

South East Derbyshire College

REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1999-00

THE
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FUNDING
COUNCIL

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FUNDING COUNCIL*

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

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

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Grade Descriptors

Inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use a five-point scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- grade 1 – outstanding provision which has many strengths and few weaknesses
- grade 2 – good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses
- grade 3 – satisfactory provision with strengths but also some weaknesses
- grade 4 – less than satisfactory provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths
- grade 5 – poor provision which has few strengths and many weaknesses.

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1998-99, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	10	53	30	7	-
Cross-college provision	14	54	23	7	2

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*
Sample size: 104 college inspections

Student Achievements

Where data on student achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in three ways:

- as number of starters, which is the number of enrolments on qualifications where the student was expecting to complete the qualification that college year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1995, would appear in the results for 1996-97 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification
- as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which students have completed as expected or where they are continuing their studies beyond the expected end date of the qualification. For programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, that is, from the start to the end of the qualification
- as an achievement rate, which is the number of qualifications students have fully achieved as a percentage of completed qualifications with a known outcome. Partial achievements are not included.

Summary

South East Derbyshire College *East Midlands Region*

Inspected November 1999

South East Derbyshire College is a general further education college to the north east of Derby with sites throughout the Amber and Erewash valleys. The college produced its second self-assessment report in May 1999. Evidence to support judgements was clearly presented. The college provided inspectors with useful information on the progress made on actions to address weaknesses since the writing of the report. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They considered that some strengths had been overstated and identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.

The college offers courses in all 10 FEFC programme areas with the exception of agriculture. Work in five programme areas was inspected. Teaching is well planned on most courses. Teachers make good use of relevant work-based examples during lessons. Overall, student achievement and retention rates are above average. The support provided for students is comprehensive and operates effectively on all sites. The accommodation is much improved since the last inspection. New centres have been opened throughout the college catchment area to cater for a wider range of students in line with the college's mission. The course review process is well established and has led to improvements in

quality. Governors monitor the financial and educational performance of the college effectively. The strategic planning process is comprehensive and is underpinned by the well-researched marketing strategy. Financial planning and reporting is effective. The college should: improve the quality of some teaching and learning, and of some tutorial practice; replace the dated IT hardware and software resources; address the underdeveloped and inconsistent use of performance indicators and targets in the quality assurance process; strengthen the reporting to the corporation of progress towards college strategic objectives; and improve the timeliness and accessibility of some management information system data.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science and mathematics	3	Support for students	2
Engineering	2	General resources	2
Business and professional	3	Quality assurance	3
Health, care and early years	2	Governance	2
English	3	Management	2

The College and its Mission

1 South East Derbyshire College is a medium-sized general further education college to the north east of Derby, adjacent to the Nottinghamshire border. It provides courses in all programme areas with the exception of agriculture. The college is the major provider of education and training in the boroughs of Amber Valley and Erewash and draws a significant number of students from parts of Derby city and Broxtowe borough, Nottingham. Amber Valley and Erewash have a population of approximately 220,000 and cover 250 square miles. The college operates from 10 sites in six towns, reflecting the small-town, semi-rural nature of the area. The principal sites are Field Road and Cavendish Road in Ilkeston, and Mundy Street and Ilkeston Road in Heanor. There are new 'local access centres' in Ripley, Alfreton, and Belper, and an older learning access centre in Long Eaton. The centres are operated with a range of partners which include the careers service, the council for voluntary service and the Derbyshire Local Education Authority's (LEA's) community education team. There are four further education colleges, one sixth form college and six school sixth forms in the locality. In 1998-99, the college was involved in two rationalisation projects to develop post-16 collaboration in the city of Derby and the Amber Valley and Erewash.

2 Employment opportunities are predominantly in small-sized and medium-sized enterprises. Employment in light manufacturing and engineering accounts for 36% of the workforce, and services, distribution and retailing for 32%. Employment in manufacturing is predicted to decline in the next decade, although it will continue to employ significant numbers. Employment opportunities within the service, retail and distribution trades are expected to grow, primarily through part-time and flexible working arrangements. The unemployment rate in the area is 5%, compared with the national average of 5.6%. The percentage of students achieving five or

more grades C or above at GCSE in 1998 was 38.2% in the city of Derby and 45.8% in Derbyshire, compared with 46.3% nationally. Post-16 staying-on rates are 60%, compared with the national average of 67.5%.

3 In July 1999, there were 1,448 full-time students and 8,272 part-time students at the college. Since 1995, the range of courses offered has expanded considerably. The greatest growth in numbers has come through the new learning access centres. The college offers courses leading to the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs), and Edexcel Foundation first and national diplomas and certificates, as well as a range of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and other specialist vocational qualifications. New developments include options for distance learning and other flexible arrangements for study. The college is a significant provider of modern apprenticeships and youth training and of courses for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

4 In July 1999, the college employed 284 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 136 were teachers. The college's senior and middle management team comprises the principal, the deputy principal, three directors, six managers of teaching sections and 12 business support and learning support managers. An independent clerk supports the work of the board.

5 The college's mission is 'to respond to the needs of individuals and employers through the provision of high-quality, cost-effective education, learning and related services. The college will extend opportunities for flexible learning in order to encourage wider participation and work with local partnerships to facilitate the development of a learning community.' In support of its mission, the college has secured funding in excess of £1 million for its work with partnerships and networks.

The Inspection

6 The college was inspected in November 1999. Inspectors had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and information held by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Inspectors made use of students' achievements data produced by the FEFC and based on returns of the college's individualised student record (ISR). Students' achievement data for 1996, 1997 and 1998 were used as the basis for inspectors' judgements on students' achievements in each of the curriculum areas. The inspection took place early in the college year and the college was unable to provide complete 1999 data in time for the inspection. The college was notified approximately two months before the inspection of the sample of its provision to be inspected. The inspection was carried out by 10 inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 48 days. They observed 65 lessons and examined students' work and college documentation. Meetings were held with governors, managers, staff and students.

7 Nine inspectors from the Training Standards Council (TSC) worked with the FEFC inspection team during the inspection. The TSC inspectors concentrated on work-based training delivered through the college's training agency. Areas inspected were construction, engineering (including motor vehicle studies), business administration, leisure and sport, care, and foundation for work. They also inspected trainee support, equal opportunities, management of training, and quality assurance. The TSC inspectors observed 16 training sessions, reviewed student portfolios, visited 28 work-based training placements, and held meetings with training managers, training assessors, and trainees. Where it was appropriate to the FEFC inspection framework, evidence gathered by TSC inspectors was taken into account when grading college provision.

8 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the lessons inspected, 51% were judged to be good or outstanding. This is significantly below the national average of 65% for lessons observed during 1998-99. The percentage of less than satisfactory classes at 6% was the same as the national average for lessons observed during 1998-99.

Context

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	0	9	7	2	0	18
GCSE	0	1	4	0	1	6
GNVQ	0	4	6	1	0	11
NVQ	1	1	3	0	0	5
Other vocational	3	10	6	0	0	19
Other	1	3	2	0	0	6
Total (No.)	5	28	28	3	1	65
Total (%)	8	43	43	5	1	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99 (%)	20	45	29	6	0	100

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

9 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
South East Derbyshire College	10.8	75
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99	11.2	78

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

Curriculum Areas

Science and Mathematics

Grade 3

10 Inspectors observed 10 lessons covering science and mathematics courses. They agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- effective practical work
- good written work on GCE A level courses
- well-equipped science laboratories

Weaknesses

- insufficient involvement of students in some lessons
- consistently poor achievements in GCSE mathematics
- inadequate management of the GCSE mathematics programme
- insufficient analysis of data to support planning

11 The college offers GCSE courses in mathematics and science, GCE A level courses in the individual sciences and in mathematics, and an access to higher education course which includes a science pathway. GNVQ and national diploma science courses were offered in the past but have been withdrawn because of insufficient demand. The self-assessment report acknowledges the narrow range of courses offered. The changes introduced to the GCSE mathematics programme have not been effective in preventing a year-on-year decline in pass rates. An RSA numeracy course was piloted last year as an alternative, but it was not developed with sufficient rigour and recruited poorly. The self-assessment report recognises that there is little analysis of data to support planning. Little use is made of value-added data, and students' destinations are not formally monitored.

12 The quality of teaching in all lessons observed was good or satisfactory. As acknowledged in the self-assessment report, teachers plan their lessons well, but most use only a restricted range of teaching methods. Only students on the access course have copies of the schemes of work. In science lessons, teachers ensure that basic mathematical concepts are explained fully. They make effective use of practical work to promote learning and develop students' skills. In a GCE A level biology lesson, students used microscopes to identify and sketch blood cells from commercially produced slides. In a GCE A level mathematics lesson, students solved a probability problem by using a practical investigative method. However, in a number of lessons, students were given insufficient opportunity to contribute. Teachers do not always take into account the needs of the less able students, and they make few checks on learning. Teachers monitor closely the programme of independent study set for students to complete assignments and coursework. This is suitably supported by learning resources such as good-quality handouts, texts, CD-ROMs and access to the Internet.

13 Science is taught on the Mundy Street site. One general science laboratory has modern octagonal work areas. The five older laboratories are clean and well maintained. All have a definite subject identity. Some of the mathematics lessons take place at the Ilkeston Road site. Many of the rooms do not have window blinds. In two lessons, students were hindered in their studies by bright sunlight. Science laboratory equipment is good, as noted in the self-assessment. For example, a modern spectrophotometer and two new incubator baths increase the scope for practical work. Students have access to the resource centre at Mundy Street. The centre has networked computers connected to the Internet, together with a selection of CD-ROMs relevant to science and

Curriculum Areas

mathematics. The range and availability of information technology (IT) equipment in classrooms and laboratories is restricted.

14 GCE A level students produce written work of a good standard. Practical reports are written in the correct scientific passive tense. Students' work often contains examples of graphs or pie charts used to interpret data. Their practical skills are at an appropriate level. However, students do not always follow correct safety procedures. During practical lessons, many do not wear laboratory coats, and coats and bags are left on stools and workbenches. No laboratory has a designated space for coats and bags. GCE A level results for science and mathematics are mostly at the national averages for further education colleges. The results for GCE A level chemistry courses have been consistently above the average, and, in 1998, 93% of students achieved a pass. Some courses have results below national averages. For example, in 1998, the pass rates for GCE A level biology were 67%, compared with a national figure of 80%. The retention rates for GCE A level courses are close to national averages. The self-assessment report recognises the poor achievements in GCSE mathematics. In 1998,

only 20% of students achieved a grade C or above. Results have been falling over the past three years and some attendance rates are low. For example, the attendance rate for one group over six weeks was 56%. Achievements for students on access to higher education courses are good. In 1998, 78 out of 82 students gained Open College Network credits and 19 of them went on to study science-related degrees.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in science and mathematics, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE science	2	Number of starters	10	29	28
		Retention (%)	60	79	81
		Achievement (%)	50	52	52
GCSE mathematics	2	Number of starters	260	332	236
		Retention (%)	82	79	73
		Achievement (%)	27	26	20
GCE A level sciences	3	Number of starters	214	264	171
		Retention (%)	81	71	82
		Achievement (%)	76	71	63

Source: ISR (1996, 1997 and 1998)

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 2

15 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering general and motor vehicle engineering courses. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and one of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They also identified additional weaknesses. Inspectors from the TSC observed work-based training for trainees on mechanical and motor vehicle engineering courses.

Key strengths

- wide range of engineering courses
- generally good teaching
- high retention rates
- good students' achievements
- effective work-based assessment system for NVQs in motor vehicle
- realistic work environments in motor vehicle and electrical installation

Weaknesses

- cramped and out-of-date fabrication and welding facilities
- lack of continuity of staffing for practical work
- no work experience for full-time students

16 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that the range of engineering courses is wide, providing students with good opportunities for progression. The provision covers craft, technician and higher technician courses in mechanical/manufacturing, electrical/electronic, welding/fabrication, motor vehicle engineering and electrical installation. A significant number of courses are offered on a part-time basis to meet the needs of local industry. Students can also follow an electrical installation programme by open learning. The curriculum is well managed. Course team and

section meetings are suitably documented. Many courses have detailed course handbooks. Meetings of the student consultative group are held termly. Overall targets for retention and achievement are set, but not at course level. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the internal verification system is thorough and effective.

17 Teaching overall is good, a strength recognised by the college. Schemes of work range in quality from detailed forward planning to a list of topics. In the best practical lessons students undertake relevant work in a systematic way. In one motor vehicle lesson, students were given a job card stating the symptoms of a fault. They examined the car, correctly diagnosed the reasons for the fault and successfully carried out the repair. The teacher discussed the symptoms with the students and agreed the course of action with them. Regular checking of students' progress was also a feature of a drawing lesson. The teacher carefully explained the steps needed to develop a first-angle projection drawing. Effective use was made of a wooden model to illustrate the front, plan and end view. Students' progress was checked carefully as they developed their drawings. In many lessons students use good-quality handouts to aid their learning. Inspection findings confirmed the college's view that the work-based assessment system for motor vehicle NVQs was well organised. It is carefully planned and assessments are accurately documented by the college assessors to confirm the trainee's performance against NVQ standards. Assignment briefs are well structured, and tasks are clearly set out. There is no work experience for full-time students. The numbers of different part-time teachers involved in supervising some areas of practical work has resulted in insufficient continuity for students. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

Curriculum Areas

18 The motor vehicle building has been refurbished recently to a very high standard. The building is bright and presents a modern image. It includes a well-organised workshop, reception area, two classrooms and a staff room. The workshop is well equipped. International companies have donated two motor cars, and a car-valeting workshop with an environmentally friendly filtration system completes the complex. The electrical installation workshop has been extended to create more working space, forming a well-equipped and modern facility. The electronics laboratories provide a suitable working environment and appropriate levels of test equipment. Students benefit from using industrial standard computer-aided software for drawing. Inspectors agreed with the college that the fabrication and welding workshop is

cramped and contains out-of-date equipment. The mechanical workshop is in need of decoration. Staff have appropriate qualifications for the courses they teach. Some technicians are also employed as part-time teachers.

19 Students are generally industrious in their work. In the majority of the assignments seen the students' work was good. For example, presentation of the assignments ranged from handwritten to wordprocessed with superb diagrams. Inspectors agreed with the college that retention rates are high. For example, the retention rates on level 2 craft courses have exceeded 90% for the past three years. Achievement rates are generally good, as identified by the college in its self-assessment report. In 1998, all achievement rates exceeded the national averages.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in engineering, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
C&G craft	1	Number of starters	90	31	124
		Retention (%)	78	94	85
		Achievement (%)	33	86	80
C&G craft	2	Number of starters	91	164	194
		Retention (%)	91	95	96
		Achievement (%)	80	71	95
Intermediate technician	2	Number of starters	*	24	11
		Retention (%)	*	71	55
		Achievement (%)	*	71	100
NVQ	2	Number of starters	40	69	67
		Retention (%)	73	74	85
		Achievement (%)	31	44	84
Advanced technician	3	Number of starters	34	54	56
		Retention (%)	85	93	75
		Achievement (%)	80	89	97
NVQ	3	Number of starters	*	77	115
		Retention (%)	*	77	91
		Achievement (%)	*	48	91

Source: ISR (1996, 1997 and 1999)

*courses not running

Curriculum Areas

Business and Professional

Grade 3

20 Inspectors observed 20 lessons covering business studies, accounting and management courses. They generally agreed with the college's identification of strengths and weaknesses, but considered that some of the strengths identified in teaching and learning were overstated, and some of the weaknesses understated.

Key strengths

- the use of topical and relevant work-based material
- most retention rates above national average
- flexible forms of learning for some programmes of study
- some effective individual action-planning

Weaknesses

- insufficient allowance for different learning abilities of students
- poor attendance and declining achievement on full-time GCE A level business studies
- shortcomings in the teaching of key skills
- inconsistent tracking of students' progress on open learning courses

21 The college offers a range of business and professional courses including GNVQs, GCE A level business studies, Edexcel Foundation and Institute of Marketing certificates, and supervisory and management courses offered by the Association of Accounting Technicians and the National Examining Board for Supervisory Management. Students on GNVQ advanced courses can take a wide range of additional GCE A level subjects, and all GNVQ students take an IT qualification. Students on professional and higher level courses can study at centres away

from the main sites, use open learning, or study at times convenient to themselves. The self-assessment report recognises that these flexible arrangements have improved access to learning. The open learning courses have expanded rapidly, offering a successful mode of delivery for many students. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that all students have frequent opportunities to review and assess their progress. Systems and processes are well documented. Students following flexible arrangements for study benefit from effective individual review and action planning. Those on open learning courses are supported through tutorials available on demand by telephone and electronic mail. However, the tracking of students' progress on open learning courses is inconsistent, leading to difficulties in identifying retention and achievement rates for this provision.

22 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, clear planning, specified learning objectives and appropriate use of resources supports learning. In these lessons, students are motivated and engage in a range of activities. Reference to topical issues, use of relevant case studies and work-based projects all help to stimulate and maintain students' interest. In one lesson, students were encouraged to relate newly introduced theories of motivation to their own experiences. However, inspectors did not agree with the self-assessment report that high-quality teaching is frequent. In some of the lessons observed, the pace was laboured, teachers failed to take account of the different abilities of students, and a few students were allowed to dominate the discussion. In some instances, teachers allowed insufficient time for students to reflect before responding to questions, and in a minority of sessions, students sat passively throughout. The quality of students' files and portfolios is often marred by the poor standard of printing used for handouts, assignments and support material. Key skills are not routinely or consistently

Curriculum Areas

embedded in courses. Inspectors considered that this weakness in the self-assessment report was understated. There has been a recent improvement for students joining courses in 1999, but second-year students have little understanding of key skills. On management courses the written feedback given to students is detailed and structured, giving students clear pointers for improvements. On other courses, the written feedback provided sometimes contains insufficient detail to be helpful to students, and too little attention is paid to correcting grammatical and spelling errors.

23 Students' written work is often of good quality. Students on courses offered by the National Examining Board for Supervisory Management produce particularly high standards of work. Attendance in some lessons

is low, and it is particularly poor on GCE A level business studies full-time courses. Most retention rates are above average. The GNVQ intermediate in business has retention rates which have been well above national benchmarks for two years. On the GNVQ advanced course, retention rates have been below average for the last three years. The self-assessment report states that achievement rates are above national averages in all subjects. In some they are good. For example, the GNVQ intermediate in business has had achievement rates consistently above the national average for the last three years. But in others they are below average. In the GCE A level business studies, achievement rates have declined over the last three years. In 1999, the achievement rate was only 44%, well below the national average.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in business and professional, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ intermediate business	2	Number of starters	26	11	17
		Retention (%)	73	82	78
		Achievement (%)	84	82	100
NVQ accounting	2	Number of starters	11	16	22
		Retention (%)	91	75	82
		Achievement (%)	80	42	94
GNVQ advanced business	3	Number of starters	54	52	53
		Retention (%)	78	62	62
		Achievement (%)	83	67	77
BTEC national certificate in business and finance	3	Number of starters	84	39	15
		Retention (%)	81	74	40
		Achievement (%)	94	60	100
GCE A level business studies	3	Number of starters	75	72	64
		Retention (%)	83	81	80
		Achievement (%)	69	50	67
National Examining Board for Supervisory Management certificate in management	3	Number of starters	9	30	34
		Retention (%)	100	100	97
		Achievement (%)	100	62	88

Source: ISR (1996, 1997 and 1998)

Curriculum Areas

Health, Care and Early Years

Grade 2

24 FEFC inspectors observed 11 lessons covering health, care and early years education. They agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report but found additional weaknesses. Inspectors from the TSC also observed training in care.

Key strengths

- productive linking of classroom learning and vocational practice
- workload confidently managed by well-motivated students
- well-planned and well-supervised work experience for all full-time students
- effective systems for monitoring students' progress

Weaknesses

- some unimaginative teaching
- fluctuations in some retention and achievement rates

25 An appropriate range of courses is offered for students in health, care and early years education. Enrolments have declined on full-time courses. The college is considering extending its part-time provision in response to demand. Regular course team meetings are held to discuss curriculum issues. Student feedback on the quality of each course is obtained from student consultative groups and recorded on summary sheets. However, at course and section level there is little rigorous analysis and evaluation of this feedback. The arrangements for the monitoring of students' progress through tutorials are effective and they encourage individual action-planning by students. Targets are set at course level as an integral part of course management.

26 The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. Lessons are effectively planned, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and often draw on their own vocational experiences in their lessons, making relevant and realistic links between classroom learning and its application in practice. A good range of resource materials is used as an integral part of lessons. These are successful in stimulating interest and are relevant to the personal and vocational experiences of students. In one session, students were asked to compare and evaluate the merits of different reading schemes for children entering compulsory schooling. A variety of children's books was available, and they were assessed by individual students in the context of their work placement experiences. Students were fully absorbed by this task. Some lessons lack imagination or are insufficiently demanding for students. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Observations of teaching and learning have taken place and the sharing of good practices is developing. Assignment briefs are generally well designed. Inspectors agreed with the college self-assessment report that students' work placements are well planned and well supervised. Teachers make regular visits and their detailed reports are incorporated into student portfolios.

27 All staff have undertaken in-house staff development on teaching and learning styles, and this has improved the quality of lesson planning. A number of staff have attended other development events such as external subject conferences. Accommodation is generally comfortable and well equipped. Suitable specialist resources and equipment are available for all occupational areas. Most of the rooms have displays of students' work that are visually stimulating. One room, used by GNVQ students, lacks a vocational identity.

Curriculum Areas

28 Students' work is well presented and is of a good standard. Students are highly motivated and confidently manage the work required of them, with support from their tutors. In a key skills lesson, students worked from a datasheet giving information on family size and childcare. They interpreted and presented information using basic statistical techniques. There was a clear sense of achievement in evidence. While retention rates on the GNVQ advanced have been above average over three years, retention rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate have been below the national average for two years. Other courses have retention rates which are around the national averages but which vary from year to year. The self-assessment report identifies that achievement rates on a number of

courses have been above the national average, such as the GNVQ foundation. Some achievement rates also vary from year to year. The data on retention and achievement rates in 1999 show that all rates have improved significantly. In 1998 all students on a nursery nursing diploma course found employment in their chosen career.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in health, care and early years, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ health and social care	1	Number of starters	*	16	17
		Retention (%)	*	56	53
		Achievement (%)	*	100	89
GNVQ health and social care	2	Number of starters	45	22	22
		Retention (%)	58	86	64
		Achievement (%)	77	63	57
Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education certificate in childcare and education	2	Number of starters	*	50	28
		Retention (%)	*	76	75
		Achievement (%)	*	63	71
GNVQ health and social care	3	Number of starters	32	38	20
		Retention (%)	81	82	80
		Achievement (%)	74	76	75
Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education diploma in nursery nursing	3	Number of starters	56	45	42
		Retention (%)	71	69	76
		Achievement (%)	94	76	77
Edexcel Foundation diploma in childhood studies (nursery nursing)	3	Number of starters	42	27	15
		Retention (%)	81	74	80
		Achievement (%)	100	89	82

Source: ISR (1996, 1997 and 1998)

*course not running

Curriculum Areas

English

Grade 3

29 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering GCE A levels in English literature, English language and communication studies, GCSE English, and English in the access to higher education course. The self-assessment report was based on the college's full humanities provision. Inspectors agreed with some judgements in the self-assessment report but found additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good achievement rates on GCE A level English courses
- strong GCSE English course
- effective provision for mature students

Weaknesses

- many retention rates below national averages
- unsatisfactory review and development of range of provision
- insufficient resources to support learning

30 The college offers full-time GCE A level courses in English language, English literature and communication studies. One-year GCE A level courses are offered as daytime and evening classes. GCSE English courses are provided for students at the college who have not previously achieved a grade C or above, and for some 15-year-old students who are non-attenders at school. English is offered as a main subject in the access to higher education course. Teachers work together informally to deliver the courses efficiently. Course team meetings take place infrequently. There are no course development plans and no overall plan for the development of the range of English courses offered. Evaluation of course performance is rudimentary. Targets are set for enrolment,

attendance, retention and achievement for each course, but course teams do not plan or implement action to address shortfalls. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

31 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers work to common schemes of work for all courses. Lessons are generally planned carefully but objectives are not always made clear to students. Teachers use a range of methods, including group discussions and whole group teaching. These are often managed effectively. Teaching for adult students, many of whom have returned recently to education, is good, a strength noted in the self-assessment. Students develop study skills and confidence as well as subject-specific skills. GCE A level literature students examined the opening of Arthur Miller's autobiography, analysing the language and the concepts of empathy and characterisation. They developed and used several skills within one exercise. In the poorer lessons, teachers fail to involve students and students lack motivation and interest. There is little use of audiovisual facilities or IT within lessons. Internal standardisation of marking for coursework is carried out conscientiously. Students' written work is marked with care and teachers provide constructive comments. First-year communication studies students mark each other's project work, using the awarding body's criteria. This helps them to develop evaluative skills and to gain an insight into the requirements of the course. Teachers monitor students' progress through termly reviews, which result in targets being set for students. Some teachers take care to follow up targets with individual students.

32 Classrooms lack display material and do not provide a stimulating learning environment. Teachers develop and share their own materials to support their schemes of work. There are insufficient copies of set textbooks. Students on the access course are not able to take away their literature text for home study. The library has a

Curriculum Areas

good range of books and videotapes. It holds some sets of texts, but students are required to renew them frequently. Communication studies students have insufficient technical resources to support their project work. Students find difficulty in gaining access to college computers. The self-assessment report recognised some of the shortcomings in the resources.

33 Students' work on all courses is of an appropriate standard. Students on the access course confidently shared their ideas about *Educating Rita* and responded well to the text both critically and personally. Achievement and retention rates are mixed. Achievement rates on GCE A level English courses consistently exceed national averages, with the exception of GCE A level English language in 1997. This strength was recognised by the college. Achievement rates on one-year GCE A level courses, largely adult students, are particularly high, despite the small number of taught hours allocated. GCSE English achievement rates for 1996 to 1998 are at or above the national average, and for 1999 the achievement rate has

risen to 58%. The GCSE English literature course achieved excellent results in 1998 following a very poor achievement rate in 1997. Achievement rates on the 1996 and 1999 GCE A level communication studies courses were low at 50%. Although retention on the GCSE English course is good, retention rates are below national averages on the two GCE A level English courses and the GCSE English literature course.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in English, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE English	2	Number of starters	146	183	147
		Retention (%)	87	78	73
		Achievement (%)	61	57	48
GCSE English literature	2	Number of starters	*	10	15
		Retention (%)	*	60	71
		Achievement (%)	*	33	90
GCE A level English language	3	Number of starters	111	111	107
		Retention (%)	79	74	76
		Achievement (%)	84	64	93
GCE A level English literature	3	Number of starters	80	63	86
		Retention (%)	71	68	79
		Achievement (%)	95	91	90

Source: ISR (1996, 1997 and 1999)

*course not running

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 2

34 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report, but found an additional weakness.

Key strengths

- well-managed and efficient admissions service
- comprehensive induction programmes
- good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- effective provision of careers education and guidance
- supportive processes for students applying to higher education
- well-publicised and effective arrangements for personal support

Weaknesses

- delays in implementing literacy and numeracy support for some students
- inconsistencies in the quality of tutorial practice

35 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment that there is an efficient and effective admissions service. All enquiries for full-time and some part-time courses are dealt with promptly by a helpful and well-managed team of staff. The staff are based at Field Road, and co-ordinate the service across the college. As well as receiving enquiries and applications, the team arranges advice and guidance interviews. In most cases, the interviews are carefully structured and helpful. The college keeps in touch with students once the offer of a place has been made.

36 Induction programmes are comprehensive for full-time and substantial part-time courses, as noted in the self-assessment. Students are provided with a good introduction to the college and their course. They receive a useful and well-written handbook, a diary and an induction pack. Tutors complete a checklist of tasks. Most courses organise ice-breaking activities and students find this helpful in establishing positive working relationships. This year, as part of their induction, students were asked to complete a questionnaire to identify the ways in which they prefer to learn. This information was recorded on a 'learning passport' and given to teachers. It is too early to judge if this information has been used effectively.

37 During induction, all full-time and some part-time students are tested for their numeracy and literacy skills. The results are sent to an additional learning support representative in each curriculum section, and tutors discuss the results with students individually. At the time of the inspection a small number of tests had not been analysed. Support for students identified as needing help was either just about to start or had not been arranged. Some students needing to develop their numeracy and literacy skills are timetabled into key skills centres in small groups. Other students receive individual or group support from staff based in their curriculum area. Tutors do not receive feedback on students' progress. The college identified additional support as a strength but inspectors judged the delays in implementing the support as a weakness.

38 Support is good for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The self-assessment report notes the college's excellent links with a range of external agencies. These include educational psychologists, services for the hearing impaired, social services and the local authority. The college has a team of student support assistants. Tutorial and support staff are encouraged to achieve a certificate in learning support and many have gained an award.

Cross-college Provision

39 The college acknowledges there is variability in the quality of tutorial practice. A standardised tutorial programme and revised tutorial processes have been introduced recently. All full-time and substantial part-time students are entitled to a weekly tutorial meeting and an individual review of their work each term. In a few instances, the weekly meeting has not taken place. The first review for new students is carried out six weeks after the beginning of their course. Students are required to obtain from each member of staff teaching them their views on progress made. They then discuss this with their personal tutors. This process was only just beginning at the time of the inspection and some students were finding it difficult to collect the information. The subsequent individual reviews are similarly based upon written comments received from teaching staff. The action plans that emerge from these reviews are, in some cases, too vague to be effective. Any concerns about individual students are recorded by staff and passed to the students' personal tutor. In some cases, no actions have been taken to address the issues raised.

40 Inspectors agreed that careers education and guidance is effective. The college works closely with the Derbyshire Careers Service. Students can book individual careers interviews and tutors may request activities for their tutorial groups. Adult students studying part-time benefit from a jointly staffed enquiry and careers service reception at the Alfreton site. Interview rooms and appropriate resources are available at the Ilkeston Road and Field Road sites. The libraries and resource centres at the main sites also have reference materials and noticeboards with information about the latest employment vacancies.

41 As the self-assessment notes, the process for supporting students applying to higher education is effective. Information about the admissions process is given well before the date for submitting applications. Students receive advice about how to write their personal

statement, and tutors provide individual support. An efficient administrative process records the stages an application has reached, and tutors are kept advised about progress. Destinations of students are systematically recorded. A high percentage of students applying to university is accepted.

42 There are well-publicised and effective services for personal support including welfare, childcare and student travel. A qualified counsellor staffs the personal counselling service. Where appropriate, the service refers students to other agencies. Appropriate interview rooms are available at most college sites. Childcare provision is offered in Heanor. The service is well publicised and parents/guardians receive a helpful information pack. The student union executive meets every half term. The roles of the executive have recently been agreed. The union is beginning to organise social events with the help of the student welfare support manager.

Cross-college Provision

General Resources

Grade 2

43 Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. The weaknesses identified in the report are being addressed and progress has been made in a number of areas.

Key strengths

- significant improvements to accommodation and resources
- a welcoming reception and student services area at Field Road
- attractive and well-equipped learning access centres at three sites
- well-resourced libraries and learning centres on two sites
- good access for students with restricted mobility

Weaknesses

- some poor-quality accommodation
- dated IT equipment and software in some areas
- inadequate student social space at Mundy Street

44 Inspectors agreed with the college that there is a thorough, energetic accommodation strategy that is closely linked to the college mission and market research. A significant programme of improvements has taken place since the first inspection. Approximately 88% of the college is accessible to students with mobility difficulties. Improvements include electric doors, chair-lifts and toilet facilities. There are ramps or assisted access to most buildings.

45 The reception and student services areas on the Field Road site provide a modern and welcoming introduction to the college. There is good signage and decoration in corporate

colours on this site although some areas remain in need of decoration. Blinds and blackout facilities are missing in some rooms. Cavendish Road is the main centre for art and design, media and music. The reception area is dull and some areas provide a less than satisfactory environment. The Mundy Street site is used by the college as a sixth form centre. This listed building is difficult to maintain, but the college has improved access and redecorated a number of areas since the last inspection. The Ilkeston Road site is a former mining technical college. Improvements to this site include a new entrance and reception area.

46 Three learning access centres have been developed at Belper, Ripley and Alfreton. These leased properties provide good-quality accommodation and are equipped with modern IT hardware and software. The Ripley centre also has an excellent suite on the top floor with conference, seminar and meeting rooms. The main building at the Long Eaton centre is recognised by the college as being less than satisfactory. The college is actively seeking new premises in Long Eaton.

47 The sites are generally clean and reasonably well maintained. A new five-year planned maintenance programme is being developed. The college recognises as a weakness the low utilisation of accommodation space and its surplus capacity. Measures are being taken within current constraints to improve this. Equipment is generally adequate across the college. An equipment replacement programme is funded through the annual budget allocation process.

48 Inspectors agreed that the college library and learning resources service has well-appointed learning centres at Field Road and Mundy Street. They provide adequate study spaces and computers with access to the Internet and CD-ROMs. A quiet study area has been introduced at Field Road on a mezzanine floor in response to a weakness identified in the

Cross-college Provision

self-assessment report. Both sites have good bookstocks plus periodicals, reports and non-book material. There is an off-air recording service for videos. Learning centre staff maintain effective links with curriculum areas. Some support is provided for flexible and distance learning. The service also manages college reprographics and photocopying. Inspectors found that the quality of copying in some areas was variable. Library automation is progressing; a computerised catalogue is available, but the circulation control system was not in place at the time of the inspection. The performance indicators for library provision and study spaces show levels above the national norms.

49 The self-assessment report recognises the significant improvement in the quality of the IT resources. The number of computers for students' use has increased significantly since the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with the college that planning and co-ordination of their use and availability has improved. An IT strategy and implementation programme has been developed and a new manager appointed to take it forward. There are 603 computers for students' use, giving a ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students of 1:5. However, as the college has recognised, more than a third of the computers are dated and in need of replacement, as is some software. In a minority of curriculum areas, this has limited the availability of computers. A project to network the centres is under way.

50 The college has adequate social and catering facilities. There are refectories or shop and vending facilities on most sites. As identified in the self-assessment report, student social space at Mundy Street is inadequate. There are good facilities for sports, including a large and well-equipped sports hall, fitness suite, changing rooms, basketball courts and playing fields. Equipment for outdoor pursuits is also available. A modern purpose-built nursery at Heanor offers childcare places for 30 children.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

51 Inspectors broadly agreed with the overall judgements made by the college in its self-assessment report. Some strengths and weaknesses were different from those identified by the college. Some of the strengths identified by the college were overstated.

Key strengths

- well-established, generally effective system for course review
- comprehensive self-assessment process linked to strategic and operational planning
- effective use of students' views
- varied and relevant staff development

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate documentation
- ineffective use of performance indicators and targets
- inadequate monitoring of performance against charter commitments

52 Inspectors agreed with the strength identified by the college that its system of course review is well established and generally effective, leading to improvements in quality of provision. They also agreed with the self-assessment that a strength of the review system is that students' views are used extensively and systematically to inform quality assurance. Each subject and course undertakes course reviews termly. They involve the collection and analysis of information from student consultative groups and staff. Each termly review has an appropriate focus from pre-entry to exit, and includes an assessment of the effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as progression issues. Students are encouraged to make constructive criticism, and

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their views are valued and considered carefully. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and corrective actions taken. Most documentation to support the review process has been revised and refined. It is appropriate and clear. However, the quality manual and the staff handbook are inappropriate and cumbersome. The college identified this weakness in its self-assessment and a review of documentation is under way, including the production of a new quality manual. Policies and procedures are being made available on the college intranet.

53 The college produced its second self-assessment report in May 1999. The report covers all curriculum and cross-college areas. It is generally evaluative and there is good use of evidence statements to support strengths and weaknesses. The college has built on the course review process to introduce a comprehensive self-assessment process, and a structured programme of lesson observations has strengthened this development. Inspectors agreed with the strength identified by the college that a strong feature of self-assessment is its link into strategic and operational planning. Actions identified through course review are written into operating plans. Senior managers monitor progress. Reviews inform programme area self-assessments. The quality council, a subcommittee of the academic board, has responsibility for oversight of the quality system and validates curriculum area reviews. The self-assessment review and standards committee of the corporation considers curriculum and cross-college reviews on a rolling programme.

54 The use of performance indicators and targets to improve quality is underdeveloped and inconsistent. This weakness was partially recognised in the self-assessment report. There are college-wide targets for attendance, retention and achievement, but they have only recently been translated into meaningful targets for specific curriculum areas. Measurement of progress towards achieving targets is not yet embedded into the monitoring process. Service

standards are not systematically developed in some business and support areas, but there are examples of good practice in areas such as library and learning resources, and finance. Service standards are now being developed for the management information system, estates and reception. The college charter has been revised. It is clear and informative. However, there is a lack of systematic monitoring against charter commitments. This was recognised as a weakness by the board in its self-assessment.

55 Inspectors were unable to agree with the self-assessment report that assessment and internal verification systems were strengths. There is thorough and effective use of the internal systems in some programme areas. However, these procedures do not ensure consistency across all areas.

56 Inspectors found that staff development opportunities are varied and appropriate. Individual requirements are identified through effective appraisal procedures. Curriculum area needs are identified through curriculum area reviews and self-assessment. The self-assessment process has been used effectively to produce a clear operational plan for staff development. This is linked to the strategic plan to provide an effective targeting of the staff development budget. Initiatives have been taken to improve the delivery of the curriculum. The college was involved in a national project on developing teaching and learning styles, and a comprehensive survey of teaching and learning is being undertaken.

Cross-college Provision

Governance

Grade 2

57 Inspectors and auditors were broadly in agreement with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. They identified different weaknesses to those identified by the college.

Key strengths

- independent and effective clerking
- good practice regarding openness and accountability
- regular monitoring of college financial performance and financial health
- effective arrangements for informing the board about educational matters
- arrangements for monitoring achievement and retention

Weaknesses

- fragmented reporting of progress towards college objectives
- underdeveloped liaison with specialist curriculum areas

58 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The board substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum.

59 The board has 15 members of whom five are independent governors, including the chairman of the board. Governors are drawn from a wide range of business backgrounds and have strong community links. The governors are clear about the distinction between the responsibilities of governance and of management. They are committed to the college and levels of attendance during the last year have been good. The board has effective

nomination and appointment procedures. Governors are required to make annual declarations of eligibility. As noted in the self-assessment report, the college has not set up a formal training and development programme for governors.

60 The self-assessment report recognises that the board has established an appropriate range of committees. Committee minutes and key papers are presented to the board for their consideration, but these do not currently include the formal receipt of the quarterly management accounts. The terms of reference of the audit committee are comprehensive, but the committee did not consider the latest internal audit plan in advance of the board. The cycle of board and committee meetings is set one year in advance and the timing of key decisions is identified. All meetings of the board in the past year have been quorate. The board systematically evaluates its performance at each meeting, and has set attendance and performance targets. These are reviewed annually.

61 The board has adopted sound policies for openness and accountability. All governors and senior staff annually update a comprehensive register of interests. The board regularly reviews a comprehensive range of policy documents that include standing orders, the code of conduct, an ethical code, and public disclosure policy. With the exception of confidential items, agendas, papers and minutes are available for public inspection in the college library. The board has been active in considering initiatives relating to good practice in governance.

62 The board first appointed an independent clerk to service all board and committee meetings in 1995. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that clerking is independent and effective. The clerk to the corporation has a comprehensive job description and receives sufficient administrative support.

Cross-college Provision

Agendas are well organised and deadlines set for the production of supporting papers. Agendas clearly identify documents circulated in support of each item of business. Discussions and actions are precise, clearly reported and minuted.

63 The governors are well informed about the college's finances, as stated in the self-assessment report. The board approves the college's financial strategy which includes clear financial objectives and key performance indicators. The finance and general purposes committee considers the college's quarterly management accounts and comprehensive cashflow statements. The decision-making process is informed by the financial implications of the options available to the committee. All governors receive monthly management accounts. However, the finance and general purposes committee does not consider the annual budget or recommend its approval by the board. Additionally, in the last two years, the committee has not been presented with the draft statements of accounts for detailed scrutiny.

64 Governors receive regular reports by the principal, which consider national, regional and internal issues relevant to the corporation. Governors receive a brief report indicating which college objectives are achieved or partly achieved. They do not receive a clear report on the progress made termly. The board is briefed regularly on a range of educational matters, and regular meetings between the chair and the principal deal with such matters. At the request of the board, directors attend board meetings and they provide information on their areas of responsibility when required. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that links between the governors and curriculum areas are underdeveloped. Action has been taken and named governors have been linked to curriculum areas. This initiative is intended to complement the existing system of presentations on the curriculum.

65 There are effective arrangements for monitoring the academic performance of the college. The assessment, review and standards committee has contributed to the development of the self-assessment processes. The board receives detailed reports on the achievements and retention of students by curriculum section. It requires follow-up action when appropriate.

Management

Grade 2

66 Inspectors agreed with most of the key strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- consultative and accessible style of management
- effective strategic planning
- strong marketing processes
- comprehensive links with external organisations
- effective financial planning and reporting

Weaknesses

- shortcomings in accessing data from some management information systems
- ineffective operational management in some areas
- underdeveloped processes for monitoring budgets

67 Inspectors agreed that the college management structure is clear and well understood by all staff. The senior management team is responsible for implementing the corporate objectives and for supervising the work of the college. This team works with the middle management team to form the corporate management team. The allocation of roles and responsibilities to teams and individual

Cross-college Provision

managers is mostly effective, as are lines of accountability. The overall college achievement and retention rates are generally at or above the national norms for the sector. Inspectors found examples of ineffective operational management leading to variable quality in some aspects of curriculum management and the tutorial programme. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. The college has identified a need to review the roles and scope of responsibilities of some managers, and this is scheduled to take place later in the year.

68 College staff consider managers to be open and approachable. The line management structure and regular team meetings provide staff with opportunities to participate in decision-making and to obtain information directly relevant to them. A twice-yearly briefing by the principal provides regular updates on developments within the college. The weekly newsletter is well designed, widely read and informative.

69 The strategic objectives are reviewed annually. The process of review and development is informed by wide and thorough consultation within and outside the college, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. The corporate management team, external representatives from partner organisations, and some governors attend strategic forum meetings held twice each year. The academic board discusses the strategic objectives before final approval by the senior management team and board. The strategic objectives are used effectively to develop the annual operating plan. Team operating statements are linked to strategic objectives, and now include agreed targets. Responsibility for achieving targets within curriculum sections has been allocated to specific members of staff. Inspectors considered that some targets were not precise enough to allow easy monitoring of progress.

70 The college's approach to marketing is based on comprehensive research. It uses labour market intelligence from a range of sources and takes account of national education and training initiatives. Marketing information includes the identification of client groups, risk assessment, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of publicity. Marketing objectives support the achievement of strategic objectives. The market research also informs a range of planning decisions including the level of college involvement in national and European initiatives, the level of resources allocated to industrial liaison work, and strategies to widen community participation. The strength of the marketing processes was not recognised by the college.

71 The college has good links with a range of local organisations and local economic development partnerships. The college has responded well to New Deal training and has strong links with Southern Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise. There is close liaison with employers, particularly small-sized and medium-sized enterprises. The college is involved with the Derby post-16 collaboration group and liaises with Derbyshire LEA on developments such as the setting up of the learning access centres.

72 Inspectors agreed with the college that data from the management information system are not timely or easily accessible, and that this currently limits its effectiveness as a management tool. The college operates from several sites and information is not yet networked. There are limitations to the ways that the data can be presented. Because of system constraints, managers have not had the opportunity to refine their individual information needs. The college has made good progress in implementing the changes necessary for it to provide an effective service to managers. The college intranet will improve the accessibility of information. There is an annual timetable for capturing data for the management information system and producing reports.

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73 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. The college cleared an accumulated deficit in 1998-99. It has low levels of solvency. The director of finance and business development is a full member of the college senior management team and is supported by a suitably qualified and experienced accountant. A financial training programme has been established for college staff. Auditors agreed that financial forecasts and strategic plans are well integrated. A financial strategy document sets out definitive objectives and key performance indicators. The budget-setting process is well documented, and allocations reflect anticipated levels of activity within the college. Approved amendments to budgets during 1998-99 were not clearly identified in reports to budget holders, managers and governors. The monthly reports received by budget holders do not include the latest approved annual budget they are monitoring. Senior and middle managers receive monthly management accounts but they do not formally consider the accounts at their meetings in accordance with their terms of reference. These weaknesses are not identified in the self-assessment report. The management accounts report performance against the key indicators and cashflow projections. More detailed management accounts are produced quarterly.

Conclusions

74 The college produced its second self-assessment report in May 1999. The report provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. Evidence to support judgements was well presented. Staff across the college and board members were involved in the process of self-assessment. The college provided inspectors with useful information on progress made on actions to address weaknesses since the writing of the report. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements

in the self-assessment report. They considered that some strengths had been overstated and identified some additional weaknesses, particularly in curriculum areas. In cross-college areas inspectors agreed with all but one of the grades given by the college. In one area, where appropriate action had been taken to address weaknesses, a higher grade was awarded. In curriculum areas, inspectors awarded lower grades in two areas and the same grade in three areas.

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 1999)

Age	%
Under 16	1
16-18 years	21
19-24 years	15
25+ years	62
Not known	1
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1999)

Level of study	%
Level 1 (foundation)	50
Level 2 (intermediate)	24
Level 3 (advanced)	24
Level 4/5 (higher)	2
Non-schedule 2	0
Total	100

Source: college data

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

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	333	1,901	23
Construction	23	304	3
Engineering	58	646	7
Business	169	1,362	16
Hotel and catering	91	1,342	15
Health and community care	170	979	12
Art and design	290	399	7
Humanities	234	1,128	14
Basic education	80	211	3
Total	1,448	8,272	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 4% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1999)

	Perm- anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	98	36	2	136
Supporting direct learning contact	45	1	1	47
Other support	96	3	2	101
Total	239	40	5	284

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£8,439,000	£8,006,000	£8,895,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£18.60	£16.75	£16.57
Payroll as a proportion of income	68%	69%	65%
Achievement of funding target	119%	98%	108%
Diversity of income	19%	19%	22%
Operating surplus	-£287,000	-£491,000	-£156,000

Sources: Income – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

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

Payroll – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

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

Diversity of income – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Operating surplus – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
1	Number of starters	372	1,161	743	1,250	1,905	1,445
	Retention (%)	84	84	88	85	93	86
	Achievement (%)	73	65	78	67	45	66
2	Number of starters	972	1,265	1,159	909	1,128	908
	Retention (%)	80	83	83	86	86	86
	Achievement (%)	66	50	63	75	72	75
3	Number of starters	1,561	1,421	1,416	1,098	868	757
	Retention (%)	83	76	81	80	86	83
	Achievement (%)	76	75	78	66	62	79
4 or 5	Number of starters	1	1	13	18	16	27
	Retention (%)	100	100	85	89	81	70
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	64	100	62	78
Short courses	Number of starters	645	691	1,180	2,988	3,642	3,227
	Retention (%)	96	95	97	96	96	95
	Achievement (%)	85	82	83	86	68	79
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	904	858	1,127	1,508	1,393	1,112
	Retention (%)	90	87	91	92	92	89
	Achievement (%)	56	83	89	89	65	94

Source: ISR

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