for teaching staff

44 The strategic plan and mission statement both contain a commitment to quality assurance. A vice-principal has overall responsibility for quality assurance and is assisted by a senior tutor. A quality assurance working group is well established with a membership drawn from teaching and support staff. It does not, however, systematically monitor performance. Many staff in the college do not clearly understand its role or recognise it as an effective body. This uncertainty, as the self-assessment report recognises, contributes to a low level of commitment to, and ownership of, quality assurance processes from the staff. The report also acknowledges that quality assurance procedures are not sufficiently comprehensive.

Inspectors judged that good progress had been made in the development of standards of performance in some support services, for example the estates function. Other services, for example the library and evening class provision, have yet to develop such standards. A quality assurance manual which is intended to consolidate procedures and documentation, has only been partially completed.

45 A curriculum review process provides judgements which are used in the curriculum sections of the self-assessment report. The better reviews take into account results of student surveys, and retention and achievement rates from the previous year, and assess progress against an action plan. However, the guidelines for completing reviews are inadequate. Few reviews contain sufficiently evaluative comments on teaching and learning or on students' achievements. These weaknesses were not recognised in the self-assessment report. Performance data are included, benchmarked to college averages, and targets are set for rates of retention and achievement. The only formal mechanisms for reviewing part-time evening provision is a survey of learners' opinions. The college curriculum management group receives reports on progress and other issues. There is a rigorous procedure for the validation of new courses.

46 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the programme of student surveys is well planned. The college uses the surveys in order to monitor the quality of the student experience. There are three centrally administered questionnaires each year. Reports on the findings are submitted to the college management team and to the quality assurance working group; individual sections are distributed to relevant departments. The reports include few recommendations for action, but some draw useful comparisons with previous years. In addition, tutors discuss the key points arising from subject surveys with

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students in tutorials. An additional survey in 1999 contributed to the development of plans for the new in-house catering service.

47 Good opportunities for professional development are available to all staff, including part-time teachers. This strength was noted in the self-assessment report. Staff evaluate training both immediately after the event and six months later, and they disseminate relevant information to colleagues. The regional sixth form colleges' network provides further opportunities for professional development. New staff are provided with a well-structured induction programme and evening class teachers are invited to a meeting at the start of each academic year. The staff handbook does not include a section on quality assurance. The college has held the Investor in People award since 1998. A well-structured annual appraisal system for support staff was developed in 1998, which has been well received. Support staff were provided with appropriate training prior to its introduction. No appraisal system exists for teaching staff. A system, planned for September 1999, has not yet been introduced.

48 Progress has been made in establishing a system of lesson observation. Observers are trained and standardisation exercises on grading are carried out. Prompt feedback is given both verbally and in writing, which most teachers regard as positive and helpful. The present procedure does not include any formal action to be taken if a low grade is awarded and there is no appeals procedure. The process has not produced significant improvements in standards of teaching and learning. The proportion of good or outstanding grades awarded by inspectors was significantly lower than the proportion awarded by the college. Staff throughout the college are involved in the self-assessment process. However, many of the weaknesses identified in the current report were also identified in the previous year's document and have not been addressed. The self-assessment reports are appropriately validated by the quality assurance working group which included a governor representative.

## Governance

### *Grade 4*

**49 The self-assessment of governance was insufficiently rigorous. Inspectors and auditors considered that the self-assessment report failed to identify a number of significant weaknesses and that the strengths were overstated.**

#### Key strengths

- effective financial monitoring by the finance and general purposes committee
- the productive working relationship of governors and senior managers

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient governor training
- the low attendance at corporation meetings
- insufficient attention to curriculum and quality issues
- shortcomings in the operation of the search committee
- the failure of the audit committee to discharge its functions adequately

50 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is weak. The corporation does not conduct all of its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also does not substantially fulfil its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

51 The corporation has a determined membership of 17. There are two vacancies for a community and parent governor which are due to be filled at the next corporation meeting. Attendance at corporation meetings is unsatisfactory at 68%. This weakness in attendance was noted in the self-assessment report. Targets for attendance have not been set and action was not taken to deal with the poor attendance of one governor. This approach does

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not comply with the corporation's attendance policy. A number of new governor appointments were made in the autumn of 1999. However, the search committee did not meet formally to consider and recommend these appointments to the corporation.

52 In order to address a weakness identified in the self-assessment report, the corporation has recently introduced an improved induction programme for new governors which is tailored to their needs. However, there is no systematic identification of governors' on-going training needs. The training which governors receive consists of briefings by managers before termly corporation meetings; these are occasionally supplemented by briefings during meetings. In general, however, these briefings have not systematically kept governors up to date about key national issues affecting both the college and their responsibilities as governors. The corporation does not adequately oversee the appraisal and professional development of senior postholders. Although a survey of members' views was carried out in October 1998 for use in the self-assessment report, the corporation has not developed a systematic framework within which it can evaluate its own effectiveness.

53 The role of clerk rotates on a biennial basis between the three eligible vice-principals. Although the role of clerk does have a separate job description, it does not contain an assessment of the time required to fulfil these duties and no formal appraisal of the clerk has been undertaken. Corporation and committee agendas and supporting papers are usually sent out in good time in advance of meetings but the quality of the minutes is often unsatisfactory. Although the chair and vice-chair have been in post since 1993, the corporation has not formally considered their reappointment. The corporation has a code of conduct which refers to the Nolan principles but it has not been extended to incorporate all the recommendations on openness. The

corporation has recently approved a 'whistleblowing' policy and has drafted standing orders for approval at the next corporation meeting. The corporation has not achieved its agreed deadline for updating its register of interests, which includes senior postholders and one manager who undertakes significant contract responsibilities.

54 The terms of reference for the search committee and its procedures for appointment of governors require updating, for example to consider criteria for the reappointment of governors to second and subsequent terms. The finance and general purposes committee meets frequently and effectively monitors detailed management accounts at each of its meetings. However, financial reports are only presented to the full corporation annually. The audit committee has not considered Council Circular 98/15, *Audit Code of Practice*. As a consequence it has not undertaken all of its required activities. For example, it has failed to produce an annual report to advise the corporation formally on the effectiveness of the college's system of internal controls. Furthermore, it did not consider the 1998-99 annual internal audit report. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. The personnel committee has been active in recommending a range of appropriate policies to the corporation for approval, for example, on equal opportunities in employment and the complaints procedure.

55 Governors' attention to quality assurance and standards is insufficiently rigorous and not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. They have not, for example, considered the college's performance against the achievement and retention targets set for 1998-99. The review of examination results does not include value-added analysis or comparisons with other sixth form colleges. Governors pay insufficient attention to the college's self-assessment report before approving it. The corporation has sought to address these weaknesses by establishing a

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curriculum and quality committee, which had met once by the time of the inspection. The corporation last reviewed the college's mission and strategic direction in July 1997; it approves a strategic plan every year. The achievement of the objectives of the previous plan is not properly reviewed as part of this process.

56 Governors and senior managers work well together. The vice-principals frequently attend committee meetings and present reports about relevant aspects of the college's work. Staff consider that governors are supportive of their work; some governors take a keen interest in particular areas, and attend events such as concerts and open days. However, as the self-assessment report acknowledges, there are insufficient strategies for ensuring that governors have first-hand knowledge of areas of the college's work.

## Management

### *Grade 2*

**57 Inspectors agreed with the most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, although they found some additional weaknesses.**

#### **Key strengths**

- effective structures for teamwork
- a broad range of provision
- responsiveness to the local community
- useful and reliable management information
- effective internal communications
- a consultative and supportive management style
- the promotion of equality of opportunity

#### **Weaknesses**

- aspects of strategic and operational planning
- poor development plans at faculty and subject level
- ineffective target-setting
- slow progress in addressing some weaknesses from the previous inspection

58 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college has a clear management structure and good lines of communication. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There is a well-established pattern of meetings which promotes effective teamwork and decision-making. For example, strategic planning takes place according to a structured calendar of meetings involving teams of staff at all levels. The curriculum management group and college management team have clear terms of reference which ensure representation by a wide cross-section of appropriate staff. The widespread consultation, which is a feature of the college's management, has resulted in a sense of shared values and aims amongst staff who consider that their views are taken into account by senior managers. Communications throughout the college are good. For example, the principal holds full staff meetings twice a term and weekly staff briefings which are accompanied by a newsletter for those who are unable to attend. Part-time evening teachers are kept well informed by a separate newsletter.

59 The 1999 to 2002 strategic plan contains a set of aims and corporate objectives which were used in formulating the college's current annual operating plan. The aims and objectives are insufficiently linked, and not all the aims are translated into action points, with the result that it is difficult to monitor their implementation. Improvements have been made to the 2000 to 2003 strategic plan which was completed recently. The operating plan is appropriately

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detailed, cross-referenced to the corporate objectives and reviewed twice a year; it is a useful management tool. Faculty and department development plans are not linked to the college's objectives, and are insufficiently detailed. Few include an action plan to enable progress to be monitored. The college benefits from useful and reliable management information. This information includes a range of reports that have been improved by effective discussion between the users and providers of the information. There is, however, insufficient use of national benchmarking data by curriculum managers when they are setting targets for improvement. The establishment of college targets for retention and achievements in 1999 was insufficiently rigorous, and none of the targets was met.

60 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college follows sound policies and practices on equal opportunities. Policies are widely advertised in staff and student handbooks and in the college charter. Personnel policies give appropriate emphasis to equality of opportunity. A survey of subject departments has been carried out and the results have been used to spread good practice in promoting equal opportunities through curriculum content and delivery.

61 As the self-assessment report indicates, the college is outward looking and responsive. It plays an active part in initiatives across the city to widen participation in further education and works in collaboration with the LEA, other schools and colleges. It liaises with community groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and shapes courses to their needs. The college company, Wyke International Ltd, has provided training for 17 local companies. The college has recruited a small number of students from overseas, and runs a summer school for Bulgarian students. In recognition of the strong European dimension to its work the college has twice gained a European curriculum award.

62 In line with its mission, the college has developed an extensive curriculum. It ranges from an entry level programme to post GCE A level courses in art, science and business. The college teaches the first year of a four-year science degree course franchised from the University of Hull, and an access to higher education course in humanities. The range of GCE A level, GCSE and GNVQ programmes is broad, and includes some less common subjects such as astronomy, and science for public understanding. Forty-five evening class programmes are currently offered for adults.

63 The college has made slow progress in addressing some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. These include inconsistent implementation of quality assurance processes, low retention rates, and inadequate department plans. The college has taken specific actions to address the low rates of student retention, but these have yet to prove effective.

64 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. The vice-principal (finance and resources) is suitably qualified and experienced in his role. The college has significant cash and income and expenditure reserves. Detailed monthly management accounts are issued to an agreed timetable and regularly reported to both the senior management team and the finance and general purposes committee, but not the corporation. The college has yet to set and monitor key strategic financial performance indicators in the management accounts. The college has experienced difficulties in achieving the deadlines set for submission of student data returns to the FEFC. In addition, auditors have expressed some concerns about the student numbers system. Budget planning and monitoring procedures operate effectively.



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## Conclusions

65 Since its previous inspection in 1997, the college has produced two self-assessment reports reviewing the academic years 1997-98 and 1998-99. The current report draws more extensively on the outcomes of classroom observations, although inspection identified a significantly smaller percentage of outstanding grades compared with the previous inspection. The report is succinct, analysing key strengths and weaknesses. Each section is supported by an action plan. The data on students' achievements were generally reliable and were used appropriately when judgements were being made on the curriculum. Inspectors agreed with all of the curriculum grades except one, which they judged did not sufficiently take account of some weaknesses in students' achievements. With the exception of management, all aspects of cross-college provision were awarded lower grades by inspectors compared with those proposed by the college. In particular, the self-assessment of governance was insufficiently rigorous and failed to identify a number of significant weaknesses.

66 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	2
16-18 years	68
19-24 years	6
25+ years	24
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation)	1
Level 2 (intermediate)	31
Level 3 (advanced)	62
Level 4/5 (higher)	0
Non-schedule 2	6
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	252	163	30
Engineering	11	3	1
Business	87	70	12
Hotel and catering	38	5	3
Health and community care	32	11	3
Art and design	200	41	17
Humanities	310	168	34
Basic education	4	1	0
Total	934	462	100

Source: college data

## Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 27% 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)

	Per- manent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	50	2	0	52
Supporting direct learning contact	8	0	0	8
Other support	28	0	0	28
Total	86	2	0	88

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

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£3,284,000	£3,157,000	£3,070,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£20.50	£18.17	£17.51
Payroll as a proportion of income	72%	75%	73%
Achievement of funding target	111%	93%	101%
Diversity of income	8%	11%	12%
Operating surplus	£123,000	-£188,000	-£38,000

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		
		1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
1	Number of starters	168	301	856	33	88	94
	Retention (%)	56	66	51	79	82	64
	Achievement (%)	62	28	16	74	44	61
2	Number of starters	955	787	1,035	161	147	132
	Retention (%)	66	71	72	49	61	59
	Achievement (%)	46	41	31	74	60	60
3	Number of starters	1,856	1,837	1,679	133	151	127
	Retention (%)	61	63	62	50	54	40
	Achievement (%)	81	82	75	72	64	49
4 or 5	Number of starters	0	0	0	56	0	0
	Retention (%)	0	0	0	77	0	0
	Achievement (%)	0	0	0	100	0	0
Short courses	Number of starters	223	13	158	9	38	68
	Retention (%)	84	92	87	44	84	81
	Achievement (%)	94	45	82	100	72	45
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	53	40	81	75	30	17
	Retention (%)	47	65	58	77	93	65
	Achievement (%)	95	0	33	100	61	73

Source: college

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