

Middlesbrough College

REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
2000-01

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 1999-2000, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	6	44	44	7	0
Cross-college provision	9	45	38	8	0

Source: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000: Chief inspector's annual report

Sample size: 112 college inspections

Note: percentages subject to rounding

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 1996, would appear in the results for 1997-98 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

Middlesbrough College

Northern Region

Inspected November 2000

Middlesbrough College is based in two residential areas of the town. The college's self-assessment process is well established and involves all staff and governors. A senior manager from another college helped to validate the most recent self-assessment report. Some of the weaknesses identified in the report had been addressed by the time of the inspection. Whilst inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the report, they found many additional weaknesses. Inspectors awarded lower grades than those in the self-assessment report to the curriculum areas inspected and the college's quality assurance arrangements. They awarded a higher grade than that in the report to the college's governance.

The governance of the college is outstanding. It is open and well clerked. The college is in a strong financial position. It is well managed and has clear lines of accountability and effective communications. The college collaborates well with many other organisations. It offers, in addition to academic courses, a wide range of vocational courses aimed mainly at the service industries. The accommodation is attractive and well maintained. There are good reception areas with helpful staff on both campuses. Courses are well publicised. Schools liaison is effective. Students are given good support.

Quality assurance is satisfactory. Students' and employers' views are well considered. Overall retention and achievement rates are improving but they remain poor on some courses. The college should improve: the unsatisfactory provision in science; the rigour of course reviews; the quality of teaching and learning; the effectiveness of tutorials; the use of accommodation; and student access to IT.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science	4	Support for students	2
Business	3	General resources	2
Hospitality and catering	2	Quality assurance	3
Hair and beauty	2	Governance	1
Humanities	3	Management	2
Basic skills	3		

The College and its Mission

1 Middlesbrough College was established as a tertiary college in 1995 as a result of a merger between a general further education college and a sixth form college. It is based on two campuses: the Kirby campus for vocational courses 1 mile from the town centre; and the Acklam campus for academic courses 1 mile further south. With 144,300 residents Middlesbrough is the second largest authority in the Tees Valley conurbation of 656,400. The unemployment rate in Middlesbrough is around 8.4% of the workforce, over twice the national rate of 3.7%. Average incomes are relatively low. The number of single parent households in the town is above the national average. The Basic Skills Agency (BSA) identifies that the population of Middlesbrough has much lower numeracy and literacy skills than exists nationally. Despite a significant decline in the local steel making and chemical industries, many people remain employed in engineering and manufacturing. Growth is predicted in business, information technology (IT), personal and protective services, and in professional and managerial occupations.

2 In 1999, the proportion of pupils in the authority gaining five or more grades C or above in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examinations was 31% compared with the national rate of 47.9%. Of local school-leavers, 48% progressed to further education and 12.7% to employment-related training. The college recruits from 41 local schools, although the majority of students come from two local schools. Of the college's students, 71% of full-time and 62% of part-time students come from the local area. Of the students, 36% are from disadvantaged areas as defined in the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' index of local conditions. Following the first year of the government's Educational Maintenance Allowance scheme, the number of full-time students has grown. Approximately

90% of those receiving this support remain on their courses.

3 Within a 10-mile radius of the college, there are three sixth form colleges, two tertiary colleges and a general further education college. There are also 70 private training organisations in the Tees Valley area. In November 2000, 6,302 students had enrolled at the college of whom 30% were studying full time. The range of ethnic backgrounds of college students matches that in the local community.

4 The college offers courses in all Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) programme areas except construction. Fewer than 60 students study agriculture and engineering subjects. Following changes to the curriculum nationally, the college has introduced the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) to replace the advanced general national vocational qualification (GNVQ). The last cohort of GNVQ students will complete their studies in 2001. The college curriculum is managed through five faculties: service industries; business; health, care and basic education; humanities, arts and science; and learning skills.

5 The college, in partnership with Tees Valley Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), supports work-based training, foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships, and New Deal. Higher education programmes are offered in collaboration with the University of Teesside. The senior postholders comprise the principal, vice-principal, the assistant principal for finance and resources, and the director of corporate services who is also clerk to the corporation. Five directors oversee human resources, quality, curriculum, marketing and customer services, and corporate services. The management team has 13 members consisting of four senior postholders, five directors one of whom is a senior postholder, and five heads of faculty. In October 2000, the college employed 344 full-time equivalent staff.

6 The college reviewed its mission statement and strategic objectives recently. It intends to provide 'high-quality learning programmes by means of a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time learning opportunities'. The principal aim of the college is to develop as a community resource through collaborative partnerships. It has joined with several other colleges to promote access to further education in the Tees Valley.

The Inspection

7 The college was inspected during the week beginning 6 November 2000. Before this, inspectors evaluated the college's most recent self-assessment report and updates on that report, and reviewed information about the college provided by other directorates of the FEFC. Data on students' achievements were derived from the individualised student record (ISR) for the two years 1998 to 1999. The college supplied its own data for 2000. Inspectors checked these data against primary sources, such as class registers and pass lists from examining bodies, and found them to be generally accurate. However, in some curriculum areas the ISR data were unreliable. In evaluating the retention and examination pass rates of students, inspectors used benchmarking data derived from general further education and tertiary colleges.

8 The inspection was carried out by a team of 11 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 51 days in the college. Inspectors observed 68 lessons and five tutorials. They examined students' work and a wide range of college documents. Inspection team members discussed aspects of the college's provision with the chief executive of Tees Valley TEC, and held meetings with students, governors, managers and staff. A team of three inspectors from the Training Standards Council (TSC) worked in parallel with the inspection team during the college inspection. The TSC inspectors

concentrated on work-based training for business administration and hairdressing. Where it was appropriate to the FEFC inspection framework, evidence gathered by the TSC inspectors was taken into account when grading college provision.

9 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. Of the lessons observed, 52% were judged to be good or outstanding compared with the national average of 62%. The proportion judged to be less than satisfactory, at 14%, was more than twice the national average.

Context

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE A/AS level	3	7	4	3	0	17
GCSE	0	0	2	2	0	4
GNVQ/AVCE	1	2	4	2	0	9
NVQ	3	9	8	2	0	22
Other vocational	2	3	4	0	0	9
Other*	2	6	3	1	0	12
Total (No.)	11	27	25	10	0	73
Total (%)	15	37	34	14	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000 (%)	17	45	31	6	0	100

*Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000:
Chief inspector's annual report*

Note: percentages subject to rounding

**includes access to further education, access to higher education, basic skills and tutorials*

10 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. During the inspection, there was flooding in the locality which disrupted travel to the college. Within this context, inspectors considered that attendance rates were remarkably good.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Middlesbrough College	10.4	75
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000	10.3	76

*Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1999-2000:
Chief inspector's annual report*

Curriculum Areas

Science

Grade 4

11 Inspectors observed 10 lessons covering biology, human biology, chemistry and physics at GCSE and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level). They did not agree with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report and identified additional strengths and significant weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good practical work
- well-planned lessons

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to individual students' learning needs
- some poor achievement rates
- unsatisfactory retention rates on GCE A level courses in 2000

12 Inspectors did not agree with the self-assessment report that the college offers a particularly wide range of courses. It provides a range of GCSE and GCE A level courses, along with the national certificate and national diploma in science (sport studies), and an access course leading to higher education. Overall recruitment has declined over the past four years. Adult students returning to study and those wishing to progress to higher education have been attracted to some programmes. They are offered appropriate part-time study arrangements. For example, the GCSE human physiology and health is offered during the day and evening. Teachers enabled a student employed on changing shift patterns to attend at different times to suit employment.

13 Most lessons are well planned. Half the lessons observed were good or outstanding but the overall quality was below the national

average for this programme area. Most of the good lessons were given by full-time teachers. They engage students in a range of practical activities and develop students' understanding of complicated scientific concepts. For example, in a GCE A level human biology lesson, students were given pipe cleaners and asked to construct models of protein structures to assess their three-dimensional complexity. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the preparation, organisation and supervision of practical work are of a high standard. In the less effective lessons, the different learning styles and abilities of students are not catered for. Few teachers ask questions to assess each student's understanding of the topics covered. Assignments are well designed, and require students to undertake appropriate research. Teachers mark assignments accurately and assess students' work thoroughly. They also give students detailed and constructive feedback on the quality of their work.

14 Students are attentive in lessons. Their assignments are completed to a high standard. Retention rates for students completing their courses in 1998 and 1999 were satisfactory. However, those for 2000 were below national averages, in some cases by as much as 30 percentage points. The college acknowledged this weakness in its self-assessment report and in recent management reports on retention. For two-year courses completing in 2001, retention shows signs of improvement. Pass rates on most GCE A level courses have been consistently below the national averages.

15 There are four full-time and six part-time teachers of science. The teachers have participated in staff development activities about improving the quality of teaching and organising lessons to suit individual students' needs. However, this training has not been effective. The scientific equipment in the laboratories at the Kirby campus is good but at the Acklam campus the equipment is dated. The layout of benches and equipment in laboratories

Curriculum Areas

sometimes hinders teaching and learning. For example, in a human physiology and health lesson, the teacher was unable to use the laboratory's overhead projector effectively because of the layout of the room. Science students use learning resources in the curriculum area and those in the learning centre well. However, there are insufficient IT resources.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in science, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE human physiology and health	2	Number of starters	117	122	113
		Retention (%)	74	72	77
		Achievement (%)	25	34	78
GCSE chemistry	2	Number of starters	25	26	25
		Retention (%)	76	73	72
		Achievement (%)	67	53	44
GCE A level human biology (one-year course)	3	Number of starters	31	22	36
		Retention (%)	81	77	75
		Achievement (%)	72	100	86
GCE A level human biology (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	*	*	11
		Retention (%)	*	*	36
		Achievement (%)	*	*	33
GCE A level chemistry (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	*	*	15
		Retention (%)	*	*	67
		Achievement (%)	*	*	78

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 3

16 Inspectors observed 10 lessons in business covering GNVQ foundation and advanced, the AVCE, GCE A level, national certificate in business and finance, national diploma in public services, and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in accounting, administration and business administration. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report and found additional strengths and weaknesses. TSC inspectors observed work-based training in business administration for 13 trainees.

Key strengths

- wide range of courses and progression opportunities
- good retention rates on one-year courses
- many students achieving high GCE A level grades

Weaknesses

- lower than average quality of lessons
- low retention rates on two-year courses
- outdated practice and poor-quality learning materials in some lessons

17 The college offers a broad range of business and administration courses. These enable students to progress from foundation to higher levels in business, accounting, administration and management. Several part-time courses are offered both during the day and in the evening. The college reaches out to a wide range of learners in community centres, and by means of its IT bus. These strengths were identified in the self-assessment report. Curriculum teams meet regularly but do not liaise effectively when planning courses. For example, in one lesson, students started

work already covered by another teacher.

Part-time teachers are poorly integrated with course teams.

18 Whilst half of the lessons were judged to be good, the overall quality of lessons was not as good as that seen in similar colleges. Most lessons are well structured. Teachers evaluate students' preferred learning styles and use this when planning lessons. In a foundation accounting lesson, good planning led to effective learning by students undertaking an in-tray exercise. The students worked well in small groups to transfer figures to coloured paper and paste them into appropriate ledgers. When all the sheets were displayed together, students could see how the work flowed. Teachers provide constructive comments on students' written work and indicate how it can be improved. In some lessons, teachers failed to retain students' interest and gave them too few opportunities to ask questions or contribute opinions. They did not check that students understood what they had been taught. Some of the teaching does not reflect current commercial practice, for example in relation to electronic mail. Some handouts are not of a professional standard.

19 The quality of students' written work is mostly good. Retention rates have exceeded national averages in each of the past three years for GNVQ foundation business and NVQ level 2 and 3 accounting and administration courses. However, the rates are poor on two-year courses and significantly below national averages on the national diploma in public services. Retention rates have declined over the past three years on GCE A level courses. They improved on the GNVQ advanced business and national certificate in 2000 but current figures indicate a fall for 2001. The self-assessment report does not pay sufficient attention to retention rates. Achievement rates for GNVQ foundation have matched or exceeded the national average in two of the last three years, and the proportion of students achieving high grades has increased

Curriculum Areas

from 10% to 25%. The GCE A level business and GNVQ advanced business achievement rates improved in 2000 to exceed national averages. Many students gain high grades in GCE A level business. The achievement rate on NVQ level 3 accounting is now significantly higher than the national average. In two of the past three years the national diploma in public services has had a pass rate of 100%. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 accounting and business administration have been lower than national averages for the past two years.

20 The full-time teachers are appropriately qualified but few have updated their business experience recently. Several of the classrooms used for business studies are spacious, comfortable and have relevant wall displays. Specialist rooms are generally well equipped but a few are too small for the number of students attending. A lecture theatre used for an advanced accounting lesson was inappropriate for group work. The teacher had difficulty assessing the work of students sitting away from the tiered aisles. The range of books in the learning centre is narrow and a few are out of date. Students have easy access to modern IT resources when working on their own but there are no computers in business classrooms.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in business, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GNVQ foundation business (one-year course)	1	Number of starters	12	17	9
		Retention (%)	83	88	89
		Achievement (%)	70	67	75
NVQ accounting (one-year course)	2	Number of starters	37	45	37
		Retention (%)	95	87	84
		Achievement (%)	67	60	63
NVQ business administration (one-year course)	2	Number of starters	17	31	25
		Retention (%)	88	84	84
		Achievement (%)	73	54	67
GNVQ advanced business (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	50	*	24
		Retention (%)	84	*	71
		Achievement (%)	58	*	94
NVQ accounting (one-year course)	3	Number of starters	49	46	39
		Retention (%)	86	93	95
		Achievement (%)	31	42	62
NVQ administration (one-year course)	3	Number of starters	18	16	15
		Retention (%)	94	88	93
		Achievement (%)	41	79	62

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Hospitality and Catering

Grade 2

21 Inspectors observed 13 lessons covering modern cookery, NVQs in food preparation and cooking, food service and reception at levels 2 and 3, supervisory skills at NVQ level 3 and GNVQ and AVCE hospitality and catering. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They considered that the strength of course and curriculum management was understated but the quality of teaching and learning was overstated.

Key strengths

- appropriate courses for a wide range of learners
- good retention and achievement rates
- effective curriculum organisation and management
- strong links with local schools and industry
- good specialist resources

Weaknesses

- lower than average quality of lessons
- insufficient development of students' practical skills on NVQ courses

22 The college offers a wide range of courses in catering and hospitality, from foundation to degree level. School links are well established. Practical 'taster' sessions are held twice a year and work experience is offered at the college to pupils attending local schools. As part of a school link project, pupils in years 10 and 11 can achieve NVQ level 1 catering units at the college. Work placements for full-time students are carefully monitored. Industrial visits are made to relate theory to practice. Course team meetings are minuted and result in effective

action plans. The monitoring of students' progress is thorough. Courses are reviewed well each year. These strengths are understated in the self-assessment report.

23 Less than half of the lessons observed were judged to be good or outstanding, which is lower than the national average. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed. Many teachers use handouts and study packs effectively and keep their students up to date. For example, in one lesson, the teacher updated students well on health and safety in the industry, including aspects of recent legislation and risk assessment. Students were given relevant statistical data and handouts which had gaps for them to fill in. In long theory lessons, teachers often talked without interruption and students lost concentration. Teachers frequently give good practical demonstrations but pay insufficient attention to developing the students' practical skills on NVQ courses. They set interesting vocational assignments that frequently relate to local amenities. Assignment briefs are clearly written. Teachers frequently check the quality of students' portfolios and provide helpful written comments.

24 Students' written work is often well presented. Most NVQ portfolios are well organised. Assignments from students on the GNVQ advanced course provided evidence of careful planning and research. The findings were often presented using IT resources. Some students' written work is of a high standard but much is poor and contains spelling errors that are not corrected by teachers. Students are well motivated and those working in the kitchens and restaurants pay careful attention to hygiene, health and safety. NVQ students enjoy working in the realistic work environment. They gain confidence and develop good social skills. Retention rates are consistently above the national average on the NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking programmes, and the national licensees certificate programme. Pass rates are above national averages on the

Curriculum Areas

majority of programmes. Although most of the students who completed the NVQ level 2 programme got jobs, some went on to study on the AVCE in hospitality and catering. Of students on the GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering gaining a qualification in 2000, half progressed to higher education.

25 Teachers have appropriate academic, assessor and internal verifier qualifications. Most have appropriate industrial experience, some of which is recent. This helps to ensure that the teaching reflects current industrial practices. Teachers are given opportunities to undertake appropriate staff development.

Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that specialist accommodation and learning resources are of good quality. There is a wide range of industry standard equipment in the well-maintained kitchens, bar and restaurant. The range of specialist books and periodicals in the learning centre is adequate although some of the books are dated. Most course documentation and learning materials are of a high standard. Students have easy access to IT in the learning centre but not in the classroom. They are given well-presented and informative student handbooks.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in hospitality and catering, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
C&G 3330 preliminary cooking	1	Number of starters	23	27	23
		Retention (%)	100	81	91
		Achievement (%)	22	95	90
NVQ catering and hospitality, food preparation and cooking	1	Number of starters	129	98	41
		Retention (%)	89	84	83
		Achievement (%)	79	91	94
NVQ catering and hospitality, food preparation and cooking (one-year programme)	2	Number of starters	49	41	94
		Retention (%)	88	93	89
		Achievement (%)	98	79	87
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	Number of starters	*	*	15
		Retention (%)	*	*	67
		Achievement (%)	*	*	100
National licensees certificate	3	Number of starters	53	33	41
		Retention (%)	100	100	100
		Achievement (%)	100	100	98

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Hair and Beauty

Grade 2

26 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but found that some strengths had been overstated and identified additional weaknesses. TSC inspectors observed training in hairdressing for 30 work-based trainees.

Key strengths

- high retention and achievement rates
- well-planned teaching
- strong curriculum organisation and management
- wide range of courses

Weaknesses

- poor accommodation for beauty therapy
- poor professional standards in beauty therapy

27 As the self-assessment report notes, the college offers an extensive range of full-time and part-time courses in hair, beauty and complementary therapies. A foundation programme in beauty therapy has been introduced this academic year. A number of short courses are also provided in community centres and schools. Recruitment to many courses has increased. Course teams are responsive to the needs of industry. For example, they have developed a franchised professional development award in holistic therapy skills for health professionals at the South Tees Health Authority. There are plans to develop this into a foundation degree. Course tutors rigorously monitor student retention and achievement rates, and produce clear action plans for improving performance. Students

have opportunities to develop their personal skills through enrichment activities. They are encouraged to participate in external competitions and are often successful. All full-time students undertake work placements.

28 Despite some good teaching, the overall profile of grades awarded to the lessons observed was poorer than the national average. Students receive course calendars that help them to plan their learning. Schemes of work and lesson plans are well structured and most lessons are well organised. For example, in a lesson on epilation, the teacher organised students effectively to simulate a client consultation through role-play. Students evaluated their own and the group's performance well. In some lessons, teachers fail to give students sufficient time to grasp complicated concepts and allow a minority of students to dominate discussions. In beauty therapy practical lessons, some teachers do not maintain professional standards or ensure that students comply with basic safety and hygiene requirements. For example, in one lesson, students failed to wash their hands before preparing a client's skin for treatment. In other lessons, students were allowed to carry out manual and electrical treatments on clients whilst wearing jewellery and nail polish. In hairdressing, teachers identify opportunities for assessing students' key skills but such opportunities are rarely identified in beauty therapy.

29 Students work confidently in the salons and most develop appropriate practical skills quickly. Retention and achievement rates on most courses have been rising over the past three years and are now at or above national averages. These strengths are identified in the self-assessment report. The performance of students on advanced nail techniques is particularly good with retention and achievement rates well above national averages. In two consecutive years, two hairdressing students were awarded the City and Guilds of

Curriculum Areas

London Institute (C&G) bronze medal for excellence.

30 Specialist hairdressing resources are good. However, beauty therapy salons are poorly decorated and some furnishings are in a state of disrepair. For example, a broken display cabinet in the reception was held together with adhesive tape. Most learning materials developed by the college are of good quality. Some books in the learning centre are dated and there is a lack of books on some specialist topics. Teachers are appropriately qualified and are given opportunities for professional development. Many have gained an additional basic skills teaching qualification.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in hair and beauty, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
NVQ hairdressing (one-year course)	1	Number of starters	17	85	121
		Retention (%)	82	80	84
		Achievement (%)	79	89	86
NVQ hairdressing (one-year course)	2	Number of starters	*	*	73
		Retention (%)	*	*	91
		Achievement (%)	*	*	80
NVQ beauty therapy (one-year course)	2	Number of starters	27	32	75
		Retention (%)	89	91	88
		Achievement (%)	100	97	94
Advanced nail techniques (one-year course)	2	Number of starters	20	14	64
		Retention (%)	85	100	88
		Achievement (%)	100	95	91
NVQ beauty therapy	3	Number of starters	†	25	36
		Retention (%)	†	92	92
		Achievement (%)	†	83	85
National diploma in beauty therapy (one-year course)	3	Number of starters	*	*	18
		Retention (%)	*	*	77
		Achievement (%)	*	*	93

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

*data unreliable

†course not offered

Curriculum Areas

Humanities

Grade 3

31 Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering GCE A level and GCE advanced subsidiary (AS) history, geography, psychology and sociology, and access to higher education. The inspection did not cover all of the subjects in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with some of the college's judgements in the self-assessment report but identified additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good achievement rates in GCE A level geography and psychology
- high retention rate in GCE A level history
- well-organised courses
- effective feedback to students

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates in GCE A level sociology and psychology
- some unimaginative teaching
- failure to identify opportunities for key skills development
- insufficient use of IT

32 The humanities provision consists of mainly full-time GCE A/AS level courses and a part-time access to higher education course. In 2000, GCSE courses in history, geography, psychology and sociology were withdrawn, owing to declining recruitment and poor performance. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that courses are well managed and that teachers work well together. All courses have schemes of work, handbooks and schedules for assessing students' work. Team meetings are held regularly and actions are recorded. Subject teachers meet formally and informally to discuss their work. They participate in regular professional development

activities. There are good arrangements for reviewing students' progress and providing extra support. Teachers check students' subject files regularly.

33 The college overestimated the quality of teaching and learning. Most teaching is satisfactory and some is good, but some lessons are dull and students are given too few opportunities to contribute their own ideas. Some lessons are planned carefully and students' interest is maintained. For example, in a GCE A level geography lesson on hazard management, students watched a film on the floods affecting Bangladesh. Groups of students then produced interesting reports on their assessment of flood management techniques, incorporating their own research data. They summarised key issues on a flip chart and enthusiastically presented their findings to the class. Teachers valued the contribution of students. In most GCE A/AS level lessons the opportunities for students to develop key skills are not identified by teachers. When key skills are developed, the fact is not recognised or recorded. Teachers rarely use visual aids or IT to enliven lessons. They do, however, give students relevant website addresses to assist with homework and coursework. Teachers constructively mark students' written work and correct spelling errors. Students appreciate the feedback provided by teachers.

34 Students' written work is at least satisfactory and some of it is good. The retention rate on the GCE A level history course has been consistently good over the past three years. GCE A level sociology has had a declining retention rate, and at 45% in 2000 it was well below the national average of 69%. The retention rate for psychology declined to 64% in 2000, which is also poor. The self-assessment report did not identify these weaknesses. The achievement rates in GCE A level psychology and sociology are good. GCE A level geography achievement rates have been 100% in two of the past three years.

Curriculum Areas

35 Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Most specialist classrooms are comfortably furnished and have interesting displays of students' work. Some, however, are cluttered and untidy. Video equipment is available in most rooms but there are no computers in the specialist classrooms at which students can work on their own. Neither can they easily access computers in the learning centre, as many workstations are allocated to the teaching of groups of students. There is an adequate number of relevant books housed in each subject area to supplement the small number in the learning centre.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in humanities, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCE A level psychology	3	Number of starters	18	*	14
		Retention (%)	83	*	64
		Achievement (%)	58	*	89
GCE A level sociology	3	Number of starters	30	23	23
		Retention (%)	83	78	45
		Achievement (%)	85	76	80
GCE A level geography	3	Number of starters	18	*	14
		Retention (%)	100	*	79
		Achievement (%)	100	*	100
GCE A level history	3	Number of starters	27	*	14
		Retention (%)	93	*	93
		Achievement (%)	70	*	77

Source: ISR (1998 and 1999), college (2000)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Basic Skills

Grade 3

36 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering literacy and numeracy provision below level 2. While inspectors agreed with a number of the judgements in the self-assessment report, they considered that some strengths were overstated and that some weaknesses had been overlooked.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- integration of basic skills with other aspects of vocational courses
- good additional learning support on vocational programmes
- wide range of good-quality learning materials

Weaknesses

- failure to meet some students' individual learning needs
- some ineffective student reviews
- insufficient specialist IT

37 Following a recent reorganisation, the faculty of learning skills has responsibility for managing basic mathematics and English, the learning centres, and the cross-college development of key skills and learning support. Basic skills support is provided mainly to students on pre-vocational or vocational programmes below level 2. There are also various cross-college approaches to the provision of additional learning support. Some vocational teachers provide the additional support when basic skills are integrated with other aspects of vocational programmes. They also teach basic skills to groups of students requiring additional support. Otherwise, teachers based in the faculty of learning skills

give support in literacy and numeracy, additional learning support, and teach key skills at level 1. In addition, the college has a small but expanding number of basic skills courses for adults, some of them taught in community centres. The range of provision of basic skills support for adults is currently too narrow, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report.

38 Two recent developments have helped to improve retention and achievement rates on GNVQ foundation programmes. Full-time students undertake an initial assessment of their basic and key skills and additional learning support is provided as an integral part of all vocational programmes at or below level 1. Students on basic skills programmes, and on some pre-vocational programmes, have their achievements in basic skills certificated. Some students achieve qualifications from external awarding bodies and others are awarded a college certificate in recognition of their attainment. There is no table showing a summary of students' achievements because the college does not have enough meaningful data on students' learning activities and related achievements in this area.

39 Most basic skills teaching is good, particularly when it is an integral part of vocational programmes. For example, students on the 'first steps' catering course practised their communication and number skills while the teacher quizzed them on the recipe and the method of kneading dough for making doughnuts. In some key skills lessons, learning support tutors do not ensure that individual students' learning needs are met. Students have individual learning plans, but there is considerable variation in the way they are decided and implemented. The effective plans take account of the initial assessment of the students' needs and identify learning activities to meet those needs. They contain specific short-term aims, evaluative reviews and constructive proposals for the student's next

Curriculum Areas

step. A number of plans, however, only contain the initial assessment and a record of work completed by the student. Some teachers do not provide sufficient feedback to students during reviews. Some students' portfolios do not provide sufficient evidence of basic skills gained on vocational programmes. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that student reviews need to be improved. Individual learning plans have recently been redesigned but it is too early to assess the impact of this change.

40 There are a number of weaknesses in the accommodation used for the teaching of basic skills that were not recognised in the self-assessment report. Some classrooms are well stocked with teaching and learning materials but there are insufficient IT resources to provide practical activities through which number skills can be developed. The site licence for some software used to develop students' basic skills restricts its use to only one college campus. Some teachers have specialist basic skills teaching qualifications and others are acquiring them.

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

41 Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Some of the weaknesses identified through self-assessment had been addressed before inspection. However, inspectors identified further strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good school liaison and promotional activities
- effective induction arrangements
- good welfare, counselling and childcare services
- effective help for students with physical, sensory and learning disabilities

Weaknesses

- some poor tutorials
- poor individual action plans for students

42 Promotional activities are well established and effective. Full-time enrolments have increased considerably in recent years. Links with schools over a wide area are strong. Pupils are given opportunities to try lessons at the college through well-established 'taster' programmes. These strengths were identified in the self-assessment report. The college provides 'taster' courses specifically designed for pupils at special schools, which have given such pupils the confidence to progress to the college. Publicity materials and course leaflets are well designed and are available on the college's website. A team of staff located close to the reception area at the Kirby campus provide clear guidance on college courses to potential students. Abundant course information leaflets are displayed nearby. The Acklam campus has no similar arrangements.

43 Enquiries that result in correspondence with potential students are recorded but this information is not used to track enquiries through to enrolments. However, formal applications to the college are analysed by school and postcode, and this analysis results in the production of useful reports. Staff try hard to keep in touch with potential full-time students, from initial application through to enrolment. Whilst enrolment is well managed, some students have experienced difficulty obtaining advice on specific courses. All full-time and many part-time students have an effective induction programme. The process is well structured but sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of each course. Students receive a handbook containing useful information about college services and services provided by other local organisations. The handbook also contains the clearly written college charter and details of the complaints procedure.

44 All full-time and some part-time students are tested during induction to identify those needing additional support with their learning. Some additional needs are also identified during tutorials. Many of the additional learning needs of students on vocational courses are met within the courses. Some teachers are not informed of their students' additional learning needs early enough. Students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given effective help. Their needs are identified early, often through reports from special schools. Specialist teachers help students with hearing or visual impairment during lessons, or provide them with appropriate electronic aids. All full-time students have been surveyed to identify their preferred learning styles. Much work has been done to design schemes of work and lesson plans that meet the needs of individuals but they have rarely been effective.

45 All full-time students are entitled to at least one hour of tutorial activity each week. Students on GCSE and GCE A level courses at the Acklam campus have a one-hour tutorial for

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group work and another for individual interviews to assess their progress. Good handbooks for each year of these courses include schemes of work and materials to help tutors. The tutorial arrangements for vocational courses on the Kirby campus are less effective. Each vocational course has its own tutorial scheme of work. Some are poor. Inspectors observed five tutorials, the quality of which ranged from outstanding to poor. The weaker ones were poorly planned and did not meet the needs of individual students. For example, tutorials based on group work did not meet the needs of mature students on a part-time course. Other students on the same course made appointments for individual meetings with a tutor which they found more useful. Individual action plans that students complete with tutors are rarely more than a record of students' learning goals and contain only brief comments on their personal progress.

46 Arrangements to provide students with guidance on welfare and financial issues are well publicised and effective. Students rate highly the help provided on these matters and the arrangements for childcare. Counsellors aim to ensure that students who need professional help are seen within 48 hours of referral. The centrally managed careers guidance service is insufficient to meet students' needs. A new appointment has been made to address this weakness. The external careers service is contracted to provide a programme of careers advice. Careers education is also included in the tutorial programme on many courses. Youth workers supporting the students' union have improved the range and take-up of enrichment activities.

General Resources

Grade 2

47 Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report. The college had made some progress in addressing weaknesses identified through self-assessment by the time of the inspection.

Key strengths

- good teaching accommodation
- welcoming reception areas
- large, well-equipped learning centres
- effective maintenance programme

Weaknesses

- insufficient access to computers for some students
- inefficiencies in timetabling and use of classrooms

48 The college has well-planned and effective refurbishment and maintenance programmes, strengths identified in the self-assessment report. The Acklam campus includes a listed seventeenth century manor house that has been renovated to a high standard. Other buildings on this campus have also been refurbished well. Accommodation at the Kirby campus has been upgraded recently and is in good decorative order. Most general teaching rooms are well equipped and well furnished. Some groups are timetabled to meet in inappropriate classrooms. The Acklam campus is underused. It is intended that some courses will transfer from the Kirby campus. Arrangements have been made for land-based courses at the Acklam campus to be provided by a specialist college.

49 Each campus has a welcoming entrance and reception area operated by helpful staff. The Kirby campus offers a range of services provided by students as part of their training.

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They include a travel agency situated conveniently alongside the reception area, a fitness club, hairdressing and beauty therapy suite, and a restaurant. They are open to students, staff and the public. The refectories and large social areas for students at both campuses are appropriately furnished and open each day of the week.

50 Access to college buildings for students with restricted mobility has been improved. A lift has been installed at the Acklam campus and a covered walkway built between the manor house and other buildings. Facilities for childcare courses and some general teaching areas remain inaccessible to wheelchair users but the college makes alternative arrangements to ensure that wheelchair users have access to all courses.

51 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are well-managed and attractive learning centres on each campus. These provide students with library facilities, study spaces and high-quality IT resources. The facilities are used well by students. All learning resources are catalogued in a comprehensive computerised database. There is a good system for matching learning materials to course requirements. However, staff in some curriculum areas are slow to respond when asked to specify their requirements for specialist books. Consequently the bookstock is out of date in some subjects.

52 The ratio of computers to full-time students is 1:7.2. Most of the equipment is less than four years old. The majority of computers are located in specialist computing teaching areas and are heavily used. The computers in the learning centres have Internet access. Appropriate software can be used by individual students on a 'drop-in' basis. However, some of the computers in the learning centres are used for group teaching purposes during part of the day and this restricts the number of workstations that individual students can use. There is a restriction on student use of

electronic mail for most of each day, a practice that does not fully conform to the college's information learning technology policy. There is insufficient technical support in IT, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

53 Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report but found additional weaknesses. When the self-assessment report was being developed, the poor retention rates on some courses were not apparent because the relevant data were not available.

Key strengths

- improvement in students' performance on most courses
- effective responses to students' views
- well-managed staff appraisal and staff development

Weaknesses

- decline in retention rates on some courses in 2000
- lack of rigour in some course reviews
- unrealistic assessment of the quality of teaching and learning
- decline in quality in four curriculum areas since the previous inspection

54 The mission statement commits the college to provide high-quality services. The director of quality, one of the new senior management team, has overall responsibility for quality assurance. Quality co-ordinators have been appointed recently to improve teaching and learning, and students' performance. The director of quality meets termly with curriculum managers and business service heads as the quality management group. The academic

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board's quality assurance subcommittee provides guidance to this group.

55 The college pays particular attention to the views of students, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Comprehensive questionnaires about the quality of courses are used at various stages. Responses are carefully considered, and improvements have been made as a consequence. The responses and the actions taken are publicised through posters and discussed in tutor groups. Major committees have student members. Students are invited to course review meetings. There are regular focus groups to gather students' views on specific college issues. Employers' opinions about the college are sought routinely but the response rate is poor. Staff are encouraged to express their views through a 'comments, compliments and complaints' procedure.

56 Managers observe lessons to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The grades they award are considerably higher than those awarded by inspectors. Common weaknesses in lessons found by inspectors were not identified through the college's lesson observation process. Consequently the self-assessment report is insufficiently critical when considering the quality of teaching. The proportion of good or outstanding lessons observed during this inspection is lower than in the previous inspection.

57 Curriculum managers collate enrolment, retention and achievement data for their courses and report their findings to senior managers. When courses are underperforming, targets for improvement are set. Predictions of students' GCE A level grades are made on the basis of their previous qualifications. The majority of students perform better than predicted. This type of analysis is being extended to GNVQ programmes. The college has improved its average points score for students taking two or more GCE A levels from 12.1 in 1996 to 15.7 in 2000.

58 The poor quality of some course reviews was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection. This weakness had not been sufficiently remedied. Teaching teams review the progress of their course at termly meetings and complete a standardised action plan. Curriculum managers and heads of faculty are charged with monitoring this process. In some curriculum areas, reviews and action plans are thorough. In others, reviews are incomplete and action plans do not address obvious weaknesses such as poor retention.

59 The college's business support functions are included in its quality assurance processes. Each team has determined standards for the quality of services it provides. Teams are encouraged to measure performance against these standards, set targets for improvement and measure progress towards them. The effectiveness of this process varies considerably. Staff in some support areas do not understand the terminology and so are unable to apply the process rigorously. A system of audit checks on compliance with procedures has been started recently.

60 The college has produced a self-assessment report each year since 1996. The self-assessment process is linked to the planning cycle. Staff at all levels are consulted during the production of the report. However, the links between course reviews and self-assessment are unclear. The final report is validated by a cross-college group, which includes a governor and a senior manager from another college. Action plans are formulated to address the weaknesses identified. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report but found additional weaknesses, particularly in teaching and learning. Whilst the college's overall retention and achievement rates have improved in recent years, the rates have declined in some curriculum areas and the self-assessment report does not deal adequately with these variations. Of the five curriculum areas included in both inspections, four were

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awarded a lower overall grade in this inspection than in the previous one.

61 Staff training and development are well managed. Needs are identified through the planning and quality assurance processes, and through a well-structured annual appraisal system. Budgets are allocated to support the professional development of individuals and the training of managers. All activities are evaluated and summary reports are produced. Staff who attend external training events are required to disseminate their experiences to colleagues.

Governance

Grade 1

62 Inspectors and auditors agreed with many of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report. Some weaknesses identified through self-assessment had been addressed before the inspection.

Key strengths

- close monitoring of the college's academic performance
- open and effective governance
- rigorous monitoring of college finances
- thorough and efficient clerking
- full involvement in determining the college's strategic direction

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of targets in evaluating governors' and senior postholders' performance

63 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles

of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

64 The corporation has 17 members. It has six appropriate committees: employment policy; remuneration; audit; finance, assets and general purposes; search; and community, industry and standards. The finance, assets and general purposes committee closely scrutinises the management accounts and advises the corporation on financial matters. The audit committee monitors the work of the internal and external auditors effectively and prepares an annual report on its work for the corporation. It includes two external co-opted members with financial expertise. The search committee operates well in reviewing all applications for membership of the corporation: retiring members are required to re-apply and be considered afresh for governor vacancies. The corporation has introduced some additional committees which meet as required, for example, to consider the selection of senior postholders and disciplinary appeals. The committee structure and terms of reference are reviewed annually. A 'whistleblowing' policy has been established.

65 The corporation conducts its business in accordance with a clear set of standing orders. Governors are required to signify their acceptance of the code of conduct in writing and senior managers are required to update the register of interests annually. Corporation meetings are open to the public and confirmed minutes of meetings are posted on the college's website. Clerking of the corporation and its committees is thorough and efficient, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. The clerk chairs the regional clerks' group of the Association of College Registrars and Administrators. The corporation recognises the potential conflict of interests resulting from the clerk being a college senior manager, and is satisfied that the role is sufficiently independent. The clerk has a separate job description for each

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role. Nevertheless, to ensure there is no conflict of interest, the corporation recently appointed an external clerk for the remuneration committee and the principal's performance review panel.

66 Documents provided for the corporation are of a high standard and some are exemplary. For example, the clerk's annual report for the corporation covers many governance issues, such as attendance rates, the number of meetings compared with the previous year, training activities and the annual update of the register of interests. Whilst they have been effective, assessment of governors' and senior postholders' performance has been introduced only recently. Governors complete a detailed questionnaire that is used to evaluate their contribution to the governance of the college. The questionnaire covers, for example, their effectiveness when participating in meetings, and making decisions, and the extent to which individual governors promote the college in the community. The process of appraising senior postholders is reviewed annually by the remuneration committee. Individual action plans are agreed, but performance is not considered against measurable targets. This was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The chair appraises the performance of the clerk.

67 Governors are fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the college. They review the college's mission statement annually. The corporation is pursuing closer collaboration with other local colleges in order to increase participation in further education in deprived areas and to improve efficiency. It has taken a firm lead in addressing the complex issues arising from a proposed merger with a nearby college. The corporation receives regular reports on college progress and reviews the findings against its strategic priorities. Governors compare the college's academic targets with local and national benchmarks where appropriate. There is regular and close

monitoring of the college's franchised activities. Attendance at corporation meetings for the past year was high at 87%. Governors also attend faculty advisory boards and a variety of other college events.

68 Inspectors and auditors agreed with the self-assessment report that governors bring a wide range of skills to their work. The corporation has undertaken a regular audit of skills. The established induction procedure for newly appointed governors includes a standard induction briefing pack that gives extensive details of the corporation and its activities. Governors undertake a range of training activities. They also receive regular briefings on new developments in further education, and attend planning days and external training events. The corporation has only recently agreed to introduce a training programme to address the training needs of individual governors.

Management

Grade 2

69 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- clear line management arrangements and good communications
- effective monitoring and achievement of operational objectives
- an open and responsive management style
- fruitful collaboration with other organisations
- good financial management

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Weaknesses

- inaccurate achievement and retention data for some courses
- shortcomings in the performance and accountability of some middle managers
- deficiencies in the deployment of some middle managers

70 The mission of the college is understood and supported by staff. Staff are fully involved in the college's strategic planning process, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. A college operating plan is produced annually following consultation with teachers and cross-college service staff. Staff in each faculty and cross-college service team subsequently produce their own annual operating statements and targets in line with the priorities of the college. At twice-yearly performance review meetings with senior managers, heads of faculty and service functions discuss their performance and, where objectives are not likely to be met, agree remedial actions. The outcomes of these reviews are fully documented and considered by the college management team. Targets to improve retention and achievement rates are set at faculty level and are monitored monthly. The college has consistently achieved or exceeded its targets for recruitment.

71 The college changed its management structure recently, reducing the number of managers but increasing the range of cross-college functions. Staff understand the new structure and their role in it. They feel valued, and are well motivated and well informed about the college's business. They fully support the college's strategic priorities. Inspectors concur with the self-assessment report that communications throughout the college are effective. Minutes of management meetings are readily available and a weekly staff bulletin contains a wide range of information. Senior managers monitor the performance of faculties against objectives but they are not

always effective in ensuring that objectives are met. There are shortcomings in the performance and accountability of some middle managers. As the self-assessment report notes, staff in some faculties are not complying with college procedures. For example, staff in one faculty do not include clear performance indicators in the faculty's operational plans. In some curriculum areas, there has been little dissemination of good teaching practice, whereas in others it is well established. There are deficiencies in the deployment of managers which lead to substantial differences in workloads.

72 The academic board and its subcommittees consider policies and receive reports on aspects of academic performance. The college has a comprehensive range of easily available policies that are kept up to date but some lack effective strategies to implement them. Job descriptions are reviewed regularly.

73 The college collaborates effectively with external organisations, a strength noted in the self-assessment report. The college is an active member of the Tees Valley College Partnership, which has representatives from seven colleges. It has collaborated with these colleges, the University of Teesside, employers, the local education authority (LEA) and a wide range of other external organisations in successful funding bids and curriculum initiatives. The college runs a soccer academy in partnership with Middlesbrough Football Club. Each faculty has an active and well-attended advisory board with good employer representation and governor participation. The advisory boards consider curriculum initiatives and other developments. There are substantial curriculum links with both primary and secondary schools. Marketing of college courses is effective.

74 The college has a computerised management information system. It is used to monitor retention rates at course and college level, and the achievement of FEFC funding

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units. All these are compared with targets set the previous year. It can also generate reports on enrolments, examination entries and the overall performance of students. Computerised attendance records are updated daily. General management reports are user-friendly and generally reliable. However, inspectors found that retention and achievement data for many two-year courses were inaccurate. The data held centrally did not accord with the data held in faculties. As a result, managers have had an over-optimistic view of students' performance.

75 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The college has an experienced and qualified finance team and is in a strong financial position. Management accounts, including a clear commentary, are prepared monthly for review and consideration by senior management, the finance, assets and general purposes committee, and the corporation. These do not contain regular reports on the achievement of financial solvency targets but do include reports of capital expenditure. Budget holders receive monthly financial reports and are able to obtain financial information through on-line access to the accounting system. Internal and external auditors indicate that the college has a sound system of internal control.

76 A senior manager has responsibility for equal opportunities. An equal opportunities group has reviewed the college's policy in this area and developed an action plan. The effects of the new policy have yet to be monitored thoroughly. The health and safety policy is thorough and is implemented effectively through the director of human resources. There are clear reporting procedures to the college management team and the corporation.

Conclusions

77 The self-assessment report, the fifth produced by the college since 1996, provided a helpful starting point for carrying out the inspection. It was a thorough attempt to provide an objective evaluation of the quality of the college's provision. Some weaknesses identified through self-assessment had been addressed before the inspection. Whilst inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report, they considered that the college's internal process for assessing the quality of teaching and learning was not sufficiently rigorous. Some low retention rates were not apparent when the self-assessment report was being prepared. Inspectors awarded lower grades than those in the self-assessment report to the curriculum areas inspected and to the college's quality assurance arrangements. They considered that the quality of the college's governance had been understated.

78 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 2000)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	34
19-24 years	53
25+ years	12
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 2000)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation) and entry level	36
Level 2 (intermediate)	28
Level 3 (advanced)	29
Level 4/5 (higher)	3
Level not specified	0
Non-schedule 2	4
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (November 2000)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision (%)
Science	333	645	16
Agriculture	17	8	0
Engineering	0	26	0
Business	180	680	14
Hotel and catering	322	552	14
Health and community care	568	785	21
Art and design	120	232	6
Humanities	310	1,332	26
Basic education	37	155	3
Total	1,887	4,415	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1998-99 ISR data, the college recruited 36% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 2000)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	128	2	46	176
Supporting direct learning contact	14	0	0	14
Other support	139	10	5	154
Total	281	12	51	344

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1998	1999	2000
Income	£8,903,000	£9,390,000	£9,829,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£16.67	£16.52	£16.90
Payroll as a proportion of income	57%	54%	54%
Achievement of funding target	100%	102%	101%
Diversity of income	14%	14%	15%
Operating surplus	£142,000	£170,000	£38,000

Sources: Income – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

ALF – Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1998), Funding Allocations 1998-99 (1999), college (2000)

Payroll – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1997-98 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

Diversity of income – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

Operating surplus – Council Circular 00/10 (1998), college (1999 and 2000)

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	1,020	1,053	1,234	1,392	1,588	1,831
	Retention (%)	85	93	89	77	85	85
	Achievement (%)	72	76	76	63	57	67
2	Number of starters	2,342	1,355	1,530	1,174	1,412	*
	Retention (%)	81	80	83	75	85	*
	Achievement (%)	44	63	59	68	71	*
3	Number of starters	*	*	*	1,223	1,309	*
	Retention (%)	*	*	*	80	85	*
	Achievement (%)	*	*	*	68	68	*
4 or 5	Number of starters	36	13	22	148	177	*
	Retention (%)	92	62	77	95	96	*
	Achievement (%)	52	63	38	53	41	*
Short courses	Number of starters	*	*	445	*	1,587	1,940
	Retention (%)	*	*	94	*	92	95
	Achievement (%)	*	*	72	*	74	75
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	1,424	1,432	1,204	1,316	*	856
	Retention (%)	86	91	91	83	*	92
	Achievement (%)	75	83	80	71	*	70

Source: ISR

*data may not be reliable

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