

Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education

REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1999-00

THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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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

Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

Inspected January 2000

Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education is a general further education college serving the population of Scarborough and its surrounding area. The self-assessment process was thorough and involved many of the staff. Inspectors agreed with the broad findings of the report but they identified additional weaknesses in many of the report's sections.

The college offers substantial provision in eight of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. Seven of these programme areas were inspected at the two main college sites, at a number of centres in the community and at the premises of three of the franchise partners. Aspects of the cross-college provision were also inspected. Provision in most of the curriculum areas inspected was satisfactory. In leisure and tourism it was good and in art and design it was outstanding. However, the profile of grades awarded to the lessons inspected was lower than both the national average and the profile at the previous inspection. Students receive impartial advice before entry, a well-structured induction to their

courses and comprehensive guidance on their opportunities for progression. Extensive welfare services help those in need. Buildings are well maintained and well equipped. There is a strong commitment to quality assurance and staff are provided with good staff development opportunities. Governors regularly review the college's financial position and have developed strong links with curriculum areas. Financial management is good. The college has improved its financial position significantly since the last inspection. Staff are purposefully involved in the strategic planning process and communication within the college is good. The college should address: weaknesses in teaching; low retention and achievement rates on some courses; the lack of specialist qualifications of staff in programme area 10; poor provision for students with severe cognitive impairment; shortcomings in tutorial provision; restricted access to some buildings; underuse of accommodation; the lack of rigour in some course evaluation and internal verification; low overall attendance by governors at corporation meetings; insufficient monitoring of progress towards strategic objectives; and the co-ordination of some curricular provision and initiatives.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Engineering	3	Support for students	2
Business	3	General resources	2
Leisure and tourism	2	Quality assurance	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3	Governance	3
Art and design	1	Management	3
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3		
Basic skills	3		

The College and its Mission

1 Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education is situated in Scarborough on the North Yorkshire coast. The borough of Scarborough covers an area of 316 square miles, including 45 miles of coastline and half of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. The college traces its origins to the Scarborough School of Art, which was founded in 1882. It became the Scarborough Technical and Evening Institute in 1938. In 1960, the college was located in new buildings on its present site and was given its present name in 1992. Provision in art and design is based at the Westwood centre about two miles away from the main site. The college also operates from centres in Filey, Whitby and Scarborough and from several schools. Provision, franchised to partner companies, is located in York, Nawton, Whitby and Scarborough. Within an 18-mile radius of the college there is one sixth form college and one independent school with a sixth form.

2 The borough of Scarborough has a population of 108,900. The local economy is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises with around 4,000 businesses and over 5,200 sole traders. The level of self-employment is above the national average. Only 15 companies employ over 100 people. Although tourism is a particular feature of the Scarborough economy, there has been a reduction in the numbers employed in the tourism industry. This has, in part, been compensated for by a growth in employment related to the conference market. Other main areas of expansion have been distribution, communications and financial services. The local unemployment rate currently stands at 4.8% compared with the national and regional averages of 4.4% and 5.2%, respectively. Minority ethnic groups form 0.6% of the local population and 1.4% of the college's enrolments are drawn from them.

3 By July 1999, the college enrolled 8,103 students during the academic year. Of these, 1,139 were on full-time courses and 6,964 were part-time students attending in a variety of modes including day release, block release, evening only and open learning. The full-time student numbers have increased by 6% since the last inspection and part-time numbers have increased by 46%. A significant trend has been the recent growth in the number of adult students, particularly those in employment. At the time of the inspection the college employed 108 direct teaching staff, 58 teaching support staff and 77 other support staff (full-time equivalents). The full-time equivalent staffing complement has fallen by 32 since the last inspection.

4 The senior management team of the college comprises the principal and four assistant principals who have responsibility for finance, resources, curriculum and administration, respectively. There are six departments: art and design; business and technology; catering and leisure; social care and hairdressing and beauty therapy; educational development and key skills; and Yorkshire Coast College Training Services which manages training and enterprise council (TEC) funded provision, Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) funded work-based training and full-cost work for industry.

5 The college has substantial provision in eight of the 10 FEFC programme areas. Few students are recruited in agriculture and construction. Programmes are offered from foundation to higher levels and include general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) and their precursors, national vocational qualifications (NVQs), and courses leading to the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level). About 13% of the full-time students are on higher education courses, mainly in art and design, hotel and catering, leisure and tourism and computing.

6 The college's mission is to 'provide quality education and training to enhance the economic, social and cultural well-being of the whole community'. In working to fulfil its mission, the college has established six strategic aims to:

- provide a broad-based curriculum
- improve access and enhance learning
- develop student support
- develop resources
- improve quality
- develop partnerships, collaboration and communication.

The Inspection

7 The college was inspected during the week beginning 17 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 FEFC. Data for 1997 and 1998 were taken from the FEFC's individualised student record (ISR). The college submitted its own audited data for students' achievements for 1999. The inspection was carried out by 12 inspectors and an auditor for a total of 52 days. In addition, an inspector spent two days inspecting open and distance learning as part of a national survey. Her findings contributed to the college inspection.

8 The college was informed of the sample of its provision to be inspected about two months before the inspection. Meetings were held with governors, managers, other college staff, students, employers, representatives of local schools, the community and the North Yorkshire TEC.

9 Seven inspectors from the Training Standards Council (TSC) worked with the inspection team during the college inspection. The TSC inspectors concentrated on work-based training in engineering, business, hospitality, and hair and beauty. They observed 16 training sessions, interviewed trainees, college and

company personnel, and inspected college documentation. Where it was appropriate to the FEFC inspection framework, evidence gathered by TSC inspectors was taken into account when grading college provision.

10 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the 82 lessons observed, 59% were judged to be good or outstanding and 6% less than satisfactory or poor, compared with the national averages for 1998-99 of 65% and 6%, respectively. The proportion judged to be good or outstanding has declined by 10% since the last inspection.

Context

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GNVQ	3	10	7	1	0	21
NVQ	0	6	7	0	0	13
Other vocational	6	17	6	1	0	30
Other	4	2	9	2	1	18
Total (No.)	13	35	29	4	1	82
Total (%)	16	43	35	5	1	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*

11 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. The highest recorded attendance was 96% in classes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the second highest was in

leisure and tourism at 84%. The lowest, 68%, was in basic skills. Average class sizes were highest in art and design at 15.2 and the lowest, six, was in basic skills.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education	8.6	78
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99	11.2	78

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

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 3

12 The engineering provision comprises college-based courses and NVQ courses for students in industry. The self-assessment report for engineering dealt only with the college-based courses. For these courses, inspectors generally agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the report. Some weaknesses had been addressed successfully by the time of the inspection. Inspectors found some weaknesses which were not in the report. They observed 11 lessons. Inspectors from the TSC observed training provided by the college for three work-based students.

Key strengths

- good retention rates in 1999 on the majority of courses
- high pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate and NVQ level 2 motor vehicle courses
- thorough and constructive assessment of students' work and progress
- extensive enrichment opportunities for full-time students
- good opportunities and support offered to workers in industry to obtain qualifications

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on a significant minority of courses
- steep decline in recruitment and retention on the GNVQ advanced course
- some small class sizes
- shortcomings in the resources for the college-based provision
- insufficient links between college-based and industry-based provision

13 The college offers courses and progression opportunities from level 1 to level 4, though the breadth of the provision is narrow. There is significant motor vehicle provision, and full-time

courses at level 1 based on electrical and mechanical craft qualifications. Full-time courses are enriched through team-building exercises, industrial visits, work placements and enterprise activities. GNVQ students are timetabled to study for a range of additional City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) qualifications intended to enhance their main course. These additional studies have been found to be too burdensome for most students. This weakness was not included in the self-assessment report. In 1998-99, 112 industry-based students completed their NVQ programmes at level 2 and 56 students completed level 3. This provision is well managed by Yorkshire Coast College Training Services which also provides, trains and supports the necessary assessors and verifiers. Managers of college-based and work-based aspects of the engineering provision are insufficiently aware of the scope, quality and opportunities offered by the other.

14 All the teaching observed was satisfactory or good. Teachers have established a good rapport with their students, and demonstrate a good knowledge of their subject. Most classroom teachers successfully gauge individual students' understanding through directed questions. Workshop teachers encourage students to progress whilst allowing each to work at a pace best suited to their abilities. Opportunities to enliven or increase the rate of learning are sometimes missed, a weakness recognised in the self-assessment report. The standard of assessed work is appropriate to the courses. Some assignment briefs are poorly designed. Some assignments are more interesting for students because they relate to their industrial visits. Teachers often provide detailed, helpful comments on students' written work. They indicate clearly how performance could be improved and require students to resubmit unsatisfactory aspects. The progress of industry-based students is monitored and recorded meticulously, and assessment activity verified by college staff.

Curriculum Areas

15 Second-year GNVQ advanced students produce some excellent written work, which demonstrates good information technology (IT) skills and research abilities. By contrast, the portfolios of first-year students are poorly presented. Candidates based in industry present exemplary portfolios for final assessment which include a variety of work-derived evidence and witness statements. Retention rates have improved over the last three years on the majority of the college-based courses, and most are now above the national average. However, recruitment and retention has declined rapidly on the GNVQ advanced course. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course and the motor vehicle NVQ level 2 are exceptionally high. Many students taking C&G courses in 1998-99 as additional studies failed to complete the practical requirements due to the pressure of work on their main course. As a result, retention rates on some C&G courses are diminished, and pass rates are very poor. The self-assessment report does not specifically identify these weaknesses. Achievement rates in qualifications taken by industry-based students vary widely. In 1998-99, the overall achievement rate for NVQs at level 2 was appreciably above the national average, and at level 3 was about the national average.

16 Teachers, assessors and verifiers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Some teachers have undertaken short placements in industry to update their knowledge. The lack of technician support in electronics hinders preparations for lessons and prevents routine maintenance, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. The levels of equipment and learning resources are sufficient. Most welding equipment has been replaced recently. The motor vehicle workshop facilities have been improved and expanded. Much of the mechanical workshop machinery and electronic instrumentation facilities is approaching the end of its useful life.

Curriculum Areas

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G and other (over 24 weeks)	1	Number of starters	30	106	78
		Retention (%)	70	*	73
		Achievement (%)	26	59	47
GNVQ intermediate	2	Number of starters	12	14	11
		Retention (%)	57	50	91
		Achievement (%)	63	71	90
NVQ	2	Number of starters	112	85	13
		Retention (%)	55	82	75
		Achievement (%)	64	31	65
C&G and other (over 24 weeks)	2	Number of starters	80	40	92
		Retention (%)	65	50	79
		Achievement (%)	52	100	38
GNVQ advanced	3	Number of starters	44	17	13
		Retention (%)	82	59	54
		Achievement (%)	16	43	71
NVQ	3	Number of starters	*	*	81
		Retention (%)	*	*	69
		Achievement (%)	*	*	50

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

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 3

17 Inspectors observed 13 lessons. The inspection covered business studies, administration, business and IT, management and professional courses. The self-assessment report did not include all the business provision. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the report but considered that some strengths and weaknesses had not been recognised by the college. Inspectors from the TSC observed training provided by the college for one work-based student.

Key strengths

- a broad and developing range of part-time courses
- expansion of community provision to widen participation
- flexible study arrangements for adults
- imaginative research assignments for GNVQ students
- good achievements on many courses

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory attendance and retention rates on many part-time programmes
- poor question and answer techniques
- inappropriately designed full-time administration courses
- unco-ordinated marketing and development of business provision
- diminished student experience due to small or combined groups
- insufficient provision at foundation level

18 The broad and expanding portfolio of part-time courses in business, management and office technology meets the needs of adults. The college is successfully widening participation in business and office technology. Courses are

offered at the main site, in the workplace, at centres in the community, and in conjunction with other training providers in the region. Aspects of the business curriculum are managed by different teams, links are poorly co-ordinated and there is insufficient sharing of good practice. Flexible arrangements on office technology courses allow adults to work at a pace which suits their personal circumstances. Opportunities for adults to progress to more advanced courses are good. Enrolment targets for full-time courses have not been met for the last three years. The GNVQ intermediate business course failed to recruit sufficient students in 1999. There is no full-time foundation provision in business, administration or IT. Some groups have been amalgamated to ensure that courses continue. Occasionally, students are disadvantaged by working in very small or combined groups.

19 Teaching is well planned. There is a comprehensive range of study notes and handouts for all courses. Improved tutorial arrangements are used to monitor students' punctuality, attendance and retention. Teachers make informal arrangements to help many part-time students, but adults who enrol for several classes receive inadequate guidance and support. Staff meetings are well documented and course files are well maintained. The design of full-time secretarial and administration courses does not allow for sufficient development of students' numeracy and problem-solving skills. These courses lack cohesion and do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to work in teams on business-related projects.

20 The best teaching is well structured and imaginative. Students are encouraged to discuss the ideas presented. A minority of teachers do not vary their teaching methods enough to maintain students' interest. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that in some lessons little or poor use is made of questioning techniques to ensure that all students participate

Curriculum Areas

and understand the work. Teachers clearly explain the topics being taught, though students are often provided with conclusions which they should have worked out for themselves. Teachers mark students' work promptly and give helpful written comments. Assessment and internal verification processes are systematic and thorough.

21 Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that students have a good understanding of assessment processes. Portfolios produced by employed NVQ students are of a particularly good standard. Accounting students are well prepared for their examinations and pass rates are significantly above the national average. GNVQ students develop a broad range of key skills through imaginatively designed assignments which require research into local businesses. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate IT course are well above the national average. Project work produced by students on professional and management courses makes good use of the students' business experiences. Full-time administration students achieve high levels of competence in the use of business software. In a minority of courses, pass rates fluctuate significantly from year to year. Many NVQ students complete their courses but fail to present sufficient evidence for overall assessment. Achievement rates in wordprocessing and integrated business technology are below national averages. Attendance and retention rates on many part-time courses are unsatisfactory and are often below national averages.

22 The college has good specialist facilities. Computers at the main site and at centres in the community have a broad range of commercial software. Students make effective use of the Internet facility in the learning centre. Printing facilities are inadequate for some advanced office technology courses. Full-time administration students have few opportunities to use a sufficient range of modern office

equipment and there is too much emphasis on the use of typewriters. Teachers bring a balance of vocational and academic expertise to their teaching. Updating of their commercial knowledge and experience is not routinely undertaken.

Curriculum Areas

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Wordprocessing	1, 2 and 3	Number of starters	192	163	321
		Retention (%)	65	73	83
		Achievement (%)	48	81	61
Integrated business technology	2	Number of starters	55	104	387
		Retention (%)	78	71	85
		Achievement (%)	33	76	42
GNVQ advanced business	3	Number of starters	32	11	11
		Retention (%)	53	64	73
		Achievement (%)	88	100	63
NVQ accounting	3	Number of starters	16	15	10
		Retention (%)	69	47	80
		Achievement (%)	36	71	75
Certificate in supervisory management	3	Number of starters	*	10	19
		Retention (%)	*	90	100
		Achievement (%)	*	100	100
Certificate in personnel practice	3	Number of starters	*	19	19
		Retention (%)	*	84	89
		Achievement (%)	*	100	100

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

**course not running*

Curriculum Areas

Leisure and Tourism

Grade 2

23 The inspection covered leisure and tourism and sports and recreation. Twelve lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified but judged that some weaknesses were given insufficient weighting and that some strengths were no more than examples of routine practice.

Key strengths

- the wide range of well-managed courses
- some innovative developments
- well-planned lessons
- good students' achievements on several courses
- well-qualified staff

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of a variety of appropriate teaching methods
- poor achievements on the GNVQ intermediate course
- some poor on-site facilities

24 As the self-assessment report states, there is a broad range of courses which provides good opportunities for progression to higher levels of study. An innovative, distance learning, foundation level course in exercise, 'Peak Performance', has been introduced and recruited well. Teachers have regular productive meetings. Courses are well organised and effectively managed. Lessons are carefully planned to provide a range of stimulating learning activities. Course documentation and learning materials are of a high standard. Schemes of work and lesson plans are appropriately detailed. Opportunities for developing and assessing students' skills are clearly indicated. As the self-assessment report

recognises, students can gain qualifications that are additional to the main course of study and that strengthen their employment prospects. These include coaching and leadership awards. Leisure and tourism students go on regular trips and carry out appropriate work placements. Productive links have been established with the local tourist industry.

25 None of the teaching observed was less than satisfactory and the majority of the lessons seen were good. The observed grade profile was well above the national average. In the best lessons the teachers set clear objectives and the students demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject and contributed well to discussion. A balance of coaching and playing was achieved in practical work. In a few lessons, the teachers made poor use of questioning techniques or failed to use a sufficient variety of appropriate teaching methods to keep all the students interested. The self-assessment report recognised the weaknesses in questioning but not those in the variety of teaching methods. Assignments are imaginative and appropriately set in a vocational context. They are set regularly, marked and returned promptly and students receive informative feedback of how they can improve their work. Students' work is internally verified on a regular basis.

26 Students work well and enthusiastically in groups. Their written work is of an appropriate standard. Students work well on practical activities, producing a good standard of work. Inspectors agreed with the college that retention and achievement rates are good on several courses, for example, the GNVQ advanced course in leisure and tourism, the BTEC national diploma in sports studies and the C&G recreation and leisure course at level 1. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course in leisure and tourism, however, have been poor for the last two years. Students' achievements on the sports coaching awards and leadership awards are good.

Curriculum Areas

27 Staff are well qualified and update their knowledge regularly. They work well together as a team and are enthusiastic and motivated. There is modern exercise physiology equipment. The college gymnasium is old and too small to service some of the sports activity. Alternative facilities in a nearby sports centre are used to augment the provision. Classrooms are of good quality and suitable for theory lessons.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G recreation and leisure	1	Number of starters	39	34	42
		Retention (%)	92	88	90
		Achievement (%)	71	100	89
C&G recreation and leisure	2	Number of starters	37	32	38
		Retention (%)	65	78	87
		Achievement (%)	38	24	57
GNVQ leisure and tourism	2	Number of starters	8	10	18
		Retention (%)	50	90	83
		Achievement (%)	100	53	33
GNVQ leisure and tourism	3	Number of starters	13	10	15
		Retention (%)	92	60	79
		Achievement (%)	67	80	80
BTEC national diploma in sports science	3	Number of starters	31	33	21
		Retention (%)	90	70	86
		Achievement (%)	82	100	100

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

Curriculum Areas

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

Grade 3

28 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering the range of provision in hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapy. Although inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report, they attached greater significance to some of the weaknesses. They also identified additional weaknesses in teaching and learning. Inspectors from the TSC observed training provided by the college for seven work-based students.

Key strengths

- well-managed courses
- a flexible and responsive curriculum
- clear links between theory and current work practices
- good and extensive support from teachers
- opportunities for additional qualifications and experiences

Weaknesses

- poor and declining pass rates on full-time courses
- low retention on some courses
- some shortcomings in teaching
- insufficient development of key skills
- inadequate schemes of work and lesson plans

29 The college offers an expanding range of full-time and part-time courses leading to NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 in hairdressing, levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy and some specialist courses in complementary therapy. These courses are offered in a variety of modes of attendance that successfully meet the needs of different client groups, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Students can achieve

additional qualifications, for example, in salon hygiene, men's hairdressing and Indian head massage. Students' experience is enriched by entering them for regional and national competitions. The section has recently re-introduced its employer's forum and is developing courses in response to local need. The college now offers part-time courses in reflexology and manicure at Whitby.

30 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that courses are well managed. Hairdressing and beauty therapy staff work well together and have developed common course documentation. Course teams meet regularly and maintain detailed course files. They use comprehensive resource packs that support the teaching of theoretical aspects of the curriculum. Lesson plans and schemes of work do not give sufficient emphasis to learning objectives, assessment criteria and teaching methods. The internal verification process is not thoroughly applied. The key skills of numeracy, communications and IT are underdeveloped. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

31 In the better lessons, teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and skill in devising an appropriate variety of activities to help students learn. In practical lessons, teachers give good advice and support to help develop students' skills and understanding. On most courses, teachers make good use of students' employment or work experience to relate theory to current work practices. In the weaker lessons, the range of student activity is narrow, and the pace of work too slow; teachers make insufficient use of questions directed to individual students to engage them in the lesson and check their understanding of the work. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report. In practical lessons students' progress and achievements are regularly monitored and recorded. However, insufficient use is made of the opportunities for assessing students' work provided by work

Curriculum Areas

placements. The section has identified this weakness and taken action to remedy it. In marking students' work some teachers give detailed constructive feedback, while others give little or none. Students receive good and extensive support from teachers who often find additional time to provide extra help.

32 Although students' portfolios of evidence are satisfactory in content, they are sometimes poorly organised and presented. Students do not use IT sufficiently in the production of these portfolios. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that retention rates on some courses are poor. For example, on the full-time NVQ level 2 beauty therapy course in 1999 the retention rate was 39%. The part-time reflexology course also has poor retention. Retention on the part-time Indian head massage course is good at 100%. Pass rates are poor and declining on the full-time NVQ combined course in hairdressing and beauty therapy and the part-time reflexology course. Curriculum

changes have now been implemented to address these issues. The part-time NVQ level 3 hairdressing course has achievements well above the national average.

33 Teachers have appropriate industrial and professional qualifications and experience. Many have gained additional related qualifications whilst at the college. The two salon managers possess both teaching and assessor qualifications and are able to provide assessment opportunities in the commercial salons. Most lessons are taught in rooms, which are appropriate for the planned activities. The hairdressing and beauty salons provide satisfactory accommodation for practical work. The resources used by students are generally sufficient and of a commercial standard, although some equipment is in need of repair. The learning centre has a good range of books to meet the demands of both hairdressing and beauty therapy.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
NVQ hairdressing (full time)	2	Number of starters	75	60	21
		Retention (%)	43	58	71
		Achievement (%)	51	90	33
NVQ beauty therapy (full time)	2	Number of starters	20	19	23
		Retention (%)	60	68	39
		Achievement (%)	92	73	60
NVQ hairdressing (part time)	3	Number of starters	17	10	12
		Retention (%)	76	70	82
		Achievement (%)	62	43	78
Body massage diploma (part time)	3	Number of starters	*	*	14
		Retention (%)	*	*	79
		Achievement (%)	*	*	91
Reflexology (part time)	3	Number of starters	*	*	15
		Retention (%)	*	*	47
		Achievement (%)	*	*	71

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

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 1

34 Inspectors observed 17 lessons, covering intermediate and advanced level full-time courses and part-time C&G creative studies courses. Inspectors broadly agreed with the self-assessment report. The school's own classroom observation profile of grades on teaching matched that of inspectors.

Key strengths

- well-managed provision
- exceptional teaching
- excellent retention, achievement and progression on full-time courses
- high standard of students' work
- thoughtfully and purposefully developed resources at the Westwood centre

Weaknesses

- insufficient consideration of cultural and environmental issues

35 As the self-assessment report confirms, a wide range of full-time courses is offered from foundation to higher levels and in a wide range of specialist areas. Full-time provision is offered in art and design, media, and performing arts. Part-time creative studies courses are provided for adults in the evenings. The different levels of courses and modes of attendance provide good opportunities for progression within the school. The department is energetic in its development of new provision. Since 1998, one advanced level and four higher level courses have been developed. Full-time courses provide the vast majority of the provision.

36 The department is well managed. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that department and course team meetings are held regularly and are well documented and attended. Action points established at meetings

are monitored carefully to ensure their implementation. There is an energetic advisory body and links with industry are good. These provide work experience, real-life projects and valuable support for new course initiatives. Courses provide a balance of research, investigation and presentation in a range of two and three-dimensional media. Students' experience is enriched by local, national and European visits.

37 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching is well planned. All staff use detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. Assignment briefs have clear aims and objectives, assessment requirements and criteria. Most of the lessons observed were good and many were outstanding. Teachers make use of a wide range of methods to initiate and maintain interest and ensure that the objectives of each session are met. Students' confidence in themselves and their work is encouraged through group work, real-life projects and competitions and public performances. In one music lesson, after simple relaxation exercises, each student sight read a piece of music. The other students then participated fully in a group analysis of each performance. Assessments are fair and meet the requirements of external verifiers and validating bodies. Work is marked carefully and the progress of students is monitored closely. Some teachers miss opportunities to place assignments in an appropriate cultural context, or explore environmental issues fully.

38 Students enjoy their courses and they frequently use free periods and evenings to work on assignments or participate in rehearsal work. One session involved first-year advanced level students who were purposefully engaged in rehearsal during a free morning. Whilst officially an unsupervised period, a teacher gave valuable support. The standard of work produced by students is high. Attendance, retention and achievement rates are good on full-time courses and well above national

Curriculum Areas

averages. The rates of progression to higher level courses, as the self-assessment report states, are also good. For example, the pass and retention rates on the diploma in foundation studies have been close to 100% for each of the last three years. In 1999, all these students progressed to higher education. Progression from intermediate to advanced level courses is also good. For example, all the students on the intermediate art and design course in 1999 progressed to the advanced level. The part-time evening courses have relatively low pass rates. Many of the adult students following these courses value the experience more than the qualification.

39 Teachers and support staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in their specialist areas and form an enthusiastic and dedicated team. The Westwood centre provides a good working environment and is being thoughtfully and purposefully developed to meet changing needs. For example, the old bar facilities have been extended to make a large refectory. The centre has two theatres which make a considerable contribution to the work of performing arts. Specialist IT provision is of good quality. Other facilities are good and the display, for example, of students' work, makes the centre an exciting environment for the teaching and learning of art and design.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Part-time creative studies courses	1	Number of starters	140	236	74
		Retention (%)	61	68	72
		Achievement (%)	32	34	23
GNVQ intermediate art and design and performing arts	2	Number of starters	20	33	13
		Retention (%)	85	73	77
		Achievement (%)	65	92	80
GNVQ advanced, art and design	3	Number of starters	53	40	35
		Retention (%)	77	88	79
		Achievement (%)	87	80	81
National diploma in performing arts	3	Number of starters	19	21	18
		Retention (%)	79	76	83
		Achievement (%)	100	94	93
Diploma in foundation studies	3	Number of starters	26	26	34
		Retention (%)	92	100	97
		Achievement (%)	96	100	100

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

Curriculum Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Grade 3

40 The inspection covered programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Ten lessons were observed. The self-assessment report included strengths identified by inspectors, but did not recognise some of the weaknesses which inspectors identified.

Key strengths

- success in extending access to a wider range of students
- students successful progress to general further education, training or employment
- productive links with schools and other agencies in the community

Weaknesses

- ineffective initial assessment of students with severe cognitive impairment
- inappropriate programmes for students with severe cognitive impairment
- overemphasis on external accreditation for some students
- failure of teaching in some lessons to take account of individual needs of students

41 The college has improved and extended access to a wider range of students. It has successfully increased the number of students from under-represented groups, including people with mental health difficulties and young people who have not achieved qualifications at school. The separate specialist provision has two programmes: a full-time vocational studies 'Pathways' programme, which includes a 'Pathways' bridging course; and a part-time programme specifically for adults called 'Sidewalk'. Some of the 'Sidewalk' provision for

students with severe cognitive impairment is provided through a franchise arrangement with a partner organisation. Good links with schools are acknowledged in the college self-assessment report. Links with other agencies have become more effective. The college is establishing good progression routes from separate specialist provision for students with learning difficulties to a wider range of vocational programmes. Regular team meetings of teaching staff and support assistants take place. Links to carers and parents are generally good.

42 Students on the 'Pathways' programme are provided with a good induction to their courses. They benefit from some teaching materials which are adapted to meet individual students' needs. As stated in the self-assessment report, these courses prepare students for work and/or further training. These students undertake work experience either in the college or the community. The quality of much of the teaching was satisfactory. In the best lessons, students were actively involved in their learning, working towards overall objectives through small achievable steps. They were well motivated and interested in their studies. These students were practising new skills and gaining in confidence. In one lesson, students were preparing and serving food to visiting school children. The students presented the food attractively and, in interacting with the children, were developing their interpersonal skills. In some lessons, the students were providing each other with valuable support.

43 The initial assessment of students with severe cognitive impairment is inadequate. Learning goals for these students are not precisely identified, nor are adequate individual learning programmes established. Students' progress is recorded only in general terms and provides insufficient detail of the learning which has taken place. This is acknowledged as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The provision is dominated by the requirements of external accreditation, which is often

Curriculum Areas

inappropriate to students' needs. Lesson plans and schemes of work are poor. Planning for teaching and learning does not take sufficient account of the individual needs of students. In some lessons, for example, students who were non-readers were given written information. In other lessons, students spent long periods on one topic or activity and lost interest. Many students are not clear about what they should be learning. Staff do not always discourage inappropriate behaviour. The students are not provided with the opportunity to benefit from work experience. These significant weaknesses were not acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

44 Students' progress is monitored through reviews, which may include parents and other agencies. Students have been increasingly successful in joining college courses and gaining employment. Students on the bridging programme undergo sensible initial assessment, are provided with appropriate additional support and their progress is recorded through the tutorial system. These students join other college programmes, gain confidence and achieve well. In 1998-99, for example, 14% of students entered employment and the remainder progressed to other education and training courses. Some of the students' additional achievements are remarkable and all are celebrated. For example, some undertook a coast-to-coast bike ride. A formal presentation evening is held to celebrate students' achievements.

45 Student to staff ratios are generous. Most lessons use well-qualified learning support assistants, who actively contribute to the learning. Teachers including some employed through franchising arrangements lack the specialist qualifications and experience for working with students with severe cognitive impairment. Learning support assistants receive appropriate training. Accommodation is good in the main college. The college has a well-equipped computer room with Internet access which is dedicated for use by students.

Curriculum Areas

Basic Skills

Grade 3

46 Eight lessons were observed covering adult basic education, additional support and vocational support. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report but found some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- well-planned teaching and learning
- exemplary practice at Braeburn infants' school
- excellent documentation for the tracking and review of students' progress
- good staff-student rapport
- improving student retention and achievement rates in communications

Weaknesses

- lack of relevant qualifications and training of some teachers
- insufficient internal moderation of the standards of students' work
- insufficient opportunities for the part-time staff to meet
- poor overall co-ordination of basic skills work
- failure to meet targets for recruitment

47 This inspection was one of the first in the sector to report specifically on the quality of provision in the basic skills of numeracy and literacy at or below level one. The self-assessment report included a wider range of courses than that covered by the above definition. Last year, 80 students were enrolled onto basic skills provision. Basic skills work is taught at the college main centre, and in several primary and infant schools in Scarborough, in partnership with the local authority community education department. Students on vocational

programmes who have been identified as needing extra tuition in numeracy or literacy also receive tuition. There has been a failure to recruit students this year at some of the primary schools used for this work, in the workplace, and at the Foyer and the Women's Centre, resulting in a failure to meet the college's target for student enrolment. However, the students recruited to lessons in Braeburn infants' school claim that they would not attend the college if this provision were not located at a school nearby.

48 There are insufficient opportunities for the part-time staff to meet with the single full-time teacher in order, for example, to discuss students' progress, to standardise and moderate students' work and to share good practice. The previous co-ordinator for basic skills work has not been replaced, in spite of several attempts by the college to do so. There has been little development work this year and there is uncertainty about future plans. The part-time staff feel isolated. These weaknesses are not mentioned in the self-assessment report.

49 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching and learning are well planned and learning objectives and methods of assessment clearly identified. Teachers have established an excellent rapport with students and have the personal skills necessary to motivate and retain basic skills students. However, some opportunities to develop basic skills are missed. The very small class sizes result in an impoverished learning experience for the students who would benefit from contact and discussion with others, group work and class activity. The self-assessment report does not identify these weaknesses. The documentation used to monitor students' work, track their progress, and plan future activity is of good quality. Valuable enrichment activity, for example visits to London, and discussions with external speakers have taken place in previous years but nothing is planned for the current year.

Curriculum Areas

50 Teaching in the family learning lessons held at Braeburn infants' school is good. The learning activities are closely linked to the parents' own experiences and interests, helping to ensure their high commitment. In one numeracy lesson, 12 students worked individually and purposefully through good-quality worksheets. They were provided with appropriate support by two teachers. The teachers kept up-to-date records of the students' progress. Students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the provision. The tutorial provision at the same centre is also excellent. Part-time students are given the opportunity to discuss personal or course-related issues by making an appointment to see a teacher.

51 Attendance is sometimes poor, especially in lessons conducted in the college's learning centre. Attendance at the centres in the community is much better. As stated in the self-assessment report, achievement and retention is improving in communication at level 1 and some students progress to higher level courses. Some of the students who start their studies at Braeburn infants' school, for example,

move on to study for GCSE subjects which are also offered at the school. Similar progression routes are also followed by some students studying at the college's main site.

52 Some of the teachers, whilst often having high level professional and teaching qualifications, do not have relevant basic skills qualifications. Staff development opportunities are currently insufficient to remedy this weakness. These weaknesses were not recognised in the self-assessment report. The accommodation and resources in the college's learning centre are excellent but underused.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G 3793 communication	Entry and 1	Number of starters	46	28	49
		Retention (%)	48	29	90
		Achievement (%)	5	38	45
C&G 3750 numeracy	1	Number of starters	*	14	*
		Retention (%)	*	57	*
		Achievement (%)	*	75	*
C&G 3794 numeracy (Numberpower)	1	Number of starters	*	*	23
		Retention (%)	*	*	87
		Achievement (%)	*	*	55

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)
*insufficient enrolments or course not running

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Support for Students

Grade 2

53 Inspectors observed seven tutorial sessions. They agreed with many of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good and impartial advice and guidance
- well-structured and effective induction for full-time students
- extensive welfare services
- comprehensive guidance on careers and higher education
- broad range of enrichment activities

Weaknesses

- shortcomings in some of the tutorial provision
- insufficient evaluation of the effectiveness of additional learning support

54 There are well-documented policies and procedures for support services for students. A wide range of information on courses and college services is available. Prospective students receive extensive and impartial advice and guidance. A helpful parents' guide introduces parents to the college, its courses and the range of services. Two comprehensive student handbooks detail the range of support and other services available. Each member of the central admissions team provides dedicated and informed support to a particular curriculum area. Open days enable prospective students to sample areas of study and meet tutors. Open days are also arranged at the college's centres in the community. As the self-assessment report identifies there are good links with local schools and visits to the college by pupils are made on a regular basis. The admissions team provides support on the premises of some schools. Guidance for prospective students is available throughout the year.

55 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the induction programme is effective. All full-time students participate in a programme which usually lasts one week. A comprehensive induction handbook covers issues such as the tutorial system, use of the learning centres and the learning agreement. Members of the admissions team and the student counsellor meet students during induction. The college charter identifies specific commitments to students on the support offered. Most of the charter commitments are being met. However, students at some centres in the community and industrial premises do not have ready access to the full range of support services.

56 At the start of their studies the levels of attainment of full-time students in numeracy and communication are assessed but there is no assessment of IT skills. Students who enrol late are also assessed. Students identified as needing extra support in these skills are provided with help in a number of ways. Some students receive support within their course, others in the learning centre from specialist teachers of numeracy and communication. A high proportion of the students identified receive additional support. There is no evaluation of the effectiveness of additional learning support. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Specialist support assistants work with students who have, for example, hearing impairments or dyslexia.

57 The college's tutorial arrangements are at an early stage of development. Full-time students are timetabled for a weekly tutorial of at least an hour. A recently established annual programme of group activities comprises job opportunities, interview techniques, applications for higher education, study skills and a range of IT-related activities. It is too early to judge its effectiveness. There is a comprehensive system which monitors students' progress and individual tutorials are scheduled throughout the year. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the tutorial system is not rigorously

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implemented in all cases. Some student reviews are not wholly effective. There has been insufficient staff training on the role of the personal tutor. Tutorial arrangements for part-time students are not formalised and practice varies between courses. Students' absences are closely monitored. Where appropriate, parents of students causing concern receive written reports.

58 A local careers guidance service helps to provide students with appropriate careers information and advice. This service works effectively alongside the college's central admissions team and personal tutors who provide extensive careers advice. The learning centre has a comprehensive careers section and students have good access to computer software for information on higher education opportunities. Effective advice and support on applications to higher education are given by the central admissions team and personal tutors. A record is kept of students' destinations upon leaving college.

59 As the self-assessment report states, the range of welfare services is a strength. A full-time student counsellor provides support, covering a wide range of personal issues, for students who require it. She is supported by five part-time counsellors who are appropriately trained. Financial support is provided for students suffering hardship. The college's access fund is significantly enhanced from college funds. The college has a 50-place subsidised nursery for children aged between two and five. Approximately two-thirds of the places are taken up by college students. This is sufficient to meet the needs of the college. The remaining places are available to the community. An active students' association receives some financial support from the college. An administrator, working half time, deals with a wide range of student support issues and liaises closely with the student counsellor.

60 There is an extensive programme of enrichment activities for full-time students. In addition to a comprehensive range of competitive sporting activities, most advanced level students undertake a range of enterprise activities as part of their course. These enable students to develop key skills in personal effectiveness.

General Resources

Grade 2

61 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements about general resources.

Key strengths

- clean, attractive, well-maintained buildings with good security arrangements
- the high standard of general classrooms and learning centres
- well-equipped learning centres
- good availability of modern computers and software

Weaknesses

- poor access for students with restricted mobility to much of the Westwood centre
- unwelcoming and inadequate reception and social areas for students

62 Major improvements have been made to aspects of the college's accommodation since the last inspection. Unattractive temporary classrooms have been removed and the college has disposed of its surplus Queen Street site. However, the college's accommodation, both at the main site and at the Westwood centre, is underused. A recent college survey indicated this weakness. The college has begun to adapt rooms so that they correspond more closely to class sizes, and to review timetabling arrangements.

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63 All sites and buildings are clean, attractive and well maintained. The Westwood centre in particular, formerly housing Sir Alan Ayckbourn's theatre-in-the-Round, provides outstanding facilities for art and design and performing arts. It is a grade II listed building which is being thoughtfully and purposefully developed to meet changing needs. There are good security arrangements on all sites. The college has made improvements to its environment since the last inspection so that it caters more effectively for students with disabilities. However, it acknowledges in its self-assessment report, that access to some of its provision for students with restricted mobility is poor. Only the middle of three floors is accessible to such students at the Westwood centre. Some areas of the main site are accessible only with difficulty. The college has allocated funds to address the problems at the main site.

64 College accommodation provides an attractive, well-resourced learning environment. The standard of provision in classrooms and other learning areas is good. All rooms are well decorated and well equipped and there is easy access to audiovisual equipment. A 50-seat lecture theatre has recently been refurbished and provided with modern data projection facilities. Surveys of students' perceptions indicate that 81% of students are satisfied with their classrooms. Lesson observations, undertaken by the college, indicate that resources are outstanding or good in 64% of the lessons observed. The maintenance programme is effective.

65 The college has learning centres on its three main sites. These are attractive and popular learning environments. The centre at the main site has recently been extended to provide 227 study places. The Westwood centre provides a focus for art and design. Both are well equipped with appropriate levels of IT, audiovisual and text-based materials. Students appreciate the facilities very highly. The book

and materials budget for these centres is well above the national average. A particular strength is the centralisation of the college's book purchasing through the main learning centre. This provides suitable control over the acquisition and utilisation of stock throughout the college.

66 The availability of modern computers and software for student use is a strength. There are 350 modern computers in the college providing a ratio of one machine for every five full-time equivalent students. These machines are easily accessible and well maintained. They are networked to the college intranet and have access to appropriate software. Over half of these computers are connected to the Internet. Access to the Internet is well managed to prevent misuse. A set of laptop computers is available for use as part of the college's community activities. The college has committed a significant amount of expenditure to the development of computer resources. However, monitoring of the usage is underdeveloped.

67 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that social facilities for students are poor. The students' common room provides inadequate space. The college has also identified weaknesses in reception areas. Inspectors agreed that these are often inappropriately used and are unwelcoming. The college is developing plans to address these issues.

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Quality Assurance

Grade 3

68 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. The college had made progress in addressing a number of the weaknesses by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- widespread staff involvement in self-assessment and a strong commitment to quality assurance
- effective use of results of lesson observation and surveys of students' opinions
- good induction and staff development opportunities

Weaknesses

- low student retention and achievement rates in a majority of categories
- lack of rigor of some course reviews and internal verification
- underdeveloped service standards in support areas

69 The self-assessment report identifies the commitment by staff to quality improvement and to the quality assurance processes. Quality assurance arrangements are clear and well understood. A quality assurance steering group, that has governor and student members, reports to the academic board, the management group and the corporation. This group reviews retention and achievement data, targets and curriculum self-assessment reports. Retention and achievement rates for 1998-99 often exceeded the college targets. Although many of these rates have improved over the last three years, the majority remain below national averages. Work on maintaining quality and introducing improvements is carried out by

eight working groups, involving many of the full-time teachers and support staff. Some policies have not been updated recently and the implementation of some others is not routinely monitored.

70 Documentation to support the annual review of courses has been revised since the last inspection. There is increased use of performance indicators to help analyse trends. In addition, progress in implementing the action plan formulated from the previous review is now assessed. Reviews of most major courses are good. In contrast, other course reviews are superficial, particularly where course leaders are inexperienced or part time or where provision is new, for example in some of the franchised provision. Outcomes from course reviews and reports from external verifiers are used to determine which courses will be examined by an internal team of auditors. A follow up audit within four months assesses compliance with the original audit recommendations and identifies good practice.

71 Internal verification procedures are applied inconsistently; the internal verification group is working to remedy this problem. The self-assessment report identifies that this group effectively scrutinises all external verification reports. Service standards and the observation of performance in college support areas have been introduced only recently and procedures are underdeveloped.

72 Lesson observation was introduced two years ago. This has led to improvements. For example, classroom observation procedures require the classroom resources to be reported and graded. Teachers and students give numerous examples of improvements made as a result. Staff development needs have also been identified as a result of lesson observations and, in response, events such as a staff development day on the use of question and answer techniques have been organised. The self-assessment report understates these

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strengths. The lesson observation profile, whilst more realistic in the second year of operation, is much more generous than the grades awarded at inspection.

73 As noted in the self-assessment report, the college charter is readily available to full-time and part-time students. Its contents are explained to them during their induction. Surveys of students' perceptions show that students are satisfied that the college meets its commitments for assessing their work and returning it within deadlines. There are no charter commitments to parents or the local community and few for employers. The college has recently begun to monitor the perceptions of those employers who fund trainees at the college. Students' questionnaires indicate that not all students are aware of the complaints procedure. However, written complaints are dealt with systematically. They are recorded, along with actions taken to redress them, and the time in which the final outcome is achieved.

74 The college's second self-assessment report is a comprehensive document. Its format follows the guidelines of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. It clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses and includes action plans to address the weaknesses. It draws on a wide range of objective evidence, including lesson observation and students' achievements. The self-assessment process is now part of the college's quality assurance and planning cycle. The quality steering group oversees arrangements, moderates the outcomes and reports to the corporation.

75 The college had its Investor in People status re-affirmed in 1999. The training and development policy is to develop all staff within their respective job roles. The college spends 1.4% of the total staffing budget on staff development activities. In addition, five days a year are devoted to general administration and training and there are additional in-house events, such as evening sessions devoted to

inclusive learning. Responsibilities and procedures for identifying training needs are clear. The annual appraisal system contributes to the determination of the staff development programme. In some areas, significant opportunities for industrial updating have been provided. Evaluation of the success of staff development activity in furthering the strategic development of the college is not yet fully developed. Induction arrangements for newly appointed staff are thorough. New teachers are assigned to a mentor, and part-time staff who do not already have teaching qualifications, are encouraged to enrol for an appropriate programme.

Governance

Grade 3

76 Inspectors and auditors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- governors' links with curriculum areas
- regular review of the financial position and student enrolments
- open governance

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of progress towards strategic and operational objectives
- slowness in adopting aspects of good practice
- low overall attendance by governors at formal meetings

77 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

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in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

78 The corporation has 16 members. Only two are women. There are no vacancies. The self-assessment report notes the range of skills members bring to the college, although the search committee has recognised the current lack of personnel and marketing expertise. The corporation has not conducted a formal skills audit. Following the re-determination of membership under the modified instrument and articles of government, the search committee has discussed nominations under the local authority membership category, but has yet to consider local community representation. The search committee's terms of reference set out the procedures by which potential new governors will be sought and a number of forthcoming vacancies will assist the corporation in complying with the new determination. Newly appointed governors receive an informative induction pack. A number of in-house training events, covering topics such as curriculum 2000 and inclusive learning, have been organised for governors. Although the clerk notifies governors of external training opportunities, there is no formal, annual assessment of individual training requirements.

79 The corporation meets termly and is supported by the finance, audit, search, remuneration, and strategic and planning committees. Corporation agendas are lengthy and governors have commented that summary reports of committee meetings would assist their work. The clerk to the corporation, who is also a member of the college's senior management team, dispatches agendas and papers to governors well in advance of meetings. She has a separate, detailed job description covering her role as clerk. There are no standing orders governing the conduct of meetings. Average attendance at corporation and committee meetings over the last 12 months is below

average at 67%. This was recognised as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Whilst the clerk records and monitors attendance, it has not been formally reported to governors. The corporation has agreed an attendance target for 1999-2000.

80 The finance committee meets eight times a year and closely reviews the monthly management accounts. These accounts are circulated to all governors. The finance committee produces an annual management report of its activities for the corporation. The chair of the audit committee has appropriate professional expertise and this committee closely monitors the implementation of agreed audit recommendations through receipt of an audit progress report prepared by the assistant principal (finance). All committees have appropriate terms of reference, which have recently been reviewed and approved by the corporation.

81 The corporation operates openly. There have been no confidential items of business in the last 12 months. Agendas, minutes and papers of corporation and all committee meetings and the register of members' interests are available for public inspection in the college's learning centres. This is publicised by notices placed in the college and in the annual report and financial statements. The register of interests covers governors and staff with significant financial responsibilities, and their spouses, partners and close relatives. It is updated annually. The corporation adopted a code of ethics in November 1997, but has yet to approve a code of conduct. It is currently considering a 'whistleblowing' policy.

82 The strategic and planning committee meets three times a year and is chaired by the chair of the corporation. It was involved in the preparation of the college's latest strategic plan. For example, it met with senior managers and revised the college's mission and strategic objectives before the corporation approved the

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full plan. The corporation does not receive regular reports on the progress made towards strategic and operational objectives, although the strategic and planning committee will in future undertake this role. The self-assessment report did not identify this weakness. Individual governors have useful links to curriculum areas. Governors chair each of the programme area advisory committees. Many regularly attend departmental prize presentations, performances by students and competitions. Governors intend to use these links to increase their understanding of students' achievements and other educational issues. The corporation receives an annual report on health and safety but not on the implementation of the college's equal opportunities policy.

Management

Grade 3

83 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. However, the report did not comment on all aspects of management, and inspectors identified some further weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good financial management
- positive involvement of all staff in the strategic planning process
- good communications
- development of community-based provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of progress against the strategic objectives
- underdeveloped use of departmental operational plans
- lack of effectiveness of strategies to address poor retention and low full-time recruitment
- ineffective co-ordination of some curriculum initiatives

84 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. At 31 July 1995, the college had a deficit on its income and expenditure reserve of £2,454,000. A four-year formal recovery plan was fully achieved by 31 July 1999. Audited financial statements for 1998-99 show a balance on the income and expenditure reserve of £571,000, and cash balances of £1,493,000. The three-year financial forecast for 1999 to 2002 indicates small operating surpluses over this period. Factors, including lower than expected enrolments in the current academic year, have resulted in the college identifying the need for further action to ensure a break-even position in 1999-2000. Comprehensive management accounts are produced monthly. They include key performance indicators and student enrolment information. The assistant principal (finance) and the college accountant both have professional accountancy qualifications. Budgets for income, pay and non-pay expenditure are extensively delegated and reviewed termly. The college's financial regulations require modifying to bring them in line with current best practice. Internal and external audit reports indicate that the college has sound systems of internal control.

85 As the self-assessment report states, there is good communication between managers and staff. Most areas hold regular team meetings, and the minutes of all meetings are shared. Staff are informed regularly about the college's financial position. The principal holds informal meetings each term with staff representing all areas of the college. An informative weekly newsletter is circulated to all staff. However, in some areas such as basic skills, where most teaching is by part-time staff, there are no regular team meetings.

86 All staff have contributed to determining the college's mission and aims. Their collated responses contributed to the strategic plan for the period 1999 to 2002. However, the strategic plan is limited in scope. It consists of a brief overview, three-year objectives and the

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summary of a market research report. It does not, for example, contain a college review of progress against the previous plan or a clear identification of objectives to be achieved in the first year of the new period. Progress against the objectives is not regularly monitored. The self-assessment report did not identify these weaknesses.

87 Some of the operational plans produced by departments and support teams lack clear objectives, action points and timescales. Some teams have not produced plans. This restricts the ability of managers to monitor the implementation of initiatives such as the development of key skills in a vocational context. In 1998, all full-time staff took part in equal opportunities awareness training. However, the implementation of the equal opportunities policy is not reported upon. Managers monitor and report on health and safety issues rigorously. The college has recently reviewed the role of the academic board. It considers proposals for new full-time courses and now includes student members.

88 The average class size has fallen during the last three years and was low in the classes inspected. Retention rates have been below sector averages during this period. Actions to improve retention have yet to be fully effective. The college has yet to develop a coherent strategy to increase the recruitment of full-time school-leavers and students on its basic skills provision. The self-assessment report did not identify these weaknesses.

89 The management information system provides a good range of reports, for example, on attendance, teaching hours, and part-time teacher expenditure. Staff require further training to enable them to make full use of this information. Curriculum managers do not always provide all of the data on students' achievements to the college's management information unit.

90 External agencies speak positively about the college and consider that its responsiveness has improved recently. For example, the principal plays an important role in supporting the work of the local TEC and there are a variety of links with local and regional agencies. New centres in the community have been established to provide access to some of the college's provision. The college provides training and assessment on a commercial basis to employers, especially for health and safety, IT, engineering and retail operations. It has franchise arrangements with three private training providers within the region. A small number of students from local schools attend the college as part of a link programme.

91 In 1999, a needs analysis undertaken by the two Scarborough colleges highlighted IT and basic skills as key areas for development. The college also uses research reports to provide data on employment shortages. These reports are not always fully used to inform college planning. The self-assessment report did not identify weaknesses in the management of curriculum initiatives. There are some weaknesses in co-ordinating curriculum provision. For example, opportunities to promote the business courses provided on the main site to students taking work-based training managed by a different department are missed. There is insufficient use of allocated funding to support teachers in developing new courses. Basic skills provision is insufficiently well co-ordinated and links between different parts of the college which teach similar subjects are not always effective.

Cross-college Provision

Conclusions

92 Inspectors found that the college's self-assessment report formed a useful basis for planning and undertaking the inspection. They agreed with the broad findings of the report but in many of the sections additional weaknesses were identified. Eight of the grades awarded by inspectors were the same as those in the college's assessment and five were one grade lower.

93 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 1999)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	20
19-24 years	15
25+ years	63
Not known	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1999)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation)	45
Level 2 (intermediate)	23
Level 3 (advanced)	21
Level 4/5 (higher)	6
Non-schedule 2	5
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	148	698	15
Agriculture	19	31	1
Construction	3	62	1
Engineering	82	241	6
Business	50	844	15
Hotel and catering	121	345	8
Health and community care	212	843	18
Art and design	249	243	8
Humanities	90	1,288	24
Basic education	37	210	4
Total	1,011	4,805	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 13% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1999)

	Per- manent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	87	13	0	100
Supporting direct learning contact	41	13	0	54
Other support	94	4	0	98
Total	222	30	0	252

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£6,896,000	£6,739,000	£6,818,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£18.77	£17.40	£17.00
Payroll as a proportion of income	59%	61%	65%
Achievement of funding target	105%	105%	101%
Diversity of income	22%	23%	22%
Operating surplus	£1,060,000	£829,000	£553,000

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	307	327	304	884	986	901
	Retention (%)	62	72	84	60	60	74
	Achievement (%)	43	55	58	51	68	61
2	Number of starters	936	812	846	1,092	929	1,029
	Retention (%)	72	70	73	61	66	71
	Achievement (%)	59	80	58	53	71	62
3	Number of starters	676	398	377	2,433	597	704
	Retention (%)	69	73	75	60	62	74
	Achievement (%)	64	82	78	49	69	74
4 or 5	Number of starters	n/a	n/a	n/a	84	149	105
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	51	63*	70
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	36	60	75
Short courses	Number of starters	505	645	497	515	1,913	2,556
	Retention (%)	83	78	89	74	77	87
	Achievement (%)	49	61	84	22	44	69
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	499	613	611	1,720	2,437	2,223
	Retention (%)	91	88	85	81	89	92
	Achievement (%)	78	80	54	63	61	56

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

*ISR data may not be reliable

n/a not applicable

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