

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1997-98**

**THE
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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

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology

West Midlands Region

Inspected November 1997

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology is the largest general further education college in Shropshire. College managers prepared carefully for the process of self-assessment and produced a clearly written report. The openness with which the college undertook the exercise was a particularly strong feature. Three senior members of another college were invited to attend assessment and moderation meetings at which the strengths and weaknesses of the college's self-assessment report were debated. A meeting of the academic board, which was attended by the chairman and members of the corporation, was called to approve the self-assessment. The evidence from the inspection confirms much of the college's self-assessment but inspectors concluded that the weaknesses, when drawn together, were more significant than the college had recognised.

The college offers a wide range of courses in nine of the FEFC's programme areas and has a few students in the tenth, agriculture. A sample of courses in five of these areas was inspected, together with aspects of cross-college provision. The college has a wide range of vocational courses and responds well to local needs. Employers and training agencies commented on the college's increasing responsiveness and

customer awareness. There are close relations with local colleges, schools, companies, and the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise. Standards of teaching are generally satisfactory. In humanities and basic education, some teaching is outstanding. Some students' achievements are good and above the national average. The college is continuing to develop procedures to ensure quality. Some quality assurance procedures are not yet fully effective. The college has not undertaken lesson observation as part of its quality assurance. Governors' expertise is used effectively to support the college. The corporation has established clear financial targets and performance indicators. Management board meetings concentrate on key issues. Financial policies and procedures have been appropriately maintained. Managers have ensured that all staff have the opportunity to be involved in strategic planning. Management information relating to students' achievements is poor. The college should: improve provision for mathematics; improve some inadequate accommodation in hairdressing and beauty; take steps to reduce the wide variation in the effectiveness of course evaluation; address weaknesses in target setting and action planning; co-ordinate more effectively staff appraisal and staff development to secure improvements in teaching; improve some management information; further develop the use of performance indicators; and establish a planned replacement strategy for IT equipment.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Mathematics	3	Support for students	2
Hotel and catering	3	General resources	2
Health and social care	2	Quality assurance	3
Hairdressing and beauty	3	Governance	2
English/communication	2	Management	3
Basic education and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2		

The College and its Mission

1 Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology is the largest of seven institutions in Shropshire funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). There are 11 schools with sixth forms in the county and a city technology college. The college serves a wide catchment area including the whole of Shropshire and parts of adjacent counties. In 1993 the college had seven sites. It now has three, two in Shrewsbury and one in Bridgnorth. Shropshire is one of the most sparsely populated English counties as well as being among the largest in geographical area. The availability of transport affects choice of work and education throughout the rural areas. Just over 85 per cent of the businesses in Shropshire employ fewer than 25 people. One per cent of businesses have more than 200 employees and they account for over a quarter of the workforce. In September 1997, the unemployment rate in Shrewsbury had fallen from 5.1 per cent in the previous year to 3.2 per cent. This was slightly below the level for the county as a whole and compared with 5.4 per cent for the United Kingdom.

2 In 1996-97, 80 per cent of the 13,000 enrolments at the college were by students aged 19 and over. Some 10,000 of these were on courses funded by the FEFC. The college has exceeded its funding targets for the last two years and expects to meet the 1997-98 target. The college employs 323 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 244 are teachers or provide support for teachers. The college was reorganised in the spring of 1996 into five teaching faculties. Two faculties are named after the college sites at Radbrook and at Bridgnorth where they are based. Two others, art, design and technology, and humanities and science are based almost entirely at the London Road, Shrewsbury, Campus. All four have a broad, multidisciplinary structure. The fifth faculty is the Shrewsbury Business School: it provides courses in business, information, and

travel and tourism and is based at the London Road and Radbrook College sites. Each faculty has direct responsibility for all courses within its remit. This includes non-schedule 2 programmes and the supervision of collaborative provision. The college has a higher education programme funded directly by the FEFC or indirectly by the universities of Wolverhampton and Staffordshire and the North East Wales Institute. An adult and community education programme receives a small funding contribution from Shropshire County Council.

3 The college adopted a new mission statement in 1997 which is: 'to be recognised as the first choice for lifelong learning throughout Shropshire and beyond'. It also has a vision statement that states: 'Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology aims to enter the new millennium as the creative hub of a network of lifelong learning centres throughout Shropshire and adjoining areas. Working in partnership with others and using telecommunications and information systems wherever appropriate, we will seek to ensure access to as wide a range of programmes at every level as is possible within the resources available to us'.

The Inspection

4 The college was inspected during the week beginning 3 November 1997. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and information about the college held by other divisions of the FEFC. The college submitted partial data on students' achievements for the years 1994-97 which were validated by inspectors against primary sources, including class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. The college was notified of the sample of its provision which was to be assessed approximately two months before the inspection. The inspection was carried out by 12 inspectors and two auditors working for a total of 49 days. They observed 80 lessons, including five as part of the inspection of the

Context

college-wide use of information technology (IT), and examined students' work and college documents. Inspectors met a representative of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise, local employers, and representatives of local authorities and community groups. Meetings were held with governors, managers, college staff and students.

5 Of the lessons inspected, 60 per cent were rated good or outstanding and 6 per cent were less than satisfactory or poor. According to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report*, 61 per cent of all lessons inspected for the year 1996-97 had strengths which outweighed weaknesses and 8 per cent had weaknesses which outweighed strengths.

The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was 71 per cent. This compares less favourably with the average at 77 per cent for the sector according to the same report.

The highest attendances were in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (97 per cent); and in mathematics lessons (73 per cent); and the lowest were in basic education lessons (52 per cent).

The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	2	2	2	0	0	6
GCSE	0	3	3	1	0	7
GNVQ	2	5	2	1	0	10
NVQ	0	7	9	1	0	17
Other vocational	3	7	5	0	0	15
Other	7	10	6	2	0	25
Total	14	34	27	5	0	80

Curriculum Areas

Mathematics

Grade 3

6 The self-assessment report contained few judgements on the mathematics provision and did not separately identify a grade for mathematics from the overall grade for the science programme area. Twelve mathematics lessons were observed on two main sites. The quality of teaching and learning was generally satisfactory and in some lessons good. Some excellent results are achieved by students on access courses and in work in mathematics for other departments, but general certificate of education advanced/advanced supplementary level (GCE A/AS level) results are below average. Targets were not set and course reviews were insufficiently evaluative. Quality assurance and self-assessment information associated with mathematics was sparse.

Key strengths

- some exemplary assignment and coursework moderation
- the clear links between mathematical concepts and vocational studies made by some teachers
- good students' achievements on some courses
- the mathematics workshop support at London Road

Weaknesses

- the lack of organisation, inadequate content and slow pace of some lessons
- students' achievements below the national average in some areas
- inconsistencies in data on students' achievements and class numbers
- some unsuitable accommodation

- lack of a consistent approach to teaching mathematics across the college
- underdeveloped quality assurance and self-assessment processes

7 Mathematics provision in the college includes GCE A/AS level in pure and applied mathematics; in pure mathematics and mechanics; in statistics; general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) resit and evening courses; access to higher education courses, general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) key skills application of number courses at all three levels; significant work for other departments; and mathematics workshops. The subject is taught at all three main sites of the college. There are significant numbers of students in all courses, except GCE A/AS level where there are problems in attempting to offer a wide choice of subjects to relatively few students. A modular syllabus introduced in 1993 gives more flexibility but students' taught hours have been reduced to offer this provision. There are inconsistencies in the time allocated for the teaching of GCSE mathematics at two sites of the college. Generally, the provision of mathematics for other departments is relevant and appropriate. The lack of co-ordination in the way mathematics is taught disadvantages some students. The college did not identify this weakness in its self-assessment.

8 There are positive working relationships between staff and students. There is some good teaching and learning. In some classes, the lack of organisation, inappropriate content and slow pace of the lesson adversely affected the students' learning. Attendance and punctuality were poor in a few classes. Consistent and verifiable information on students' achievements was not available. Little information was available on students' retention. Achievements in access to higher education courses and service work in the technology faculty were good. Results for GCE A/AS level courses were

Curriculum Areas

below the national average, although they have improved since the introduction of a modular scheme. A consistent table of results for GCSE was not available. Some data for GCSE evening classes indicated a better than average pass rate. Students generally achieved the required standard of course work and their work was well marked. A particularly notable feature is the moderation of assignment work which standardises content and marking across teaching sets. The mathematics workshop at the London Road Campus provides good support for students who are directed there by staff or who, on their own initiative, seek support there. The workshop at Radbrook College is not as effectively promoted and does not have the same level of resources. The college's self-assessment identifies resource-based teaching as a strength but does not differentiate between the centres.

9 There has been little staff development associated with the subject for some time. The availability of equipment is variable: there are sufficient graphical calculators but the self-assessment report recognises that there are not enough computers to support GCE and GCSE students in class. Computers are available in the mathematics workshops but their use is not well monitored. The bookstock for mathematics in the library is adequate but is becoming dated. Rooms used mainly by mathematics teachers contain mathematically related information to promote the subject. In contrast, some of the accommodation used to teach mathematics for other departments is drab and some is

unsuitable. The mathematics workshop at Radbrook College is not well located.

Examples of students' achievements in mathematics, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCSE	Retention (%)	+	41	30
	Pass rate (%)	+	82	80
GCE A level	Retention (%)	94	52	70
	Pass rate (%)	35	60	38

Source: college data
+data for 10 students only

Curriculum Areas

Hotel and Catering

Grade 3

10 Inspectors observed 10 lessons in the hospitality and catering provision, covering full-time and part-time programmes at levels 1 to 3 and intermediate and advanced GNVQ and national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses. The strengths of teaching and learning are identified clearly but the self-assessment does not mention some of the weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Key strengths

- the good quality of most teaching and learning
- visits to industry which are well integrated with theory lessons
- good retention in 1996-97 for hospitality and catering students
- students' technical skills

Weaknesses

- variable quality of schemes of work and lesson plans
- lack of key skills provision for students on all NVQ levels 1 and 2
- the preparation of dishes not reflecting the full range of current trade practice
- unsatisfactory system for providing information on students' achievements

11 Most teaching for hospitality and catering students is of good quality. Teachers use appropriate teaching methods effectively to sustain students' interest and extend their knowledge and skills. Teachers make good use of students' experience of work to develop their understanding of the subject. Visits to industry are incorporated effectively into theory lessons. A study visit to a five star hotel was used as the basis for a lesson on customer care. The self-assessment report indicated that teaching is

well planned. Inspectors found that some schemes of work and lesson plans were inadequate consisting, in some cases, merely of lists of topics. Several dishes prepared in culinary skills lessons and realistic work environments did not reflect the full range of current trade practice. Some menus which students are asked to prepare for the college's restaurant do not provide them with enough challenge in terms of food preparation and cooking. Students on some NVQ level 1 and 2 hospitality and catering programmes do not have lessons designed to develop their key skills.

12 Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and advanced hospitality and catering courses are similar to the national average. The pass rate in 1996 for GNVQ advanced was 20 per cent above the national pass rate. However, pass rates on GNVQ courses have declined over the last three years. Pass rates for NVQ level 2 in professional catering have declined from a very good pass rate of 86 per cent in 1995 to an unsatisfactory 27 per cent in 1997. Similar declining patterns can be seen in food and beverage service, and food preparation and cooking at level 1. Retention rates for hospitality and catering students improved from 70 per cent in 1995 to 91 per cent in 1997. Most students have good technical skills. Students pay appropriate attention to hygiene. Some students should be encouraged to adopt a more professional approach to their appearance in the restaurant. The process for verifying students' achievements in hospitality and catering is generally effective. There are clear documents and procedures for the programme area, a fact supported by comments from external verifiers. The strength of the verification system is clearly made in the self-assessment report.

13 The college provides an appropriate range of courses, including NVQ and GNVQ programmes in hospitality and catering from levels 1 to 4. A useful range of additional qualifications is offered; for example, the British Institute of Innkeeping national licensees'

Curriculum Areas

certificate. A weakness recognised in the self-assessment report is the need to strengthen industrial links. There are some links with industry, for example, a network of work placements for students and the provision of assessment in the work place for local employers. However, there is no industrial advisory committee for hospitality and catering.

14 The quality of most specialist teaching accommodation is good. The kitchens provide a realistic work environment of a high standard. This strength is clearly recognised in the self-assessment report. The college's restaurant is in need of some refurbishment, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. There are no showers in the changing area for female students. The range and quality of hospitality and catering equipment is satisfactory but the restaurant lacks a modern billing system and its kitchen does not have a combination oven. Most staff have appropriate industrial experience, although this is not recent and no significant industrial updating has taken place. The range and quality of library books and periodicals is generally good.

Examples of students' achievements in hotel and catering, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
Intermediate GNVQ	Retention (%)	77	79	94
	Pass rate (%)	52	46	38
Advanced GNVQ	Retention (%)	62	72	94
	Pass rate (%)	62	67	45
NVQ level 1	Retention (%)	63	76	94
	Pass rate (%)	83	73	53
NVQ level 2	Retention (%)	58	78	79
	Pass rate (%)	86	43	27

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Health and Social Care

Grade 2

15 The inspection included observation of 11 lessons. The self-assessment report provided separate strengths and weaknesses for health and social care at both the Radbrook and Bridgnorth sites, as well as for other provision at Radbrook which fell outside the inspection. The self-assessment also applied to a wider curriculum range than that inspected, and inspectors had difficulty in linking strengths or weaknesses directly with evidence in the curriculum area or college site being inspected. Inspectors identified strengths and weaknesses during lesson observations that were not included in the self-assessment report. Retention data used by the college to support a claimed strength were unclear.

Key strengths

- effective use of a variety of learning activities, including group work
- well-planned induction programme and effective initial guidance and support
- well-taught key skills
- extensive vocational experience of staff
- the effective use made of students' own experiences of placements and/or work
- a rigorous system of internal verification
- well-equipped rooms

Weaknesses

- some poor retention, attendance and punctuality
- few opportunities for teachers to share good practice in teaching and learning
- students' needs are not always given priority in timetabling

16 Retention at Bridgnorth College ranges from 60 to 93 per cent. High levels of retention

on the GNVQ intermediate course are balanced by poor levels on courses leading to the awards of the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education. The data supplied for Radbrook indicate retention rates ranging from 64 per cent to 100 per cent. Only one year's figures could be provided in this format. The intermediate GNVQ in health and social care and childcare and education courses had retention rates below 70 per cent. In contrast, retention was 100 per cent on the BTEC national diploma in childhood studies course. The overall retention data for 1997 showed a decline, in some cases a continuing trend, in the two-year vocational courses. Overall, the data supplied indicated a marked decline in the pass rates for vocational courses.

17 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that key skills are well taught. Key skills are part of every course at Radbrook: as common skills in BTEC courses, and as complementary skills in Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education courses. The teaching of key skills at Radbrook is undertaken by three specialists from the faculty. They work with vocational teachers in the GNVQ programme. It is difficult for students to resit GCSE mathematics and English at Radbrook because of timetable clashes. All students undertake a foundation level IT course.

18 Staff have appropriate vocational qualifications and experience. Part-time teachers who work in health and social care bring useful up-to-date vocational experience. Inspectors observed a variety of good teaching and learning activities, including some effective group work. There are few opportunities for staff to share good classroom practice. Informal classroom observation and team teaching take place. For the college to sustain its claim to 'pervasive examples of a rich variety of teaching methods', more formal methods of lesson observation would be appropriate and would provide opportunities for the exchange of good practice.

Curriculum Areas

19 The college provides a general induction programme for one week followed by course inductions. Students consider that their induction is successful. Introduction to GNVQ procedures and assessment methods takes place over a 12-week period and students indicated that this helps them to understand course requirements. Study skills, research skills and work-related assignments are effectively introduced to part-time students during a three-week programme. Induction is evaluated by students and staff. Evidence from evaluation is that induction is effective and changes have occurred in response to students' needs.

20 Close links with staff in residential homes and with other care providers enable the college to work with employers. Tutorial staff arrange a well-organised programme of work experience for students. Many students obtain jobs at their placement but details of this are not recorded. Some employers are involved in the provision of a course for professional medical practice managers. Although there are strong links with employers, they are not involved in course evaluation. Feedback from employers is usually obtained through placement supervisors.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
One-year vocational courses	Retention (%)	77	88	62
	Pass rate (%)	54	59	42
Two-year vocational courses	Retention (%)	70	81	59
	Pass rate (%)	62	59	45

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Hairdressing and Beauty

Grade 3

21 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in the hairdressing, beauty and therapy courses at the Radbrook site. The evidence from the inspection did not support some of the judgements made in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- students' work of a good standard
- clear assessment procedures understood by students
- good reports from external verifiers
- the professional standards from the extensive and recent industrial experience of staff

Weaknesses

- poor resources, adversely affecting teaching and learning
- poor statistical data, including little information on students' destinations
- low pass rates compared with enrolments on many courses
- insufficient opportunities for students to use IT

22 The department offers a wide range of hairdressing, beauty, holistic therapy, and sports therapy courses, including some innovative short courses. Student numbers have grown on the holistic therapies and part-time programmes. Teachers have combined courses to give viable groups of full-time students. Teaching methods are not always appropriate. In theory lessons, teachers fail to vary learning activities sufficiently, or use visual aids effectively, and overuse handouts, booklets and written assignment work. In some lessons, teachers lacked skills in the use of whiteboards and used overhead transparencies of poor quality.

23 The information produced by the college on students' achievements did not match source data. There were data to show improved pass rates in one-year vocational courses though they were still below the national average. Evidence from the inspection confirmed the weakness identified in the college's self-assessment that on some NVQ courses students often need extra time in a subsequent year to gain the qualification. Students' practical work is of a good standard and written work and portfolios are well presented.

24 There are schemes of work for all courses. Teachers draw up timetables to take into account the distance many students travel. Full-time courses are being reviewed to check whether the introduction of additional compulsory qualifications has resulted in low achievement. Some students find difficulty with the written assessment demands of their vocational courses. IT is not integrated with the curriculum and opportunities to use IT for research, assignments and relating theory to practice are not sufficiently encouraged by staff.

25 Many positive changes have been introduced over the last three years. The staff work well as a team. The area is well managed. Staff and students are generally well informed about procedures and developments. Some registers are not completed fully or accurately and there is no collation of data to assist the development of strategies for improving retention.

26 Most teachers have teaching qualifications and recent industrial experience. Many have gained additional related qualifications through staff development. There is a good mix of male and female teachers. The specialist resources were refurbished some three years ago to create two hairdressing salons and a beauty salon, in addition to the other beauty salon and two stockrooms. All salons are too small for most of the groups that use them. This has an adverse effect on teaching, learning and assessment. Equipment is just sufficient and space for storage is restricted.

Curriculum Areas

27 The learning resource centre holds a broad range of specialist books and subscribes to six trade journals. A good variety of other specialist material is available, including learning materials directly related to the NVQ courses which students can use on their own and at times of their own choosing. Videos are available for students to borrow or to view in the centre. Other materials available for loan or reference help students to develop general skills, such as business planning, letter writing and communication. All students visit the learning resource centre during induction but not all of the department's staff were aware of the full range of resources available. The salon reception area is large and welcoming and has its own separate access and parking for clients. The department's computer does not have the capacity to run the planned appointment booking software.

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

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
One-year vocational courses	Retention (%)	90	87	71
	Pass rate (%)	35	35	45

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

English/Communication

Grade 2

28 Twelve lessons were observed, at the London Road and Bridgnorth sites, in GCE A level English language and literature, GCE A level communication studies, GCSE English, GCSE media studies, and on the access to higher education courses. Inspectors agreed that there is good provision. However, inspectors' findings differed in some significant ways from the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good-quality teaching and skilful use of appropriately varied teaching techniques
- clear and fair assessment of students' work
- pass rates in external examinations above the national average
- varied and flexible modes of study
- ready availability of learning resources
- well-furnished and equipped classrooms with appropriate subject display

Weaknesses

- teachers do not cater for the wide range of ability in some classes
- inadequate reporting of subject examination results
- lack of rigorous analysis of trends in students' achievements
- lack of precise targets for improvement
- absence of a GCSE course in English at the Radbrook site
- simultaneous timetabling of GCSE and learning support at Bridgnorth

29 The quality of much of the teaching and learning was good. Schemes of work take into

account syllabus requirements and relevant lesson plans are used for all classes. In long lessons, teachers sustained students' interest by the use of varied teaching methods, including lectures, work in pairs and effective use of audiovisual aids. The best teaching extended students' understanding. Students receive clear information about assessment requirements. Teachers assess work fairly and provide many useful comments to help students improve their work. Teachers did not always cater effectively for the wide range of abilities in classes; they did not adequately involve some students in learning activities; and did not always respond to some poor, inappropriate behaviour and low motivation of students in a minority of classes.

30 Students who sit external examinations achieve pass rates mostly above the national average. However, significant numbers of students do not complete their course. The reporting of students' achievements from the student records system is inadequate. Some weaker students have poor coursework but most achieve a satisfactory standard. Progress to further and higher education is generally good. Course files do not sufficiently record comparisons of students' achievements over time or with national averages. This weakness was not clearly identified in the self-assessment report. Targets set for improvements in students' achievements and retention are not sufficiently precise.

31 Courses are well managed. Students have many opportunities to visit plays and performances. Courses offer varied and flexible modes of study. A lack of similar opportunities for GCSE students has been partly rectified in accordance with the action plan. The fact there is no course in English at the Radbrook site restricts the opportunities of students based there, a weakness that had not been identified. As noted in the self-assessment report and action plan, GCE A level students have few opportunities to develop their skills in IT. The simultaneous timetabling of GCSE English and

Curriculum Areas

learning support at Bridgnorth restricts opportunities for students to obtain additional, individual support. Evidence from the inspection confirmed the view expressed in the self-assessment report that staff could not obtain the statistical information they required from the management information system.

32 Inspectors agreed with the strengths identified by the college in its assessment of staffing and specialist resources. Teachers are appropriately deployed to ensure that their subject expertise is used to best advantage. Some staff have had substantial curriculum-related training. Students are well supplied with free textbooks and the resource centres contain adequate books and other resources to enable students to work on their own. Classrooms are well furnished and equipped. The college is aware, from a recent student survey, that there is little use of the communications workshop in the learning resource centre at the London Road Campus.

Examples of students' achievements in English/communication, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCSE	Retention (%)	89	89	84
	Pass rate (%)	59	44	59
GCE A level	Retention (%)	100	67	78
	Pass rate (%)	58	79	73

Source: college data

Curriculum Areas

Basic Education and Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Grade 2

33 Eighteen lessons were observed. Course provision includes literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and separate specialist classes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The only students' achievements statistics the college could provide were for 1996-97 but inspectors did not find these reliable. The evidence from inspection does not support all of the judgements made in the college's self-assessment report. Inspectors identified some significant strengths and some significant weaknesses, particularly in the quality of teaching, that were not included in the report.

Key strengths

- some outstanding teaching
- the effective individual learning programmes
- the good assessment and review of students' progress
- students make steady progress in developing targeted skills
- students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress to further study or employment
- good communications and teamwork

Weaknesses

- some ineffective teaching for students with learning difficulties
- unsatisfactory arrangements to record the learning goals and achievements of adult students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- some teaching and learning approaches are not matched to students' abilities

- inadequate access to computing, particularly for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- some volunteer assistants are not subject specialists and are ineffectively deployed

34 Most teaching is of good quality and some is outstanding. Varied teaching methods are used to sustain students' interest. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that teaching programmes are planned carefully to meet students' individual needs and longer-term goals. In the provision for literacy, numeracy and ESOL, the system of assessing and reviewing progress with students works well. Teachers' methods for recording the learning goals and achievements of individual students are not satisfactory in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some ineffective teaching methods are used for students with learning difficulties, including the use of language and learning materials unsuited to students' adult status.

35 Students' retention rates and attendance are good. Students make steady progress and develop good skills in communication and numeracy. Their progress is recognised and valued. Pass rates are high for students who enter external examinations. However, only about one-third of students in literacy, numeracy and ESOL enter for examinations. This figure was overstated in the college's self-assessment report. Almost all students in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress to further education or employment. The destinations of students in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision are not known because information is not systematically collected.

36 A good range of basic education provision is offered which helps students to develop work-related skills in communications, numeracy and other appropriate areas. Some provision effectively widens participation for

Curriculum Areas

students from some groups, for example, employees with poor basic skills and people recovering from alcohol or drugs dependency. Most aspects of provision are efficiently and effectively managed. Communications are good and staff work well in teams. Arrangements for setting performance targets and using management information to monitor students' progress are underdeveloped.

37 Teachers and volunteers are highly committed to their work. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced for teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff have the opportunity to identify their training needs and undertake appropriate staff development. Trained volunteers are not always effectively deployed in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision: some do not have sufficient specialist subject expertise. A good range of learning resources is generally well used in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision. Some students have little access to computing facilities, particularly those on specialist courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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Support for Students

Grade 2

38 Self-assessments undertaken by each of the support services made a valuable contribution to the college's thorough self-assessment report on support for students. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment. A few strengths claimed by the college were overstated and some weaknesses were not included.

Key strengths

- good pre-entry guidance through a variety of routes
- effective assessment of the needs of full-time students for additional support and provision of support in learning centres
- effective guidance and counselling
- access for students to varied sources of careers advice and information
- high degree of student satisfaction with support services

Weaknesses

- unco-ordinated monitoring and evaluation of the full range of support services
- ill-defined aims and content of learning support through the tutorial system
- inadequate provision for some part-time students
- limited accommodation for support services on each campus

39 Student support services are provided through a centralised client advice and student support unit, overseen by the client services manager. Regular meetings of the staff in client support help to co-ordinate these services. Enquiries and appointments can be made on all

campuses. Some aspects of support for students, for example, elements of admissions and interviewing, accreditation of prior learning, screening to identify learning support needs, and tutorial support are devolved to faculty level.

40 Guidance for students on entry to courses is effective. The college organises open events to provide information about its courses. There are guidance and advice centres at Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth. Staff visit over 40 schools and take part in presentations on careers, and on further and higher education. Collaborative arrangements between the college and the local sixth form college bring a range of options to the attention of prospective students. Students express considerable satisfaction with the impartial pre-entry guidance that they receive. Procedures for accreditation of students' prior learning have been established but they are little used. The college does not have a method for assessing accurately the level of need for the accreditation of prior learning.

41 Learning support is generally well organised. The college's learning centres include good provision for supporting learning through timetabled workshops or for helping students who call in at the centres. Some of the centres contain a good supply of learning materials. Staff are available at pre-arranged times at the learning centres on each campus. There are no support staff during twilight or evening periods for mathematics and communications when many part-time students are in the college. Almost all full-time students complete a screening test for numeracy and literacy. The tests are administered by class tutors who decide whether students have an additional learning need in these areas and refer students for support. Variations in the level of referrals from different parts of the college indicate inconsistent practice between tutors in making referrals.

42 All full-time and some part-time students have a personal tutor and timetabled tutorial periods. The college has a tutorial policy and

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handbook. However, neither provide a clear basis for tutoring; they contain little guidance on the range of activities that might be carried out during tutorials. Some courses have no explicit commitment to specific arrangements for tutorial support or a programme of tutorials. This makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of tutorial provision on these courses.

43 There are various sources of information on future careers. The college uses an external provider to offer a careers guidance service at all three sites. Students' participation in individual advice sessions has been low and the college is seeking ways to increase the amount of careers advice that students receive. A full-time careers adviser has been recently appointed to manage the college's careers advice and plan the extension of advice into the curriculum. The college is also working towards gaining Investor in Careers status.

44 Students value the guidance and advice they receive from the personal support services in the college. A significant level of financial support is given by the Radbrook Foundation. Staff have identified a variety of alternative sources of financial support for students. An effective counselling service is provided by qualified counsellors. The accommodation available for student support services at all sites is small and is also used to cater for a variety of other services. There is little room for reference materials to be displayed or for students to consult written sources of information. Crèche facilities are provided at just one of the three sites.

General Resources

Grade 2

45 The inspection covered a substantial sample of the college's general resources, including IT across curriculum areas. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment.

Key strengths

- well-equipped library and learning centres at each of the main sites
- good access to computing facilities and support available for students to develop computing skills
- some examples of innovative use of IT to extend students' knowledge and experience
- well-maintained accommodation and grounds
- generally, good-quality classrooms suitable for teaching activities and the size of groups
- good-quality student common areas and sports facilities

Weaknesses

- some out-of-date computing equipment and no planned replacement strategy
- poorly-sited reception areas
- no access to some parts of the buildings for people with restricted mobility

46 The college has effectively integrated its library provision with learning centres at each main site. Centres are well equipped with over 40,000 books and a wide range of multimedia materials. An adequate stock of journals is effectively displayed. A range of careers and higher education information is available. Sufficient quiet study areas are appreciated by students. The resources provision is well managed and staff respond to the resource needs of different curriculum areas. Students' use of the facilities at the centres is carefully monitored and improvements are made to the services offered. Inspectors agreed with the judgements made in the college's self-assessment of its provision of resources for students' learning.

47 The college is strongly committed to using information and communications technologies to support learning and improve the efficiency

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and effectiveness of its operations. Students have ready access to computing facilities. The ratio of computers to full-time students is 1:8. A recent survey in one learning resource centre showed that computers were used well; on average each computer was used by 58 students during a four week period. However, the quality of computing equipment is not consistently high and some computers are not up to date. In recent years, the college has invested significantly in computing equipment but it has no planned replacement strategy. Students have access to the Internet at each site.

48 Effective support is available for students to develop computing skills in the learning centres and as part of teaching and learning in most curriculum areas. Some teachers make innovative use of information technologies to extend students' knowledge and experiences. For example, students of sports studies investigated the diversity of sporting facilities in other countries, using the Internet to make international comparisons. Teachers in a few subject areas do not include the key skills of computing as part of students' learning programmes. Inspectors agreed with the judgements made about the quality and effective exploitation of information technologies in several sections of the college's self-assessment report.

49 Accommodation at the main sites includes a Victorian building, purpose-built buildings and modern buildings. There is sufficient accommodation. Space utilisation surveys show that some accommodation is underused. Generally, the standard of buildings is good and grounds are well maintained. Poorly-sited reception areas are not easily found by visitors to the college. Good use is made of several centres in Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth, as well as in outlying villages. These centres are of a high standard and make provision accessible to many people who would find it difficult to travel to the college's main sites. Across the college, most classrooms and practical workshop areas provide suitable learning environments. Some

teaching rooms, however, are too small for the number of students using them and the range of learning activities. Most staff have good office accommodation and access to meeting rooms. Students appreciate the social areas, refectories and the college shop. The sports centre and playing fields are of particularly high quality. Some parts of the buildings are not accessible for people with restricted mobility.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

50 The college's self-assessment of its quality assurance recognises that there are both strengths and weaknesses in the quality assurance arrangements. Inspectors concluded that the college's assessment does not identify some important weaknesses and overstates some strengths.

Key strengths

- the well-structured framework for course evaluation
- improvements in provision resulting from effective quality assurance at programme level
- clearly-documented procedures for most of the college's activities
- a clear and informative college charter
- the effective arrangements to monitor and evaluate staff development

Weaknesses

- the lack of quality assurance systems for some aspects of the college's work
- a wide variation in the effectiveness of course evaluation
- imprecision in target setting and action planning
- insufficient attention paid to students' achievements
- an ineffective teacher appraisal system

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51 Clear arrangements are in place to review the annual faculty reports for curriculum areas but quality assurance arrangements for cross-college areas are not yet established. The college is using the experience gained from its self-assessment to continue to develop quality assurance. Some worthwhile initiatives are being taken: however, they are not all effectively co-ordinated. Arrangements for the validation of new courses are effective. There are comprehensive and detailed procedures for collaborative provision with clearly-specified responsibilities and arrangements for quality assurance.

52 Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement about the strength of the various arrangements for monitoring quality. In the best course evaluations there is generally full compliance with quality assurance arrangements: standard forms are completed fully and a comprehensive analysis of strengths and weakness is recorded. Some course evaluations, however, are superficial: the documentation is incomplete; not all of the course performance statistics are recorded and action plans are blank. In most areas, insufficient attention is given to students' achievements. Only a few subjects analyse trends and make comparisons of performance. In some cases, relatively poor performance is recorded without comment. This is reflected in the reports submitted for annual review. Some include data on students' achievements together with an analytical commentary; others have insufficient detail. The review of the reports by the curriculum standards and assessment services committee is not always comprehensive. Some opportunities to raise issues related to students' achievements and improve the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements are missed.

53 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that procedures are clearly documented for most of the college's activities; many specify standards of performance. However, many operational objectives and

targets lack detail and few are quantified. College targets for students' performance are not appropriate for all areas and are not matched to individual courses to provide a more realistic challenge. Action plans are a mandatory part of the course evaluation process used to inform the following year's developments. Although these arrangements lead to some improvements in the quality of provision, many action plans are only specified in general terms and are not comprehensive. The college charter is clearly structured and covers most aspects of the college's work; it is effectively cross-referenced to other documents. Some standards of performance are indicated. There is a clear procedure for dealing with students' grievances but the charter does not provide sufficient information about it.

54 Students' opinions are sought in a number of ways and all students complete at least one questionnaire. There has been some duplication of the cross-college services and course-based surveys. Some effective responses have been made to questionnaires leading to improvements in resources but the response to course-based surveys is uneven. In a few areas the responses are analysed and used to support judgements. In a few cases, significant levels of dissatisfaction are not commented on. Some questions are too broad. Changes to the surveys are being implemented this year. A survey of staff views on accommodation has been used to inform planning. Some teachers were not aware of the role of the curriculum standards and assessment services committee in relation to course evaluation and some faculty directors were not aware of changes that were being introduced to students' questionnaires and had little knowledge of quality assurance procedures in other faculties. The course evaluation returns indicate a lack of understanding on the part of some course tutors.

55 The self-assessment accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses of staff development. The college achieved Investor in People status in 1997 and the process helped to

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highlight many issues. There is a clear staff development policy and procedure which includes effective arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. The college has recognised weaknesses in the management of staff development and acknowledges that the appraisal system for teaching staff has been largely ineffective. A comprehensive and informative report clearly identifies proposals for improvement which are being implemented. These developments aim to improve line management and reinforce the link in some areas between staff development and planning. Consultation on a revised appraisal system is being carried out. Effective use is being made of college-based training. This has enabled the college to increase the level of staff development activity despite a decrease in the funding. The budget, at just over 1 per cent of staff costs, has been reduced by about a third over the last four years.

56 The self-assessment process was based on the arrangements for course evaluation. This is a well-documented procedure which was modified to take account of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. Evidence supporting the college's report was clearly referenced to course monitoring and evaluation. A few teams had made a start in establishing standards for their work and they were able to draw on these developments in making their self-assessment. The procedure provides a reasonable structure for full-time course programmes but is less suitable for the evaluation of flexible modes of delivery. The self-assessment report, however, does not comment explicitly on those instances where the quality of course evaluation is less than satisfactory. The inspection team was unable to rely on the data on students' achievements presented by the college and found that data held by teaching teams differed from those held centrally.

57 The college is evolving sound procedures for self-assessment but has not yet tested them

with sufficient rigour. College managers made careful preparation for the process of self-assessment and produced a clearly-written report. The openness with which the college approached the exercise was a particularly strong feature. Senior members of another college were invited to join assessment and moderation meetings at which the strengths and weaknesses of the college's self-assessment report were debated. The evidence from the inspection confirms much of the self-assessment report but does not support some of the judgements made to determine the grades.

Governance

Grade 2

58 Inspectors concluded that the college's self-assessment of its arrangements for governance accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of provision.

Key strengths

- formal procedures for the appointment of governors
- the broad range of skills within existing corporation membership
- governor involvement in the development and approval of strategic plans
- the corporation's structured approach to self-evaluation
- effective clerking arrangements
- effective committee structures

Weaknesses

- lack of governor development and training
- separate roles of governors and college managers not always maintained
- a temporary interruption in full financial reporting to governors
- good practice on openness not fully adopted by the corporation

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59 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.

60 A search committee has been established to consider proposals for new members. Governors are appointed on the basis of merit, subject to the need to achieve a balance of appropriate skills and experience on the corporation. The corporation has recently reviewed arrangements to plan new appointments and to ensure change in membership. This work has included the introduction of defined terms of office for governors, the inclusion of a student governor on the corporation, and revised arrangements for the election of the chairman and the vice-chairman. Some training and induction is provided for governors, but a continuous development and training programme has not been established.

61 Governors come from a wide range of backgrounds, including engineering, management, local government and banking. Efforts are being made to co-opt a member with financial expertise to serve on the audit committee. Governors' expertise is effectively used to support the college. They are encouraged to take an interest in curriculum work through arrangements to link individual governors with faculties. The distinction between the responsibilities of governors and the college management board has occasionally become blurred in practice. The corporation has recognised the need to establish a clear understanding of their respective roles and has suggested that revised terms of reference need to be agreed for the college management board.

62 Governors have evaluated their own performance by completing a self-evaluation questionnaire. In addition to this, the audit

committee has reviewed its own performance and has concluded that there are few weaknesses in its current operation.

63 Clerking arrangements for the corporation are effective, though the job description for the clerk to the corporation does not fully describe his role and responsibilities. In addition to its formal meetings, the corporation meets periodically with the college management board to review and debate issues of strategic importance. Corporation meetings are well attended and supported by well-written reports and appropriately-detailed minutes. The corporation adopted a model code of conduct for its members which is not sufficiently detailed. The clerk to the corporation maintains a register of the financial and personal interests of governors and of staff with significant financial responsibilities. The register is updated at least annually, and is open for public inspection.

64 The self-assessment report states that the process of governance is gradually being made more open. Corporation minutes are made available for public inspection, newsletters inform staff of the corporation's decisions and the corporation has agreed to publish and circulate widely an annual report. Corporation meetings, however, remain closed and the circulation of corporation agendas and papers remains restricted.

65 The corporation is appropriately involved in the development of the strategic plan. For example, strategic planning days are held for governors and members of the college management board. The strategic plan includes a review of achievement against the previous plan and details objectives for the next three years. It also includes an operating statement summarising targets, timescales and responsibilities for those aspects of the plan that the college intends to implement in 1997-98. Although the principal's reports inform the corporation of strategic developments, and governors regularly discuss progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives, the

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corporation is not provided with specific, written reports detailing progress towards the achievement of short-term objectives.

66 The budget is debated fully by governors. Although governors were well aware of the college's financial position, the corporation had not been provided with full management accounts since its meeting in June 1997. At the time of the inspection, regular financial reporting to governors had been reintroduced. The corporation has established clear financial targets and economic performance indicators, and plans to assess the college's performance against them on a regular basis.

67 Much of the detailed work of the corporation is undertaken by its committees which meet regularly and are generally well attended. Each committee has written terms of reference that have been approved by the corporation. The terms of reference for the employment, policy and finance committee are not sufficiently detailed. The corporation has formally agreed the composition of its committees and governors serve on committees which make the best use of their expertise. Formal reports of committee business are routinely received by the corporation.

Management

Grade 3

68 Inspectors agreed with most of the college's assessment of its strengths, but considered that the college had understated some significant weaknesses.

Key strengths

- effective arrangements for staff to contribute to the strategic planning process
- good relationships with local schools, the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise and with other further education providers

- generally good communications
- effectively-deployed staff
- strong commitment to equal opportunities in the college

Weaknesses

- poor student-related management information
- lack of sufficiently clear and measurable targets in strategic plans, and some operating statements and action plans
- ineffective monitoring of some strategic plans, operating statements and action plans
- underdeveloped use of performance indicators
- failure to produce management accounts since April 1997

69 Management board meetings usually concentrate on key issues and the actions arising are well reported and implemented. The college has a comprehensive policy and procedures manual that covers all of the important functions in the college. Each policy or procedure has a review date but not all policies have been reviewed at the appropriate time. Some have recently been revised. These include, for example, the procedure for personnel documents which are comprehensive, clearly written and easy to use. Communication is generally good and appropriate information is provided for staff. Some staff express the wish to be more involved in decision-making in their area.

70 Membership of the academic board is drawn widely from across the college. The board concentrates on teaching and learning and provides an academic steer for course development. The discussions and evaluation processes are open and frank. However, the procedures followed by the board are not sufficiently rigorous and there is little evidence that they have been effective in monitoring or

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raising academic standards. The data on students' achievements presented to governors are not reliable.

71 Inspectors agreed with the strength identified by the college of its arrangements for all staff to have the opportunity to participate in strategic planning and contribute to the formulation of annual plans. Reviews of strategic and operational plans are thoroughly built into management procedures. Some plans do not contain clear and measurable targets. Some important performance indicators are only just being introduced to the college, and managers recognise that significant work has to be done to develop further measures to meet the college's monitoring needs.

72 Staff are generally well deployed. Thorough analysis is undertaken to ensure that the college's curriculum needs are met. A few teachers do not have full workloads and there are inequalities in other staff workloads. The college is developing contracts for support staff to address an identified weakness. Good team building is being developed. The resources in general and finance budgets are adequate and sufficient to meet present teaching and learning needs.

73 Financial policies and procedures have been appropriately maintained. Managers set out rules and responsibilities for financial management and outline the practical operation of the college's financial systems and controls. The college's internal and external auditors have not identified any significant weaknesses in the college's internal control system.

74 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the financial management of the college is adequate. Financial forecasts and strategic plans are appropriately integrated, and the procedure by which they are developed is clear and well understood. Full management accounts are normally produced at monthly intervals in 20 working days. This does not accord with best practice. Management accounts have not been

produced since April 1997 partly due to the lack of a college accountant, a post which had been vacant for four months at the time of the inspection but has since been filled. As a result, senior managers have been unable to maintain adequate oversight of the college's financial performance. At the time of the inspection, monthly management accounts had been produced for consideration by senior management. Budget holders receive timely reports on expenditure and expert advice when required. Heads of faculty have received initial training in financial management. Some course costing is undertaken but unit costing is not used and this disadvantages some areas.

75 There are good relationships with the local schools, special schools and other further education providers. The college has strong links and franchise arrangements with the universities of Staffordshire and Wolverhampton and the North East Wales Institute. The relationship with the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise is good and leads to productive work on further education projects. External links with employers are good in several subject areas. In some provision they are underdeveloped or ineffective. Local employers who were interviewed found the college supportive and responsive to their needs.

76 A marketing unit was recently reorganised to focus more effectively on what is required in education and training in the region. The college recognised the need to strengthen substantially its knowledge of local and regional training needs. Market research undertaken in faculties is generally effective, particularly that gained from labour market literature.

77 The management information system is able to provide data for a variety of college functions, including some aspects of information on students, college finance and personnel information. These data are reliable. Faculties have access to some of this information. Faculty heads and other managers are provided with specialist reports on a request basis. Systems

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for monitoring students' attendance and progress are in the early stages of development and are of little help to curriculum managers. The college recognises that this is a serious weakness. In some subjects, registers are not kept up to date.

78 There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities in the college. Monitoring is carried out by an equal opportunities committee which reports to the management board. There is an approximately equal distribution of male and female staff in both senior management positions and in staff posts overall. Recruitment and selection procedures are thoroughly checked by senior managers for equal opportunities issues.

Conclusions

79 The inspection team found that the clarity of the self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. Although several findings in the college's self-assessment report are in agreement with those of the inspection team, inspectors judged that the self-assessment process did not effectively draw the weaknesses together and that the report overstates some strengths. The significance of weaknesses identified by curriculum inspectors led them in all but two cases to disagree with the findings of the self-assessment. There was more agreement about the grades for cross-college provision. In the two areas where the inspection team and the college disagreed about the grades awarded, inspectors considered the college to be overgenerous.

80 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)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	1
16-18 years	16
19-24 years	13
25+ years	67
Not known	3
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1997)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Foundation	20
Intermediate	31
Advanced	22
Higher education	4
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	23
Total	100

Source: college data

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

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	270	928	9
Agriculture	0	7	0
Construction	94	783	7
Engineering	115	511	5
Business	272	1,709	15
Hotel and catering	152	150	2
Health and community care	412	2,027	18
Art and design	239	1,198	11
Humanities	264	3,966	32
Basic education	52	114	1
Total	1,870	11,393	100

Source: college data

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1997)

	<i>Permanant</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	168	49	0	217
Supporting direct learning contact	27	0	0	27
Other support	79	0	0	79
Total	274	49	0	323

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£10,324,000	£10,540,000	£10,399,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£19.27	£18.40	£19.24
Payroll as a proportion of income	77%	76%	72%
Achievement of funding target	102%	107%	105%
Diversity of income	21%	18%	19%
Operating surplus	-£445,000	-£734,000	-£82,000

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), college (1996-97)

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), college (1996-97)

Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	116	114	99
	Average point score per entry	2.9	3.4	3.4
	Position in tables	bottom third	middle third	middle third
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	333	255	232
	Percentage achieving qualification	83%	99%	98%
	Position in tables	middle third	top 10%	top 10%
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	88	58
	Percentage achieving qualification	*	94%	98%
	Position in tables	*	top 10%	top 10%

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends *(continued)*

Students' achievements

		<i>1994-95</i>	<i>1995-96</i>	<i>1996-97</i>
Advanced academic	Pass %	68	82	76
	Retention %	65	70	84
Intermediate academic	Pass %	57	44	44
	Retention %	91	88	83
Advanced vocational	Pass %	74	72	74
	Retention %	68	62	48
Intermediate vocational	Pass %	62	52	46
	Retention %	89	91	83

Source: college data

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