

**North
Derbyshire
Tertiary College**

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1997-98**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council 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 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.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision, curriculum areas and lesson observations, for colleges inspected during 1996-97, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	9	59	30	2	–
Cross-college provision	18	51	27	4	–
Lesson observations	19	42	31	7	1

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report*. Grades were awarded using the guidelines in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*.
Sample size: 122 college inspections

Retention and Pass Rates

Where data on students' achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in two ways:

- as a retention rate, which is the proportion of students who completed a course in relation to the number enrolled on 1 November in the first year of the course
- as a pass rate, which is the proportion of students which passed examinations in relation to the number entered. Pass rates for GCE A level are quoted for grades A to E unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for GCSE courses are quoted for grade C or above unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for vocational and professional awards are for successful completion of the full award.

Summary

North Derbyshire Tertiary College

East Midlands Region

Inspected December 1997

North Derbyshire Tertiary College serves the community in North Derbyshire, North Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. The college's recently introduced system for self-assessment has been built on a well-established system of course review, evaluation and action-planning. The self-assessment report contains strengths and weaknesses for each area of the college. A committee, consisting mainly of members external to the college, reviewed and moderated the self-assessment reports.

Inspectors were in broad agreement with many of the findings in the college's self-assessment report but considered that some key strengths and weaknesses had been overlooked and that the college had overstated some of its strengths.

The college offers courses in all 10 of the FEFC programme areas. Provision in five of these areas was inspected, together with aspects of cross-college provision. The college has responded to the needs of its local community by offering an appropriate range of free courses in eight community centres in addition to those offered on the campus at Clowne. Collaborative partnerships with private trainers extend the range of provision at several community centres. There are improved quality assurance processes to monitor the collaborative provision.

The college's mission to serve the needs of the local community is strongly supported by governors and all staff. Course reviews and self-assessment and faculty action plans contribute to the college-wide strategic planning process. Management structures are clear and generally effective. The college has spent much time and effort preparing for a significant legal challenge. Resources are used effectively to support the college mission. Students receive good guidance and advice. Standards of teaching are generally good. However, students' achievements are below the national average in several areas and attendance and retention are low on many courses. Take-up for additional learning support is poor. Some of the tutorial and learning support for part-time students is poor. The level of IT equipment across the college is generally good, although its distribution between centres, and the level of technical support provided, requires review. The college should: take steps to address the low achievement, attendance and retention on some courses; clarify responsibilities for co-ordinating learning support; provide opportunities for sharing good practice across college centres; integrate more coherently the various elements of the quality assurance system; secure reliable systems of internal control; and establish a more effective strategy for the improvement of the accommodation.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Computing and information technology	2	Support for students	2
Business	2	General resources	3
Health, hairdressing and care	3	Quality assurance	2
Modern foreign languages	2	Governance	3
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2	Management	3

Context

The College and its Mission

1 North Derbyshire Tertiary College was established in 1991 following sixth form reorganisation in the area. The college mission states 'the college is a community college meeting education and training needs, primarily in North Derbyshire, North Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire'. It serves a community of approximately 95,000 in a mix of small and large villages, predominantly ex-mining communities with strong cultural traditions and loyalties, bordered by the towns of Chesterfield, Mansfield and Worksop and the city of Sheffield to the north. The socio-economic characteristics of the area have changed significantly in recent years with the closure of most of the coal mining and related industries. Unemployment is above the regional average of 6.2%. It is 9.1% in North Derbyshire and 11.5% in North Nottinghamshire. In addition, there are pockets of very high unemployment. Male long-term unemployment in the Bolsover and Chesterfield district is 11%. Some 54% of long-term benefits claimants have no formal qualifications. Low levels of expectation of educational achievement in the area, together with significant social disadvantage and restricted transport services, pose significant challenges for the college in designing its curriculum and providing student support services.

2 The college was originally based at a campus in the centre of the small town of Clowne. It has developed a number of sites to meet its objective of providing free and accessible education and training for adults and currently operates in a total of eight 'community learning opportunities centres' across the locality. These community centres have won various national awards, and two have won the national parliamentary awards for community education. In 1993, the college, in partnership with the University of Sheffield extra-mural department, developed the Markland higher education campus which offers courses designed to promote progression to higher education.

The college provides free transport and free nursery places to encourage participation in education and training.

3 There are sixth forms in a number of schools in the area. The college maintains links with local schools in North Derbyshire and Chesterfield. The educational achievement of year 11 school-leavers is below the national average; 65% of year 11 school-leavers fail to reach the benchmark of five general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades C or above, and 7.3% leave with no GCSE qualification. The staying-on rate for post-16 school-leavers is 66% in North Derbyshire and 50% in Nottinghamshire; both are lower than the national average of 77%.

4 The college is organised into three teaching faculties: business and technology; general and social education; community education; and a faculty covering franchised partners. There are over 10,000 students, of whom some 8,500 (85%) are adults. A high proportion of these enrolments is for courses located in community centres and this work has provided the base for expansion over the past five years.

Context

The Inspection

5 The college was inspected during the week beginning 8 December 1997. The self-assessment report and information held by other divisions of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) were evaluated before the inspection week. The college submitted data on students' achievements for the three years 1995 to 1997 which were validated against class registers and pass lists issued by examining and awarding bodies. Students' achievements for some of the courses completed in 1995 were difficult to retrieve and not provided by the college. The inspection was carried out by a team of 10 inspectors working for 36 days and an auditor working for five days. Meetings were held with governors, managers and college staff and students. In the curriculum areas, the inspection included observation of lessons and tutorials, review of students' work and discussions with students and teachers.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level and GCSE	1	2	1	0	0	4
GNVQ	0	5	2	0	0	7
NVQ	3	15	9	1	0	28
Other vocational	7	17	8	2	0	34
Total	11	39	20	3	0	73

6 Of the 73 lessons inspected, 68% were rated good or outstanding and 4% were less than satisfactory. This profile is better than the average for all colleges inspected in 1996-97, according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report* where 61% of lessons were graded outstanding or good and 8% less than satisfactory or poor. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected (66%) is below the average attendance for all colleges for 1996-97 (77%) as documented in the same report. The highest attendances were in extended education (85%), computing and information technology (77%), and social care (75%). The lowest attendance was in hair and beauty therapy courses (57%). The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected.

Curriculum Areas

Computing and Information Technology

Grade 2

7 The inspection covered information technology (IT) and computing provision at the main college campus at Clowne and at a range of community centres. Self-assessment reports produced by each community centre and the college team were summarised in an overall statement. The self-assessment reports did not always include the key indicators of performance and some lacked deep analysis and were insufficiently self-critical. Appropriate action has been taken to address significant weaknesses identified in the quality of the IT facilities.

Key strengths

- the wide range of IT provision freely available in the community
- effectively planned and well-managed teaching and learning on most courses
- comprehensive students' records and effective monitoring of individual students
- pass and retention rates on full-time courses above the national average
- well-organised and attractive IT workshops

Weaknesses

- the range of teaching methods on some City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) courses
- lack of accurate data on achievements for the C&G 726 courses
- low retention and pass rates on some part-time courses
- lack of technical expertise to support the use of IT equipment in community centres
- inappropriate range of learning materials for some students

8 The computing provision is effectively managed to provide a wide range of entry levels and progression routes and programmes at convenient locations and times. Inspectors agreed with the college's identification of this as a strength in its self-assessment report. Students can choose from a wide range of options within the C&G 726 qualification each year. A large number of students gain a nationally accredited qualification annually. A small number of students study full time for courses leading to the BTEC national diploma in computer studies and the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate IT applications. Students with no previous experience can follow a foundation level programme, while those with more experience can progress more quickly.

9 Teachers plan their courses well. They make effective use of a wide variety of learning activities and well-produced printed handouts and computer-based learning packages. However, on C&G 726 courses students study from printed notes and work through practical exercises and this style of learning is not appropriate for all students or all topics. The self-assessment reports do not identify the need to extend the range of teaching methods used for these students. The teaching arrangements for beginners in the IT workshops require further development.

10 Courses are appropriately administered. Records kept of individual students' attendance and progress are good. The effectiveness of self-assessment in some community centres is reduced by the lack of accurate data to monitor the key performance indicators of attendance, success and progression of groups of students. Surveys indicate that students are generally satisfied with their courses and the tuition given.

11 In the last year, over 500 students gained a full C&G IT certificate and many more gained a partial award. However, at some centres, and on courses taught by some tutors, results are poor. Overall, retention and pass rates on part-

Curriculum Areas

time IT courses are low with less than 25% of the students who begin courses gaining a full award, although many gain partial awards. This weakness is noted in the college's self-assessment report. The results for full-time courses in computing are good and at or above national levels. Progression to further courses and higher education is satisfactory.

12 Computer centres are attractive and provide access to an appropriate range of modern computer facilities. Equipment is identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report but this has successfully been addressed. The hardware specification varies between some centres and access to multimedia systems and the internet is not always available. The courses that can be provided in some workshops are limited by the expertise of the staff. Technical support for computer systems is not readily available at all community centres.

Examples of students' achievements in computing and information technology, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
BTEC national diploma computer studies (full time)	Retention (%)	93	75	88
	Pass rate (%)	85	73	67
BTEC first and GNVQ intermediate (full time)	Retention (%)	92	73	100
	Pass rate (%)	67	45	81
C&G 726 (part time)	Retention (%)	*	*	*
	Pass rate (%)	30	27	48

Source: college data

*reliable data not available

Curriculum Areas

Business

Grade 2

13 The inspection of business included provision in the college site, and provision franchised out to collaborative partners. The college produced a summary self-assessment report for the whole of the programme area. Some key strengths within teaching and learning and resources were overlooked and some key weaknesses were underemphasised. Some weaknesses had largely been addressed by the time of the inspection. The contributory self-assessment reports from some teams lacked deep analysis and failed to identify the underlying reasons for weaknesses.

Key strengths

- generally high standard of teaching
- high proportion of good, individually managed learning by students
- good examination pass rates in secretarial skills single subjects
- well-planned and managed workshop provision
- provision available on a flexible basis to serve local community needs
- good specialist resources

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some courses
- failure to integrate key skills with the work on some courses
- the quality of some feedback to students on completed work
- poor curriculum development links between teaching teams across the college

14 The standard of teaching was generally high across the range of courses observed. This

strength was underemphasised in the college's self-assessment report. The organisation and management of workshops, and the monitoring of students' progress are particular strengths. Relationships between staff and students and individual tutorial support are good. Inspectors agreed with the college's identification of this as a strength in its self-assessment report.

15 On full-time and substantial part-time courses the tasks set for students were imaginatively devised to take account of their expertise. However, key skills are not always integrated with the tasks set and the strength claimed for the key skills work was not substantiated by inspection. Staff comments on assignment work are not always sufficiently detailed to help students improve their work, and some grading is overgenerous. The tutorial programme for full-time students is ambitious and insufficient course time has been made available for the programme to be completed.

16 Pass rates in single subject examinations in secretarial skills are good. Students who complete their full-time programmes achieve high pass rates. Retention on full-time and some part-time programmes is poor and is identified in the college's self-assessment as a weakness. Progression rates from year one to year two of some programmes are low. During the inspection, only 64% of the students enrolled on registers attended.

17 Business administration courses are available throughout the year to meet local community needs. Enrolment can take place at any time and hours of attendance are flexible throughout the day, week and year, including weekends. This strength was recognised by the college in its self-assessment. Individual programmes are well managed; there are sound systems for pre-entry guidance, action-planning for learning and for monitoring students' progress. The main campus at Clowne, the community centres and the franchise partners all develop their curriculum and resources

Curriculum Areas

independently. Links between them are poor and there are missed opportunities for sharing good practice and staff development. This is not identified in the self-assessment report.

18 Resources on the main site and in most community centres are good. On the Clowne Campus there is a well-equipped and well-furnished business centre. The computers are up to date and run modern software, including accounts packages. The reception area is operated as a realistic work environment for national vocational qualification (NVQ) students. The resource based learning centre for European studies is of high quality. Collaborative partners have good-quality accommodation and resources. One partner operates for part of the time from a well-equipped room at the Manor College Further Education Centre. Good-quality learning resource packages to enable students to learn on their own are used at all sites.

Examples of students' achievements in business, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
National diploma, certificate and GNVQ advanced	Retention (%)	*	60	55
	Pass rate (%)	*	71	68
Stage 3 skills and NVQ level 3	Retention (%)	*	81	81
	Pass rate (%)	*	46	74
Stage 2 skills and NVQ level 2	Retention (%)	*	81	84
	Pass rate (%)	*	47	70
Stage 1 skills and NVQ level 1	Retention (%)	*	72	80
	Pass rate (%)	*	51	75

Source: college data

*reliable data not available

Curriculum Areas

Health, Hairdressing and Care

Grade 3

19 The inspection covered provision in health and social care, hairdressing, beauty therapy and complementary therapies. The main self-assessment report summarises a range of course team self-assessment reports and it was necessary to review this to be clear which strengths and weaknesses applied to the areas inspected. In general, inspection evidence supported the college's findings.

Key strengths

- effectively planned teaching
- the variety of teaching and learning methods in health and social care
- consistent and fair assessment and constructive feedback
- full integration of key skills within a vocational context
- good achievements on GNVQ foundation and complementary therapy courses

Weaknesses

- poor retention, achievement and attendance on some courses
- low numbers of students and small class sizes in health and social care
- lack of systematic lesson evaluation
- ineffectiveness of learning support sessions in health and social care
- some ineffective teaching in theory lessons in hair and beauty
- shortage of electrical therapy units in beauty therapy

20 Within the caring provision there is a popular North East Midlands Access Programme consisting of basic counselling skills, caring strategies, pathways to care and alternative therapies at levels 1 and 2. The college offers a full range of hairdressing, beauty therapy and complementary therapy courses. This was also

identified as a strength in the college's self-assessment report. Most courses are supported by an element of work placement.

21 All courses are effectively managed. All course teams have prepared well-structured schemes of work and lesson plans. Hairdressing and beauty therapy courses are based on two campuses, Clowne and Manor College Further Education Centre. There is little sharing of good practice. Practical teaching in hairdressing and beauty therapy is good but the effectiveness of some teaching of theory is reduced by the small range of teaching methods used. Few adults take advantage of the extra support available from the key skills unit. In health and social care, teaching is effectively planned to include an appropriate variety of teaching and learning methods. Assessment is consistent and fair and teachers provide helpful feedback to students. There is effective monitoring of assessment through internal verification. The college's self-assessment report justifiably described the provision in health and social care as a strength.

22 Students worked conscientiously in class and most participated well in question and answer sessions. Students worked confidently in the salons, were dressed in a professional manner and were developing appropriate and relevant practical skills.

23 In health and social care, achievements on the GNVQ foundation course and the North East Midlands Access Programme courses are generally good. On the GNVQ advanced and intermediate courses achievement is poor and declining. Achievements in hair and beauty are satisfactory, with very good achievements in complementary therapies. Retention on the GNVQ advanced course is unsatisfactory. Retention rates on some courses in hair and beauty in 1997 are poor but there is high retention on part-time evening courses for complementary therapies.

24 Enrolments on the full-time GNVQ programme have fallen significantly over the past three years and together with poor

Curriculum Areas

achievements have resulted in the college not running a second year of the advanced course or a foundation course in 1997-98. Enrolments to full-time courses in health and social care in 1997-98 are low. In the lessons observed in health and social care the average class size was 6.3 students. Issues relating to enrolments, achievement and retention are acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

25 Overall the accommodation is fit for its purpose. Hairdressing salons are of industrial standard and provide a professional working environment. Beauty salons are new and meet the needs of the existing beauty and complementary therapy courses. There is a lack of specialist electrical and other equipment for beauty therapy. The demonstration theatre at Manor College Further Education Centre is of a high standard and provides an excellent learning environment for students.

Examples of students' achievements in health, hairdressing and care, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GNVQ advanced	Retention (%)	+	57	28
	Pass rate (%)	+	28	0
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	64	71	90
	Pass rate (%)	48	70	33
GNVQ foundation	Retention (%)	79	66	44
	Pass rate (%)	100	68	100
North East Midlands Access Programme	Retention (%)	+	+	78
	Pass rate (%)	+	+	77

Source: college data
+course not running

Curriculum Areas

Modern Foreign Languages

Grade 2

26 The inspection covered modern language provision at the main college campus and the language training provided through collaborative provision at Manor College Further Education Centre. There were separate self-assessment reports for each provision which were then combined with another curriculum area. The majority of the judgements were supported by the evidence of inspection.

Key strengths

- appropriate provision which meets students' needs and levels of experience
- well-planned courses and comprehensive student records
- effective use of audiovisual aids by teachers
- high levels of students' practice in the spoken language

Weaknesses

- teachers' excessive use of English and failure to involve students in oral work in some lessons
- limited opportunities to share good practice across campuses
- lack of access to facilities for students to study on their own

27 There is appropriate provision which meets students' needs and levels of ability and the college's self-assessment report acknowledged this as a strength. The main provision consists of general certificate of education advanced/advanced supplementary level (GCE A/AS level), GCSE, East Midlands Further Education Council awards levels 1 to 3 and NVQ level 1. The languages available are French, German, Italian, Spanish and Welsh. All evening courses have large numbers and are

well attended. Daytime classes are smaller and there are low numbers taking GCE A level. The first year of the GCE A level German has not run this year.

28 The quality of teaching is consistently high at Clowne but less so at Manor College Further Education Centre. The self-assessment report for Manor College included the effective use of a variety of teaching materials as a strength. This was not always found to be the case. In the best lessons, teachers gave clear explanations in the language being learned and in English, provided an appropriate variety of progressively difficult learning activities, encouraged high levels of students' use of the spoken language, work in pairs or in the class as a whole, and used audiovisual aids effectively.

29 Though the standard of students' oral work in lessons was generally high, there were several instances of poor pronunciation by students in some classes, reflecting their lack of oral practice in the language. Most students take formal assessments and their progress through the levels is carefully recorded. In 1996, GCSE results at the Clowne Campus were good with pass rates at grades C and above of 100% in French and Spanish and 80% in German. These results support the claim in the Clowne Campus self-assessment report that examination results are a strength. In German, GCE A level results were very good in 1996 with a 100% pass rate but GCE AS results in Spanish were poor with a pass rate of 25%.

30 Tutors at the Clowne Campus manage their courses effectively and the training at Manor College Further Education Centre is well managed by the commercial language trainer. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that comprehensive student records kept at the Clowne Campus were a strength. There is no system for reviewing language-related issues, including resources, across the college, or for providing opportunities to share good practice.

Curriculum Areas

31 Resources for modern languages at Clowne Campus are very good. Students have access to numerous sets of texts, self-study packs, sets of audio cassettes and a computer station with access to multimedia, electronic mail and the internet. However, there are few facilities where students can use these resources to study on their own as formal teaching takes place in the centre for most of the day and evening.

Examples of students' achievements in modern foreign languages, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A/AS level	Retention (%)	*	77	63
	Pass rate (%)	*	53	80
East Midlands Further Education Council level 3	Retention (%)	+	100	100
	Pass rate (%)	+	13	10
East Midlands Further Education Council level 2	Retention (%)	+	86	90
	Pass rate (%)	+	22	70
East Midlands Further Education Council level 1	Retention (%)	+	+	53
	Pass rate (%)	+	+	100
East Midlands Further Education Council beginners	Retention (%)	88	74	100
	Pass rate (%)	36	47	67

Source: college data

*data not available

+course not running

Curriculum Areas

Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Grade 2

32 The 'extended education' programme offers full-time programmes, link courses and a little part-time provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college's self-assessment report covers all basic education provision. It overestimates the strengths of the aspects inspected. There are some key strengths in teaching and learning and weaknesses in curricula management that are not identified.

Key strengths

- well-planned teaching and learning
- achievement of targets for retention/completion
- students' achievement of a portfolio of appropriate qualifications
- clear recognition of students' other achievements
- effective link courses
- strong links with other providers

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped assessment of learning needs
- failure to inform teachers sufficiently of students' learning needs
- insufficiently developed individual learning programmes for some students
- some ineffective teaching
- large size of some groups
- failure to manage care staff effectively in some sessions

33 The foundation studies section offers link programmes with schools for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This 'extended education' programme makes up over

10% of full-time students on the Clowne Campus. The extended education course at Manor College Further Education Centre runs a parallel programme, managed separately. The provision meets the needs of a wide range of students. Links with other agencies are strong, particularly those with social workers, day centres, voluntary organisations and private care providers. The self-assessment report justifiably described the provision and links with other agencies as strengths.

34 Courses and schemes of work are well planned and lessons are well prepared. Most of the teaching is good or outstanding. However, the self-assessment report fails to identify any strengths in teaching or learning. Teachers use imaginative methods which give students opportunities to make choices or to take leadership roles. Often with the help of a learning support team, teachers help students to develop interpersonal skills, inside and outside the classroom, and give positive verbal feedback to them on how well they are doing. In a few lessons, there is effective recording of students' learning outcomes. Teachers encourage students to participate in extra-curricular activities. There are some less effective lessons where teachers fail to manage groups adequately, and provide students with work that is insufficiently challenging. In a few lessons, students engaged in enjoyable activity but its educational purpose was unclear.

35 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report's identification of the failure to implement differentiated learning activities as a key weakness. Other weaknesses in teaching, learning or curriculum management are not identified. The effective assessment of students' learning difficulties and the development of individual learning programmes are not well established. A few students have individual timetables, but these are not yet sufficiently developed to form individual learning programmes. Teachers receive insufficient information about students' learning difficulties so that they can adjust their teaching. The

Curriculum Areas

recognition in the self-assessment report that some groups are too large was confirmed by the inspection.

36 There is a strong commitment to staff development. Care staff from other agencies are sometimes not well managed and appear poorly briefed about their role in supporting learning. The specialist accommodation is welcoming, bright and cheerful. Weaknesses in accommodation include the lack of noise insulation between the two main teaching rooms. Students have access to standard IT equipment. The woodcraft area is not well equipped.

37 Inspectors agreed with the college's identification in the self-assessment report that the range of students' achievements are a key strength. Students achieve a portfolio of appropriate qualifications which they value. Students make good individual progress. Students' other achievements are recognised and valued by the college, and extra-curricular activities are well developed. Two students obtained medals in the special Olympics in 1997. As yet, few students progress to general further education courses.

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

38 Each team with responsibility for aspects of support for students produced a self-assessment report. It was not always clear whether the reports covered the whole college or only the Clowne Campus. Inspectors broadly agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment reports, although they differed in the emphasis they gave to some and considered that the college had omitted some. There is no specific reference to additional learning support or the tutorial system in the self-assessment report although inspectors thought that there were key strengths and some weaknesses in each of these aspects.

Key strengths

- effective pre-course advice and guidance
- comprehensive induction for full-time and most part-time students
- systematic tutorial procedures providing effective support for full-time students
- well-resourced key skills workshop on the Clowne Campus available to all students
- good access to advice about progression opportunities
- accessible counselling, welfare and chaplaincy services across all campuses
- well-organised childcare available at all centres
- effective arrangements for communicating with students across the college

Weaknesses

- lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities for assessment and the provision of learning support

- some poor quality of tutorial practice
- lack of learning support for part-time students
- little monitoring of some support activities

39 There is a well-planned programme of pre-course advice and information events. Specific advice sessions are held for adults at a variety of locations. The careers service 'options' guidance points at, or near, all community centres provide accessible and helpful guidance to mature students. For school-leavers there is an extensive programme of schools links and open events and a co-ordinated system of year-round advisory interviews in all faculties. There is a common system for recording initial guidance and for planning individual programmes in the main college but its use is less systematic across the community centres. The college admissions policy is used across all college centres.

40 The college framework for induction is effective. It is supplemented by additional activities to meet specific course requirements. All full-time students have briefings from student services, the college counsellor, careers staff and the key skills workshop staff. Students receive a copy of the charter with details of the complaints procedures. Full-time students were generally satisfied with their introduction to the college. Induction for some part-time students is less effective. Students' views are canvassed and changes have been made to induction procedures as a result.

41 Almost all of the college's full-time students work on the main college site. This has a well-resourced key skills workshop in which students can obtain help in literacy, numeracy and IT. All full-time students aged 16 to 19 complete the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) initial diagnostic test during induction, and learning support is offered either through the workshop or through support on their course. There is no central

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co-ordination of the support provided on courses. Attendance at the workshop is poor; only 50% of those identified for additional support attend. Only some adults and part-time students receive assessment. The level of support in some college community centres is low, though some have workshops offering learning support and some written materials. Students have an entitlement to use the support facilities on the Clowne Campus but travel is difficult and few do so. The roles and responsibilities of staff for identifying, providing and monitoring additional learning support require clarification.

42 The college tutorial system for full-time students works well. Within the overall college framework, individual courses devise well-planned tutorial programmes which take account of students' needs. Comprehensive records of tutorials are maintained for full-time students. A modified version of the tutorial system applies to part-time students. A minority of tutorials observed lacked purpose. The overall quality of a few programmes was poor. This issue is identified in the self-assessment report and accompanying action plan and clearer standards and monitoring procedures are being introduced. Part-time students who attend the community centres benefit from good individual tutorial support although full records of individual meetings with tutors are not always maintained. Management information about overall attendance, achievement or progression at course or centre level is incomplete. The self-assessment report identifies attendance as an issue.

43 Students receive good careers advice while at the college. The careers service works closely with tutors to provide group and individual support for full-time students. Increasingly, part-time students are using the 'options guidance' service in the college or at points close to the community centres. The college provides counselling and chaplaincy services covering general welfare across all centres and these are well used by students. There are close links

with professional counsellors. Childcare, usually provided by the college, is available on all college sites. There is a generous fee and transport policy for all students. All these strengths are identified in the self-assessment report and they were confirmed by the inspection.

44 The college makes great efforts to communicate with its varied and scattered student clientele. There are weekly briefing sheets that enable tutors to update students and a termly student newsletter which goes to all centres. Students on the main site operate a college radio station. Students' responses to the course reviews are generally positive.

General Resources

Grade 3

45 Inspectors agreed overall with the key strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report but considered that some of the strengths were overstated. IT equipment has since been improved since the self-assessment was completed.

Key strengths

- 'self-help' maintenance and improvement on all sites
- modern library and resource centres on the Clowne Campus
- the high quality of the Manor College Further Education Centre development
- well-equipped learning workshops

Weaknesses

- lack of an effective strategy for accommodation
- extremely low space utilisation
- poor facilities and state of repair at some sites
- lack of computers and technical support for IT in some areas

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46 The lack of an effective strategy for developing the accommodation and improving utilisation is a key weakness that was not identified in the self-assessment report. The recently produced accommodation strategy is not supported by appropriate data or analysis. Space utilisation is low at 16% across all sites. A target for improvement has been set but there are not yet systems that effectively monitor progress towards its achievement. The need for increased capital expenditure identified as a weakness in the college's self-assessment is not supported by the evidence of the inspection.

47 Accommodation across the majority of sites is suitable and most areas of the college are in a fair or good state of repair. The standard of internal decor is generally good. There is high-quality accommodation at the Manor College Further Education Centre. The main entrance to the Clowne Campus is in need of refurbishment and the car park is in need of repair. Some of the community centres will require substantial maintenance over the next few years. The property services team undertakes a great deal of maintenance and repair work and this was justifiably described as a strength in the college's self-assessment. There are some problems in keeping up with the required maintenance and repair schedule for all sites. Suggested planned maintenance programmes have been prepared recently by an external consultant. Staff work areas at Clowne and Manor College Further Education Centre are generally spacious. Some staff accommodation at the community centres is only adequate.

48 Access for students with restricted mobility is generally good. The college's disability statement contains useful information on physical accommodation and access. It identifies areas which are not accessible and lists plans for future improvement. The first-floor study area of the library is not accessible, but alternative spaces are available at ground-floor level. At Manor College Further Education Centre there is currently no lift but one is

planned. The Clowne Campus has a modern, well-furnished refectory and student recreational area. Manor College Further Education Centre has a students' common room but facilities at other community centres are less good. The college has its own sports ground in Clowne with good changing facilities.

49 General facilities to support learning are good and were identified as a strength by the college. A modern, well-equipped and well-stocked library provides excellent facilities for students on the main site although the college acknowledges that limited staffing restricted further development. It has an appropriate stock of books, videos and periodicals. There are adequate study spaces and IT facilities, including CD-ROMs. Library management and information systems are computerised. Each curriculum team on the Clowne Campus has its own resource centre to support teaching and learning. Learning workshops are a key feature of the provision. An attractive, easily accessible workshop is also available for key skills development. Rooms are generally well furnished, with a good supply of equipment.

50 Overall the standard of IT equipment across the college is adequate as a result of the action taken to resolve the weakness identified through self-assessment. There is an equipment replacement policy and further improvements are planned. Computing facilities are available to students in the library and resource centres across the college. Each programme area owns some IT facilities. In some areas computers are underused, but in others, demand outstrips availability. Levels of technician support for IT are inadequate to meet the demands across all the college sites.

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Quality Assurance

Grade 2

51 The strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report were generally consistent with those identified by inspection although the college did not identify some specific strengths and has combined together some weaknesses.

Key strengths

- the continuous development of its quality assurance framework
- the established system for course review and evaluation
- the internal inspection system incorporating the observation of teaching
- the self-assessment review group with external membership
- the quality assurance processes for collaborative provision
- the appraisal and staff development provision for all staff

Weaknesses

- the lack of coherence between some elements of the quality assurance process
- the small range and little use of performance indicators
- self-assessment not integrated with all aspects of the quality assurance processes
- inconsistency in the rigour and realism with which targets are set and used

52 The college has continuously developed and improved its quality assurance framework. The system of self-assessment is built on a well-established system of course review, evaluation and action-planning that involves a wide range of staff. There are substantial links

between self-assessment and the existing quality assurance processes. However, self-assessment has yet to be fully integrated with all the elements of the quality assurance framework. The first formal self-assessment report was prepared for the inspection and involved senior managers, representatives of a range of college committees and members of the corporation.

53 The self-assessment report was produced as a summary document. It does not contain the detailed evidence and analysis of strengths and weaknesses which is included in the comprehensive range of subsidiary self-assessments prepared by all college teams. The subsidiary reports were generally useful to inspectors. Evidence also came from the effective system of internal inspection, surveys of students' and employers' views, and action plans for improvement. The data on students' achievements presented by the college were generally accurate although data for those courses that enrol throughout the year were not always presented in an easily useable form. There is little and inconsistent use of performance indicators in quality assurance and self-assessment across the college. The self-assessment report contains an action plan which effectively addresses the areas of weakness and identifies target dates against which progress can be measured.

54 The comprehensive quality assurance policy is reviewed annually. Retention targets and other objectives related to, for example, the quality of teaching and learning are generated annually by all operational teams. The inconsistency in the rigour with which the targets are set and used reduces their effectiveness. This is recognised as a weakness in the college's self-assessment report. Termly course reviews monitor progress and agree actions to effect improvements. However, the points for action sometimes describe an issue rather than clearly stating measures for improvement. All teams produce action plans based on the issues from their self-assessment

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report; these are generally tighter and more detailed than the termly reviews. The overlap between termly reviews and the annual self-assessment reduces the coherence of the quality assurance monitoring. Course reviews and self-assessments provide a useful basis for the faculty reports which then contribute to the college strategic plan. There are good quality assurance processes to monitor collaborative provision.

55 The quality development unit, set up in 1994, competently administers and analyses surveys of students' opinions, undertakes inspections and reports outcomes to the quality assurance committee. The system for internal inspection is thorough. It includes the observation of teaching as well as checking all the systems for course review and evaluation. Action plans are developed and progress is monitored. The self-assessment report identified the need to increase the frequency and scope of the inspection cycle. This has been addressed through the appointment of another member of staff to carry out inspections.

56 The quality assurance committee effectively monitors the operation of the framework for quality assurance across the college and the progress made against action plans. It presents an overview report on quality assurance to the corporation. It monitors the complaints procedures and undertakes the annual updating of college policies. It is a committee of the academic board. The academic board includes student and staff representatives from each faculty. It meets termly and makes recommendations on issues arising from the quality reports and the analysis of surveys of students on their experiences.

57 The self-assessment review group is a recently constituted committee. It provided a useful independent external assessment of the self-assessment report. It advised on the accuracy and the rigour of the report and moderated the grades awarded. It comprises

11 members including representatives of students, staff, employers, the local education authority (LEA), schools, the local training and enterprise council (TEC), the community, the corporation and the academic board.

58 The system of staff development is thorough. Both the established system for appraisal and the internal inspection of the curriculum contribute to the identification of staff development needs. The system for staff appraisal is appreciated by staff. Annual appraisal is augmented by regular one-to-one meetings where training and development targets, achievements and feedback from development activities are discussed. The college achieved the Investor in People award in 1996.

Governance

Grade 3

59 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college in its self-assessment although there were a number of weaknesses not identified by the college.

Key strengths

- the effective appointment procedure for expanded corporation
- the activity of the governance committee in securing members with additional skills for the corporation
- an appropriate committee structure with clear terms of reference
- effective clerking arrangements
- governors' wide-ranging support for the college

Weaknesses

- poor attendance at some corporation and committees meetings

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- overlap of work of the corporation and the finance, employment and general purposes committee
- lack of comprehensive and timely financial management information for corporation
- audit committee ineffective in securing timely action on key internal audit recommendations
- limited monitoring of the college's educational performance

60 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is adequate. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. The corporation has established a finance, employment and general purposes committee, an audit committee, a remuneration committee and a governance committee. It is in the process of establishing an education and a quality assurance committee. The governance committee considered issues leading to improvements in various corporation procedures such as the register of members' interests. The committee structure is supported by clear terms of reference for each committee. The finance, employment and general purposes committee's business is sometimes conducted at corporation meetings. As a result the functions of this committee and the corporation have sometimes overlapped.

61 The corporation and committees are well supported by the comprehensive clerking arrangements as identified in the self-assessment report. Appropriate agendas and papers are circulated in advance of meetings and are publicly available. The college's register of interests is completed by all governors and senior managers. The corporation has a code of

conduct and standing orders. The standing orders cover committee procedures effectively but are less thorough in dealing with corporation procedures. Governors receive limited financial information in a format determined by them; management accounts are distributed to the finance, employment and general purposes committee and the corporation only in the months in which they meet. This weakness is not identified in the self-assessment report. Interim accounts in the format of the annual accounts are produced twice yearly in addition to final accounts, and considered several months after the end of the accounting period. The format and delay in considering the interim accounts reduces the usefulness of these reports. The audit committee has considered internal audit assignment reports during the year. It did not highlight the full significance of the adverse 1995-96 internal audit annual opinion to the corporation. The audit committee did not secure all the necessary actions to resolve the adverse report.

62 The size of the corporation is being increased from 10 to 15 with effect from 1 January 1998. The governance committee led the process for the expansion in size and for securing members with additional skills for the corporation. Vacancies were advertised in local newspapers and a selection process was undertaken. Key criteria for the process were to find representation from the various geographical areas served by the college and members with the expertise necessary to provide a balance of skills in the corporation. Five members were co-opted and included a member from the local authority. Nearly 50% of the expanded corporation will have educational expertise. There are no elected staff or student representatives, although a member of staff has been co-opted to the new corporation.

63 Governors are supportive of the college's mission to serve the needs of the local community. They make regular visits to the college's main site and to the community centres

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to attend formal functions and to understand the work of the college. This is noted in the self-assessment report as a strength. Routine monitoring of the college's performance has concentrated on ensuring and improving the financial viability of the college. Much time and effort has been spent on preparing for a significant legal challenge. The governors consider and approve the strategic plan. The remuneration committee recommended the inclusion of performance indicators in the strategic plan 1997 to 2000 as a measure of senior postholder performance. The principal and the chair of the corporation have a close working relationship. The respective roles of the corporation and the principal in managing the college are clearly understood.

64 Educational matters are regularly considered by the corporation and the finance employment and general purposes subcommittee. The college annual report contains an introduction from the chair of the corporation and is approved by the corporation. It reports on educational matters as well as financial matters. As identified in the college's self-assessment report, a more detailed monitoring of the college's performance against educational targets is being planned. Two governors serve on the self-assessment review group which is overseeing the college's self-assessment process.

Management

Grade 3

65 Inspectors generally agreed with the strengths and weakness identified by the college related to the educational aspects of the management of the college. Inspectors and auditors identified a number of weaknesses in management responsibilities which were not identified by the college.

Key strengths

- college-wide strategic planning process
- clear and generally effective management structures and internal communications
- effective deployment of resources
- comprehensive and timely budget reports to budget holders
- external liaison and marketing
- the depth of understanding and strength of support for the college mission by all staff

Weaknesses

- the lack of coherence between various strategic plans
- limited sharing of curriculum good practice across sites
- inadequacy of aspects of systems of internal control
- poor integration of financial management and accounting systems
- little monitoring of the financial contribution of outreach centres
- limited formal monitoring of equal opportunities policy

66 All staff are involved in the production of strategic plans to a broadly similar format at college, faculty or team levels as identified in the self-assessment. The 1997 to 2000 strategic objectives have been translated into operating

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objectives for 1997-98. The two 'academic' faculty strategic plans contain individual team strategic plans for 1997-98 with associated targets. These plans do not contain a review of performance against previous targets or make explicit reference to the current college objectives. Overall, there is a lack of coherence between the various strategic plans.

67 Staff understand and support the college's mission. Communication is generally effective across the college. Regular newsletters and those on specific issues cover corporation and college affairs. Some inter-site communications and sharing of ideas and expertise between teams teaching common subjects could be improved. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment and confirmed by the inspection.

68 Management structures are clear and generally effective, as identified in the self-assessment report. Staff understand their roles within the structure. The senior management team, which forms the strategic planning group, consists of the principal/chief executive, the director of strategic planning, the two assistant principals, the clerk to the corporation, the head of faculty (college and community services), and the college administrator. The group monitors management accounts and student enrolments. Each month there is an in-depth review of a particular topic. Funding unit targets have been met. Resources are deployed effectively. Staffing costs are tightly controlled and form less than 60% of income. A number of staff have been redeployed to undertake new and existing work and to make better use of their capabilities. An effective cycle of meetings enables teaching and support staff to meet with line managers either individually or as a team at regular intervals, and termly with the principal.

69 The FEFC's audit service considers that, within the scope of its review, the financial management of the college is weak. The college's internal auditors have reported adversely in their annual reports for 1995-96

and 1996-97. They have stated in their 1996-97 report that management is not able to rely on the overall system of internal control.

Considerable action has been taken on the recommendations but this was insufficient to address all aspects of the report for 1996-97. Many of the audit recommendations were given a high priority by the internal auditors. Some high priority recommendations have not been fully implemented since 1995.

70 The college regularly reviews its performance against the FEFC's published performance indicators covering sector colleges and generally meets them. Budget holders receive comprehensive and timely budget reports and additional information as necessary. The monthly management accounts do not include a monthly balance sheet, forecasts of income and expenditure to the year end, or a cashflow forecast beyond the current year end. The commentary accompanying management accounts is not sufficiently detailed. The profiling of the budget for 1996-97 is inaccurate in the year to date. Production of the management accounts is not integrated with the accounting system. Some student management information is produced centrally but managers often keep additional records. The lack of easy access to data is recognised in the self-assessment report. Plans have been made to provide on-line data access.

71 The college has close links with the North Derbyshire TEC, the Derbyshire LEA and the local communities. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. The college is an active participant in a number of community projects involving local community groups and agencies. A business development unit supports links with employers.

72 The strategic plan has been developed using a number of sources of data including regional economic assessments and labour market information. The marketing unit is used mainly to promote the college. There is a comprehensive schedule of visits to schools to

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attend events such as post-16 information evenings. There are close links with job centres to promote the college's services for adults. Surveys have been undertaken to determine the views of employers on the college provision.

73 The equal opportunities policy is comprehensive and defines equal opportunities practices under a number of relevant headings, but there is little formal reporting of progress against all the headings. Equal opportunities is a regular agenda item on faculty team leader meetings. Staff and student gender and ethnicity groupings are monitored termly. All job descriptions comply with the college's equal opportunities policy. Staff have attended courses on a range of equal opportunities issues.

Conclusions

74 The overarching self-assessment report was produced as an executive summary document. The subsidiary reports contained variable levels of analysis but generally identified the key strengths and weaknesses. They were useful to inspectors carrying out the inspection. Inspectors agreed with many of the findings in the college's self-assessment report although they considered that the report did not always reflect the key features of the team reports or emphasise the same points. Inspectors found that some key strengths, particularly those related to teaching and learning, were missed while others were overstated. A number of key weaknesses, particularly related to cross-college areas, were not identified. Inspectors agreed with most of the grades awarded for cross-college areas and curriculum provision. In all cases where the inspection team and college grades differed, inspectors considered the college to be overgenerous.

75 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 (July 1997)

Age	%
Under 16	2
16-18 years	14
19-24 years	12
25+ years	71
Not known	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1997)

Level of study	%
Foundation	47
Intermediate	33
Advanced	19
Higher education	0
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (July 1997)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	33	3,238	36
Agriculture	41	94	1
Construction	106	81	2
Engineering	181	272	5
Business	172	1,355	16
Hotel and catering	48	91	1
Health and community care	345	1,165	16
Art and design	25	113	1
Humanities	271	1,515	20
Basic education	0	225	2
Total	1,222	8,149	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1997)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	96	0	0	96
Supporting direct learning contact	17	0	0	17
Other support	89	0	0	89
Total	202	0	0	202

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£6,002,000	£6,122,000	£6,295,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£21.63	£13.86	£19.52
Payroll as a proportion of income	61%	59%	60%
Achievement of funding target	95%	181%	98%
Diversity of income	18%	9%	5%
Operating surplus	£48,000	-£207,000	*

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

ALF – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), Funding Allocations 1996-97 (1996-97)

Payroll – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96)

Diversity of income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)

Operating surplus – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96)

*data not available

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	79	89	49
	Average point score per entry	3.0	3.3	3.2
	Position in tables	bottom third	middle third	bottom third
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	34	53	50
	Percentage achieving qualifications	79%	51%	54%
	Position in tables	middle third	bottom 10%	bottom third
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	54	35
	Percentage achieving qualification	*	57%	46%
	Position in tables	*	middle third	bottom third

Source: DfEE

Note: the majority of the college's students are 19 years of age or older

The achievements of these students are not covered in published DfEE performance tables

*1994-95 intermediate vocational results not available

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