

# St Mary's College, Blackburn

REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
**2000-01**

THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL

***THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL***

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

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

*Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT  
Telephone 024 7686 3000  
Fax 024 7686 3100  
Website [www.fefc.ac.uk](http://www.fefc.ac.uk)*

*© FEFC 2001 You may photocopy this report and use extracts in promotional or other material provided quotes are accurate, and the findings are not misrepresented.*

# Contents

Paragraph

---

## Summary

---

### Context

The college and its mission	1
The inspection	6

---

### Curriculum areas

Mathematics and science	10
Business	15
Leisure and tourism	21
Psychology and sociology	27

---

### Cross-college provision

Support for students	32
General resources	40
Quality assurance	47
Governance	54
Management	61
Conclusions	67

---

### College statistics

## Grade Descriptors

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

Audit conclusions are expressed as good, adequate or weak.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1999-2000, are shown in the following table.

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

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

Sample size: 112 college inspections

Note: percentages subject to rounding

## Student Achievements

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

- as number of starters, which is the number of enrolments on qualifications where the student was expecting to complete the qualification that college year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1996, would appear in the results for 1997-98 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification
- as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which students have completed as expected or where they are continuing their studies beyond the expected end date of the qualification. For programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, that is, from the start to the end of the qualification
- as an achievement rate, which is the number of qualifications students have fully achieved as a percentage of completed qualifications with a known outcome. Partial achievements are not included.

# Summary

## St Mary's College, Blackburn

### *North West Region*

#### **Inspected November 2000**

St Mary's College, Blackburn is a designated Catholic sixth form college in Blackburn. The college produced a detailed self-assessment report as part of its established quality assurance procedures. It was validated by a panel including external representatives. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report and with all but three of the grades, two of which were judged to have improved since the report was produced. They considered that important weaknesses in some cross-college areas had not been identified by the college.

The college offers a wide range of courses in six of the FEFC's programme areas. Provision in four of these was inspected, together with aspects of cross-college provision. Whilst continuing to attract mainly 16 to 19 year olds the college has recently extended its courses for adults in the local community. The college's distinctive mission to develop its students as balanced individuals informs every aspect of its work. The college has made substantial progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Much of it is now outstanding or good. Pass rates on many courses are outstanding. Support for students is outstanding. The distinctive Catholic ethos of the college is re-enforced through these arrangements. There are excellent links with schools. Students receive good guidance on

their choice of course and settle in quickly. They receive good individual support within subjects and in meeting their broader study needs. Their progress is meticulously monitored. Careers education and guidance is good. College accommodation provides a pleasant and welcoming environment for staff and students. Effective adaptation and refurbishment has been carried out to college buildings. The college has a well-established self-assessment process and a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Students' views are well used as part of the quality assurance process. Staff development arrangements are good. Governors have a wide range of skills which are used effectively to set the college's direction and to help the work of staff and students. Effective leadership from managers fully involves staff and students. It has led to improvements in retention, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. The college should address: the use of IT in some subjects; overcrowding in some classes; the lack of access in some accommodation for those with restricted mobility; the scope of quality assurance procedures and their proper implementation; compliance with good governance practice; and the links between planning, review and self-assessment.

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Cross-college provision</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Mathematics and science	2	Support for students	1
Business	2	General resources	2
Leisure and tourism	1	Quality assurance	2
Psychology and sociology	2	Governance	3
		Management	2

# Context

## The College and its Mission

1 St Mary's College, Blackburn is a Roman Catholic sixth form college situated on a single site half a mile from the town centre of Blackburn. The college was founded as an educational institution in 1925 by the Marist Fathers to provide Catholic secondary education for boys in East Lancashire. In 1978 the college became a sixth form college and in 1993 became a designated institution under the terms of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*. The Marist Fathers remain the trustees and support the college in its daily liturgical services.

2 The college recruits the majority of its students from seven 11 to 16 Catholic schools and a Church of England school in the area. Twenty-one other schools from Blackburn with Darwen and East Lancashire provide the remainder. A significant number of these other students come from a nearby 11 to 16 non-denominational comprehensive school. Courses designed to attract students from groups which have not usually entered post-16 education are made available in community locations. There has been a significant growth in the number of adults following courses at St Mary's College, Blackburn. These include adults on pre-access courses, parenting courses, computer and leisure courses, and, through its links with Liverpool Hope University College, degree and postgraduate certificate of education courses. The minority Asian heritage community of Blackburn and Darwen is well represented in the college's student population.

3 The college is a member of the East Lancashire Lifelong Learning Partnership and has close links with the four general further education colleges, the local education authority (LEA), East Lancashire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), East Lancashire Careers Service, the Education Business Partnership, the chamber of commerce and other providers of education and training in the area. St Mary's College, Blackburn works in collaboration with

Blackburn College and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to provide non-schedule 2 courses and has just completed an Integra Project providing classes in basic education in the local Asian heritage community.

4 Since designation in 1993 the college has broadened its curriculum in response to requests from partner schools and to meet the needs of the local community. The college has nearly 900 full-time students aged 16 to 19, the majority of whom are on advanced level programmes. There are 35 general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) and advanced supplementary (AS) subjects on offer. The college also offers advanced vocational certificates of education (AVCEs) and general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) in business, science, health, leisure and recreation, travel and tourism and a BTEC in childhood studies. More recently, GCE AS courses in law, music technology and performing arts have been introduced in response to the outcomes of market research. These curriculum initiatives have been accompanied by the provision of a dance studio, an additional computer suite and a fitness suite.

5 The mission of the college is 'to provide challenging high-quality, post-16 education whereby students can grow as balanced individuals morally, intellectually and spiritually. In pursuit of this mission, the college aims to build a community based on Gospel values in which all students and staff have the opportunity to maximise their potential regardless of gender, ethnicity, religious persuasion or disability'.

## The Inspection

6 The college was inspected during the week beginning 20 November 2000. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and had studied information held by other directorates of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

# Context

Data on students' achievements for 1998 and 1999 were derived from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC. Data on students' achievements for 2000 were provided by the college before the inspection. Inspectors checked the data against registers and pass lists issues by examining bodies. The data were found to be largely accurate. The college was notified of the sample of its provision to be inspected approximately two months before the inspection.

7 The inspection was carried out by nine inspectors and an auditor working for a total of 42 days. Inspection team members observed 53 lessons, evaluated students' work and examined college documents. Meetings were held with college governors, managers, college staff, students, and other interested parties.

8 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000. Of the lessons observed, 68% were judged to be good or outstanding and none were less than satisfactory. This compares favourably with the national averages of 62% and 6%, respectively.

## Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	11	7	9	0	0	27
GCSE	1	2	1	0	0	4
GNVQ	8	5	3	0	0	16
Other	0	2	4	0	0	6
Total (No.)	20	16	17	0	0	53
Total (%)	38	30	32	0	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000 (%)	17	45	31	6	0	100

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

Note: percentages subject to rounding

# Context

9 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1999-2000.

## Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
St Mary's College, Blackburn	12.9	87
National average, all inspected colleges 1999-2000	10.3	76

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



# Curriculum Areas

## Mathematics and Science

### Grade 2

**10 Inspectors observed 14 lessons in science and mathematics covering general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) science, GCSE mathematics, AVCE science and GCE A level biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. They agreed with the strengths recognised in the self-assessment report but identified some additional weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- good retention and achievement on most courses
- wide range of appropriate teaching methods successfully used to promote learning
- innovative use of the college intranet in chemistry
- well-planned lessons
- good use of targets to motivate students and monitor progress
- wide range of well-equipped laboratories

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to the needs of all students in mathematics
- little use of learning technology in mathematics
- slow progress towards integration of key skills

11 The science and mathematics provision is well organised. The college timetable allows students to study five subjects at GCE AS or an AVCE with GCE A level. Clear and appropriate entry requirements for the GCE A level courses have been applied to ensure that students are recruited to courses which match their ability and aspirations. This has contributed to an

improvement in the retention rates for most science subjects. Though faculty meetings are held, they have little impact on the management of science departments. Minutes of these meetings are not sufficiently specific and do not contain relevant timescales for action to be implemented. When they join their courses all students complete an assessment of their preferred learning styles. The results are used effectively to plan teaching. As noted in the self-assessment report the use of targets based on GCSE grades is effective in motivating students. Progress towards the achievement of these targets is well monitored.

12 The self-assessment report recognises that science teaching is well planned. Most teachers use a variety of appropriate methods to stimulate learning. Most learning materials are of high quality and provide appropriate work for students of all abilities. Good use is made of the college intranet in chemistry. In one lesson, chemical 'ball and stick' models, transparencies, balloons and the college intranet were all effectively used to help students understand molecular shapes. In some lessons, particularly in mathematics, students spend long periods of time working through repetitive exercises, and when the teacher asks questions only the most able students respond and other students are not questioned. The self-assessment report recognised that there is insufficient use of learning technology in GCE A level mathematics. Students participate enthusiastically in practical work and, generally, carry out procedures effectively. The planning of practicals is not always sufficiently thorough. In one chemistry practical lesson, some students were not required to wear goggles, although this was necessary. Opportunities to develop key skills within science subjects have not yet been clearly identified. Most staff set homework or tests, at least fortnightly. Students' work is appropriately assessed. Written feedback often contains additional words of encouragement. There are regular parents evenings and twice-yearly

# Curriculum Areas

reports. Additional subject support sessions are arranged for science students, some of whom are referred by staff. Many students attend voluntarily. In one session the six students saw an effective demonstration of the different rates of diffusion of ammonia and hydrogen chloride gas to help them understand a test question. Afterwards they received individual help.

13 As noted in the self-assessment report, the pass rates for all GCE A level science subjects were above the national average for the last three years. In GCE A level biology there was a considerable improvement in 2000 where all students passed. Retention has shown considerable improvement and is now generally good. For GCE A level mathematics and physics it has improved from below national averages to well above them in 2000. The proportion of students who obtained grade C or above in GCSE science has been well above the average over the last three years. In GCSE mathematics it has been consistently around the average. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ advanced science course are also around the average. Students produce a high standard of written work. Many GCE A level students displayed good analytical and deductive skills and comprehensive knowledge of the subject. Little information technology (IT) is used by students for wordprocessing their work.

14 All the science and mathematics staff are qualified teachers and have at least a first degree in their specialist subject. Technical support is good for all three sciences. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the specialist science laboratories are spacious, well equipped, and tidy. Every laboratory has at least one modern computer and adequate equipment for students. Two have interactive whiteboards. The classrooms used for the teaching of GCE A level mathematics were, however, crowded.

# Curriculum Areas

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE mathematics	2	Number of starters	87	86	86
		Retention (%)	87	94	90
		Achievement (%)	41	45	41
GCSE science	2	Number of starters	25	22	26
		Retention (%)	76	82	77
		Achievement (%)	63	67	60
GCE A level biology	3	Number of starters	*	78	73
		Retention (%)	*	86	85
		Achievement (%)	*	90	100
GCE A level chemistry	3	Number of starters	*	56	61
		Retention (%)	*	84	95
		Achievement (%)	*	98	98
GCE A level physics	3	Number of starters	*	27	28
		Retention (%)	*	70	96
		Achievement (%)	*	95	93
GNVQ advanced science	3	Number of starters	11	12	11
		Retention (%)	91	67	73
		Achievement (%)	80	100	57

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

\*data unreliable

# Curriculum Areas

## Business

### Grade 2

**15 The inspection covered GNVQ business courses at intermediate and advanced levels, the AVCE and GCE A/AS levels in business and accounting. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified additional strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- good pass rates
- high retention rates on GNVQ courses
- much good teaching
- close supervision of students' progress
- thorough marking and prompt return of students' work

#### Weaknesses

- insufficiently demanding learning activities in some lessons
- insufficient use of IT by GCE A level students
- insufficient liaison between teachers in course teams

16 Students have a choice of either academic or vocational business courses at the college or can take a combination of them. Half of the students who started the AVCE business course in September are also studying other GCE A/AS level courses. GCE A level and GNVQ advanced students have recently benefited from working together with volunteers from industry during a one-day business simulation. Curriculum teams meet regularly but teachers who share some courses do not liaise enough on the detailed planning and development of learning materials. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report.

17 Inspectors judged seven of the 11 lessons observed to be good or outstanding. Lessons are well planned and specify how objectives will be achieved. The variety of teaching and learning methods used by teachers to engage students is recognised in the self-assessment report. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and relate them to their previous learning. For example, in a lesson on consumer law, contractual concepts were explained by referring to a set of general conditions for the hire of equipment. In GNVQ courses attention is paid to developing students' abilities to plan and organise their own work. Regular subject support workshops are well used by students to clarify some aspects of their course or to catch up after an absence. Teachers identify ways in which students on GNVQ courses can develop key skills through their activities and assignment work. Similar opportunities for GCE A/AS level students are not provided. Many tasks set are demanding but in a few lessons the pace of work was slow and some students were insufficiently occupied. In some lessons teachers do not check students' learning rigorously. Opportunities are missed on GCE A level courses to relate theory taught to current business practice.

18 Students' attendance is good and students have significant help from teachers in ensuring that authorised absences do not prevent successful completion of the course. Teachers regularly review students' work to check that they are likely to achieve their target. Extra encouragement and support is offered for those at risk of not achieving their potential.

19 The quality of much students' written work is good. Teachers return it promptly with constructive feedback on how it could be improved. Students work enthusiastically in several courses, and are inspired to learn. There are good pass rates on all courses inspected, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Pass rates have significantly exceeded national averages in each

# Curriculum Areas

of the last three years. Last year, pass rates reached 100% on GNVQ intermediate and GCE A level business and accounting courses. The proportion of students who achieved a high grade was higher than the national average on GNVQ advanced and GCE A level courses. An impressive 83% of GCE A level business students achieved a high grade in 2000, substantially more than the national average of 57%. Retention rates are consistently high on GNVQ courses. In GCE A level business studies they have remained close to the national average over the last three years. Retention on GCE A level accounting fell in 2000 when just over half of students completed their course. There is good progression from intermediate level to advanced courses. In each of the last

three years over 70% of students who achieved the GNVQ at intermediate level went on to advanced level.

20 Several teachers have recently updated their business and commercial experience. Specialist classrooms are stimulating, with informative course-related wall displays and useful banks of relevant resource materials. Classrooms used for GNVQ students have modern computers for students to use during lessons. Students on GCE A level courses do not use IT sufficiently in their work. Several rooms are too small for the number of students in the class. The number of books in the library for GCE A level business students is small.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GNVQ intermediate	2	Number of starters	13	12	12
		Retention (%)	*	83	92
		Achievement (%)	*	80	100
GNVQ advanced	3	Number of starters	19	13	31
		Retention (%)	84	85	87
		Achievement (%)	93	91	88
GCE A level accounting and business	3	Number of starters	96	94	86
		Retention (%)	74	76	67
		Achievement (%)	93	98	100

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

\*data unreliable

# Curriculum Areas

## Leisure and Tourism

### Grade 1

**21 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in leisure and tourism and GCE A level physical education courses. They agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- rigorous course planning and organisation
- consistently high standard of teaching
- work experience and foreign study visits
- high pass rates on all courses
- good retention on GNVQ programmes
- the high standard of students' work
- students' success in gaining progression

#### Weaknesses

- some poor retention rates on the GCE A level programme
- adverse impact of some unsatisfactory classroom accommodation on teaching

22 Provision in leisure, tourism and sport comprises full-time GNVQ courses from foundation to advanced level, AVCEs in travel and tourism, and leisure and recreation and GCE A/AS level sport and physical education. Students can take additional qualifications in sports leadership, first aid, fares and ticketing, and the Association of British Travel Agents certificate. The college timetable enables students to combine GNVQ and GCE A/AS level programmes. Courses are well managed. There is a regular programme of course team meetings. Staff are fully involved in all aspects of course review. Students' performance is carefully monitored and unexplained absences are promptly followed up. As the

self-assessment report states, students, and their parents, are appropriately informed about their progress throughout their programme.

23 Most of the lessons observed were good or outstanding. None was unsatisfactory. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that teaching and learning are planned effectively. There are detailed schemes of work for all units and teachers prepare lessons carefully. Teachers clearly state the objectives for learning at the start of lessons and usually give a summary at the end. Individual and group activities are lively and demanding. Teachers pay close attention to the needs of individuals and monitor their progress carefully. They check that students understand their work through carefully constructed questions and class discussion. In one lesson, students watched a video about the impact of motivation on sports performance. This was followed by class discussion and an activity to explore issues further. At the end of the session students were provided with high-quality handout materials from which they prepared revision cue cards. GCE A level physical education students complete cue cards after each lesson creating an excellent resource for examination revision.

24 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that work experience and the programme of educational visits are major strengths of the provision. Leisure and tourism students undertake a work study trip to Switzerland during which they gather evidence that enables them to produce high-quality assignment work for two GNVQ units. Work experience is part of all GNVQ courses and is also available to GCE A level students.

25 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that students' achievements on GNVQ courses are outstanding. Pass and retention rates have been consistently high in recent years. In 2000, pass rates at foundation and intermediate levels were 100%, and at advanced

# Curriculum Areas

level 97%. Retention rates on GCE A level physical education have been poor, but have risen steadily from 57% in 1998 to 77% in 2000, which is now close to the national average. Most students on completing their studies progress to employment, or to higher or further education. For example, 71% of GNVQ foundation and intermediate students progressed to further courses at the college in 2000. Students' assignment work is of a good standard, and covers a broad range of topics. Assignment briefs are clear and set at an appropriate level. Teachers mark work thoroughly. They include constructive comments to help students improve their work. Individual students and teams from the college are very successful in regional and national competitions. Recent successes have been gained in volleyball, netball, swimming and cross-country running.

26 Courses are mainly taught by full-time teachers who are all appropriately qualified and experienced. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching areas for physical education and sport are good. The college has a large sports hall, well-equipped fitness centre and outdoor sports pitches. There are few opportunities for travel and tourism students to develop retail travel skills in a realistic work environment. At the time of the inspection, a planned college travel agency was not yet operational. In course base rooms topical posters and displays of students' work improve the environment. Some teaching of large GNVQ student groups is constrained by overcrowding. In one lesson this made student role-plays more difficult. This weakness was not recognised in the college's self-assessment report.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in leisure and tourism, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism	1	Number of starters	8	8	11
		Retention (%)	88	100	91
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	Number of starters	23	15	16
		Retention (%)	87	100	88
		Achievement (%)	100	93	100
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	Number of starters	22	38	48
		Retention (%)	73	82	79
		Achievement (%)	75	94	97
GCE A level sports, games and recreation	3	Number of starters	47	48	64
		Retention (%)	57	65	77
		Achievement (%)	93	93	91

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

# Curriculum Areas

## Psychology and Sociology

### Grade 2

**27 Inspectors observed 11 lessons in GCE A/AS level psychology and sociology. They agreed with most judgements in the college's self-assessment report but identified additional strengths and weaknesses. Some weaknesses in the report had already been addressed.**

#### Key strengths

- demanding teaching in accord with the college's mission statement
- outstanding GCE A level achievements
- good progression to higher education
- effective use of resources

#### Weaknesses

- low retention in psychology
- insufficient collaboration and sharing of good practice between subjects
- inadequate curriculum management in psychology

28 Course management in sociology is good. Suitable use is made of target-setting, planning and course evaluation. There are detailed schemes of work, well-developed lesson plans and good strategies for the development of students' key skills. Curriculum management in psychology is less effective. Departmental meetings are informal and poorly documented. Schemes of work for GCE AS sociology are incomplete. There is no clear strategy to address below average retention. These weaknesses in curriculum management are not referred to in the self-assessment report. Staff in sociology work closely as a team. However, there is little collaboration or sharing of good practice in psychology or between the subjects. A useful student handbook has been produced

in psychology and course information is available on the college intranet. Both subjects have effective induction programmes which are rated highly by students. Inspectors agreed that students' attendance is good. In lessons observed, average attendance was 88%, which is above the national average.

29 There is much good teaching. Eight of the 11 observed lessons were judged to be good or outstanding. Lessons were demanding and had clear purposes. Their objectives were shared with students. Students were involved in a range of learning activities. In psychology for example, prints from selected Lowry paintings were used to evoke discussion on Freudian theories. Students' life experiences were effectively used as a resource. For example, they were invited to recall their own memories to illustrate theories of child development and use examples of attitudes in industrial communities towards educational performance. Teachers' use of question-and-answer techniques to check students' learning was not always effective and some teachers did not use other methods to check on students who had not contributed to lessons. Regular assignments are marked carefully and are returned with detailed feedback to encourage students to improve their performance. The methods used by teachers and the classroom environments they establish reflect the college mission well. In one sociology lesson, the use of an adapted newspaper article prompted a lively discussion on gender and identity. Students freely offered a wide variety of views on this sensitive subject. They were all equally welcomed and valued by the teacher.

30 Inspectors agreed that pass rates at GCE A level are outstanding. Over the past two years, 121 of the 126 students who completed the GCE A level courses in psychology and sociology passed. Of these 81 were awarded higher grades. This is significantly above the national average for both subjects. Based upon an analysis of their GCSE grades when they join



# Curriculum Areas

the courses, students mostly achieve the predicted grades at GCE A level. The self-assessment report identified retention as a weakness in both subjects. In sociology, strategies have been successfully adopted to address this weakness. Retention has risen to 86% which is now well above the national average. In psychology, retention remains poor and below the national average. There is good progression to higher education from these subjects, especially in sociology. Of the 24 students who completed GCE A level sociology in 2000, 13 went on to sociology, or sociology-related higher education courses. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that students are highly motivated. They contribute enthusiastically and effectively to lessons. Standards of written work are good. Students' files are thorough and well arranged.

31 Well-qualified, knowledgeable staff teach with enthusiasm. They provide a range of additional subject support sessions which are well attended. Inspectors agreed with the college's own assessment that teaching areas are well resourced and contain attractive wall displays. Increasing use is made of the computers located in the psychology base room. However, little use is made of resources outside the college to enrich students' learning experience. Some large classes are inadequately accommodated. This restricts teaching and learning and prevents teachers checking adequately on students' progress.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in psychology and sociology, 1998 to 2000

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1998	1999	2000
GCSE A level psychology (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	*	50	69
		Retention (%)	*	70	71
		Achievement (%)	*	91	98
GCE A level sociology (two-year course)	3	Number of starters	29	36	29
		Retention (%)	48	56	86
		Achievement (%)	100	95	100

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

\*data unreliable

# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 1

**32 Inspectors agreed with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. In addition, they recognised that the college is making progress in addressing the few weaknesses identified.**

#### Key strengths

- effective communication and promotion of the college's Catholic identity
- excellent school links
- well-organised arrangements for induction
- good individual subject and study support for students
- well-planned careers education and guidance
- comprehensive enrichment programme

#### Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

33 The distinctive Catholic nature and ethos of St Mary's College, Blackburn is demonstrated and reinforced through arrangements for supporting students. The college welcomes people from other faiths and non-faith backgrounds to a friendly, supportive community. Individuals are valued; differences in faiths and beliefs are explored and respected. The college has built on the strengths identified during the last inspection and improved its systems for supporting students. Improvements in student retention and achievement rates have taken the college to levels at, or above, the averages for sixth form colleges.

34 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that pre-enrolment activities are effective. The college provides objective information and guidance for prospective students. School links

are excellent. College staff attend careers information evenings, give talks to pupils and teach lessons in schools. The media department in college has made promotional videos for local schools. Pupils take advantage of opportunities for work experience in college reception, catering services and finance departments. College students enjoy work experience in school laboratories, offices and sports departments. They also 'shadow' teachers at work in schools. 'Taster' days enable pupils to experience college courses. Headteachers speak highly of the links with the college and the information given to pupils.

35 Induction arrangements are well planned and well managed. Personal tutors introduce students to the college and its services. A useful student diary and planner summarise essential information for students on facilities and services. The charter commitments and expectations form the basis of the learning agreement that is explained to and signed by students. The college identified these strengths in its self-assessment report. Transfer arrangements between subjects are effective. Subject-based support is provided to ensure students who start courses late have the opportunity to catch up on missed lessons.

36 Individual support for students at every level is good. Students' key skills levels and study support needs are assessed during induction. Personal tutors ensure that students' key skills achievements are recorded. Basic skills support is obtained through the study centre, which is viewed positively by students. Teachers identify students with high academic potential. These students are encouraged to extend their learning through additional subject support lessons. Their research skills are also enhanced by learning support tutors in the study centre. Personal tutors rigorously monitor the progress of all their students. They set targets based on GCSE examination results. Students who underachieve against their targets are directed to attend subject support sessions.

# Cross-college Provision

Support for students with disabilities is good. Although the nature of the buildings makes access for wheelchair users difficult, the college makes every effort to support these students. One student suffering from muscular dystrophy was supported effectively through foundation, intermediate and advanced level courses, and into employment.

37 Careers education and guidance provided in partnership with the careers service is comprehensive and well planned. High-quality materials support the careers education elements of the tutorial programme. Guidance for students wishing to enter employment helps them to consider choices, make job applications and prepare for interviews. Higher education guidance is effective. Of the students applying for higher education courses 91% were successful in obtaining places on the degree courses of their choice in September 2000. The college also monitors the retention rates of former students on their chosen higher education programmes. Of the college's students, 89% rated careers guidance highly in their feedback questionnaires in 1999-2000. Many students who have left the college return for help when they apply for jobs.

38 The college chaplain leads an active chaplaincy team that includes a student member. Chaplaincy activities include community prayer, liturgies, social events, link work with schools and fund-raising for charities. The small but welcoming Chapel is used for meditation as well as services. The general religious education programme has been effectively replaced with an innovative 'faith in the curriculum' initiative. Each subject leader identifies a topic on the syllabus suitable for exploring aspects of faith. The topics are used to demonstrate that religion is an integral part of life. One group of students considered the religious aspects of *The Tempest*. They likened Prospero to God and Caliban to the devil and explored how in theatre they could convey this message to the audience. In lessons teachers

are sensitive to the needs of students from other faith backgrounds.

39 There is a comprehensive range of enrichment activities for students. These include, a pre-teaching course endorsed by Edge Hill College, a pre-medical course, pre-forces courses, music facilities, sports leadership certificates, and a college radio station. Students may participate in many recreational and competitive sports. The college's Wednesday afternoon fixture programme includes football, rugby league, hockey and netball teams. There are also lunchtime and twilight sport and recreation sessions.

## General Resources

### *Grade 2*

**40 Inspectors broadly agreed with the college's judgement on the quality of general resources. They identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- effective planned maintenance programmes and procedures
- high-quality accommodation in adapted refurbished areas
- attractive and well-equipped subject resource areas
- good library and associated learning resources
- modern high standard IT facilities
- good and well-used sporting and recreational facilities

#### Weaknesses

- inadequate access for people with restricted mobility in some places
- some small and overcrowded teaching areas

# Cross-college Provision

41 Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that the buildings provide a pleasant and welcoming working place for students and staff. There is a planned and systematic approach to building maintenance and refurbishment. Good progress has been made in the fitting of double-glazed windows throughout the buildings. Classrooms and specialist teaching rooms are well decorated and are stimulating places in which to learn. Since the last inspection, further effective adaptations and improvements have been made to parts of the accommodation. Rooms for curriculum areas are grouped together and include the provision, where possible, of dedicated staff work areas. Inspectors found overcrowding and cramped conditions which restricted students' learning in some subject areas.

42 Common areas, including the dining hall and adjacent lounge corridor, are adequate to meet the needs of students at all but peak periods. Students and staff welcome the improved quality of the food, service and the dining hall furniture which have followed the recently renegotiated catering contract.

43 The library is highly valued by students. It is attractive, well maintained and well managed. It offers 126 study places on a mezzanine floor. It is well stocked with books, periodicals, video and audio cassettes and CD-ROMs. Seven networked computers with Internet and intranet access have been introduced to the upper level. These are well used by students on an open-access basis. There is an audiovisual room for students' personal use and a separate room for study support. The library is now open on three nights each week to help 16 to 19 students and adult learners.

44 Inspectors agreed that the college has made significant progress in developing and implementing a strategy for the use of information and learning technology. Since the last inspection the number of networked

computers has been increased from 95 to 164. This represents a ratio of one computer to just over five students. Further increases are planned over the next two years. The college network has been extended and upgraded to industrial standards. Three specialist IT teaching rooms have been redesigned and refurbished to a high specification. Interactive whiteboards and projections have been installed in two of these rooms. Access to the Internet and college intranet is now available on all networked computers. A helpdesk service provided by a specialist IT technician has been introduced in a separate open-access area containing 16 networked computers. A dedicated room has also been created and equipped with five networked computers and appropriate software to help students develop their key skills. College information and learning technology 'champions' are developing intranet sites in collaboration with colleagues in many curriculum areas. The range of learning materials available on the college intranet is steadily growing.

45 There are good recreational and sports facilities on the college site. In addition to the outdoor sports pitches the college has a good sports hall with suitable outdoor and indoor changing rooms and a modern well-equipped fitness centre. The former squash court has recently been converted into a dance studio, which is used for performing arts and for certain evening classes, including yoga and t'ai chi. Community use of these facilities continues to grow with a corresponding increase in the income generated. All these facilities are well maintained and well used by students, staff and members of the community. There is further access for students to facilities beyond the college. These include all-weather hockey pitches, an athletics track, cricket pitches at local clubs and a swimming pool at a nearby school.

46 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that access to certain parts of its accommodation and facilities for persons with

# Cross-college Provision

restricted mobility is unsatisfactory. The layout of the main building means that wheelchair access to the first floor teaching rooms is currently not possible. A small lift has been installed which provides access to parts of the library on the first floor. It remains difficult for users with restricted mobility to gain access to some other parts of the library. The college acknowledges these difficulties in its charter. There are plans to address some of these difficulties of access within the proposed building of a new multimedia centre.

## Quality Assurance

### *Grade 2*

**47 Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They also identified some additional weaknesses.**

#### **Key strengths**

- a clear commitment to continuous improvement
- thorough and accurate self-assessment process
- effective use of views of students
- significant improvements in teaching and in students' achievements
- good staff development arrangements

#### **Weaknesses**

- gaps in the quality assurance framework
- insufficient monitoring of the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements
- underdeveloped appraisal procedures

48 The college demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement through its use of targets, performance indicators and national benchmarking data. It has made significant improvements to its

quality assurance arrangements since the last inspection. Inspectors agreed that these arrangements, including self-assessment, are now well established. Quality assurance systems are better understood and supported by staff and students. There is a clearer definition of the responsibilities of groups and committees involved in the quality assurance process and of the links between them. Further action is required to ensure that all staff fully understand and comply with the framework. There are insufficient monitoring arrangements to ensure that the intended procedures are properly implemented. Systems for assuring the quality of administrative and support services remain less well developed.

49 Quality assurance procedures have contributed to improvements in teaching and learning. The proportion of lessons judged by inspectors to be good or outstanding is now significantly higher than in the previous inspection. A system of lesson observations has been developed to monitor the quality of teaching across all departments. The senior managers and heads of department who observe lessons participate in joint observations and compare practice with another college. However, formal arrangements for ensuring consistency in the grading of lessons across departments and faculties are underdeveloped. In the college's own lesson observations the proportion of grades judged to be good or outstanding was significantly higher than in lessons observed by inspectors.

50 Staff in many subject areas carry out course reviews thoroughly. Subject teachers analyse course retention and achievement increasingly using benchmarking data to inform judgements and assist with target-setting. The management information system generates regular and timely reports to all managers so that they can monitor progress towards their agreed targets. Where appropriate, students' achievements are analysed against predictions of their performance on entry. Most teachers

# Cross-college Provision

and students value this approach as a means of improving performance. Reviews within curriculum areas provide managers with evidence to formulate their annual self-assessment. The best course reviews include clear references to students' views, external verifier reports and course trends. They report specifically and systematically on performance against targets. A few reviews are completed less thoroughly. These reports are insufficiently detailed and lack critical evaluation of course performance.

51 Self-assessment is well established in the college. All curriculum areas, cross-college teams and governors were involved in the comprehensive self-assessment process. Course reviews are aggregated by managers and inform the annual faculty self-assessment reports. The college produced its third self-assessment report for the inspection. It was self-critical and provided an accurate basis for planning the inspection. Lesson observations of all teachers are used to inform judgements on teaching and learning. Clear actions to identify areas in need of improvement are identified as a result of the self-assessment process. Many of these have contributed to improvements in student retention and achievement. In the areas inspected, inspectors agreed with six out of nine grades awarded by the college and up-graded the college assessment in two areas.

52 The college systematically collects and analyses the views of students on the quality of its provision. There are regular surveys of students' views within subject areas and across the college. Students' views are obtained through questionnaires, focus groups and the student council. Students receive feedback on the outcomes of surveys. There are clear examples of developments and action taken as a result of issues raised. Information collected from parents and employers is less well used in reviewing overall college performance. The college charter clearly sets out key standards and most students are aware of these.

53 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that staff development arrangements are effective. The staff development policy emphasises its role in supporting the implementation of the strategic plan. The college places a high priority on staff development; each year five days are set aside for staff development activities and preparation for whole-college issues. New teachers have systematic and supportive induction to the college. All staff have an annual personal review, which effectively identifies staff training needs. Teachers have received appropriate training relating to teaching and learning which has informed their practice. There are also good opportunities for industrial updating. Inspectors agreed with the weakness identified in the self-assessment that a formal appraisal process is not yet developed. The personal review system does not use all the evidence available from the quality assurance processes to conduct a thorough analysis of the performance of staff. The college has recently achieved the Investor in People award for the second time and a local careers service quality standard.

## Governance

### *Grade 3*

**54 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. They identified additional weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- effective use of the skills of the well-qualified and experienced governors
- governors' effective involvement in setting the strategic direction of the college
- rigorous appraisal of the principal
- well-developed links between governors, staff and students

# Cross-college Provision

## Weaknesses

- lack of representation of the minority ethnic community amongst the governors
- underdeveloped arrangements for the appointment of governors
- slow progress in conforming with good governance practice

55 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is adequate. The governing body substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. The governing body has a current membership of 18 which includes 12 foundation governors and two co-opted governors appointed by the Marist Order as trustees of the college, two staff governors, one TEC governor, and the principal. Nominations are being sought from the local authority to fill the current vacancy. The recently revised determined membership includes a student and a parent governor. Plans are in place to enable these changes to be made.

56 Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise which are used well in their membership of committees and in their links with the college. These include business, finance, education, careers advice, chartered surveying, economic development, legal and community affairs. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report. Governors have good links with college departments which enable them to keep well informed about their work and to provide support. One governor with business consultancy expertise organised a recent industry day for business students. Governors regularly support college activities and social events. Levels of attendance at governing body and committee meetings are good. Governors

have a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and management. An induction policy for new governors has recently been prepared, and there is a thorough governor's handbook. There is no formal training programme for governors, nor has an analysis of training needs been completed. Some training is given during governing body meetings. Governors are informed of external training opportunities, and there has been some attendance at these events.

57 A membership advisory committee has been established to identify gaps in governors' skills, interview prospective governors, and recommend appointments to the trustees. It has recently commenced a skills audit. Inspectors agreed with the weakness in the self-assessment report that there is a need to address the lack of representation of minority ethnic groups amongst the governors. The committee has been asked by the governing body to address this issue. The committee's terms of reference are incomplete. They do not include the need to review the contribution made by individual governors before re-appointment. There is no role description or person specification for governors.

58 The strategic planning group established by governors has been successful in bringing together governors and managers to consider issues of college strategy and direction. The group has established a calendar for the involvement of governors in the strategic planning process. This year's planning conference was well attended by governors and managers. Governors effectively ensure that the strategic direction of the college fully reflects its mission. Since the last inspection governors have established a quality assurance committee. Its terms of reference provide a sound framework for reviewing college targets and students' achievements. The committee has successfully improved the focus of governors on quality assurance issues.

# Cross-college Provision

59 Agendas and reports are well prepared and are distributed to governors at least a week before the meetings. Draft minutes are produced within a week. There is an annual calendar of governing body and committee meetings. Standing orders governing the conduct of governing body and committee business are not yet completed. Committee terms of reference do not all clearly state the quorum, frequency of meetings or clerking arrangements. The clerk does not attend all committee meetings. Members of the management and finance committee receive monthly management accounts. The governing body receives its own financial summary. The audit committee reports annually to the governing body on the college's internal control system but does not systematically monitor the implementation of auditors' recommendations. Governors annually update the register of interests but committee agendas do not have declarations of interest as a standing item. The code of conduct has not been updated since 1996 and does not include the Nolan committee's seven principles of public life. Agendas, papers and minutes are available for public inspection but this availability is not advertised. The governing body has not approved policies for determining confidentiality of business, dealing with complaints against the governing body or access to meetings by the public.

60 The governing body secures the systematic appraisal and review of the principal and senior postholders. The chair with other governors undertakes the appraisal of the principal. This includes interviews with a number of college staff, students, and heads of partner institutions. The outcomes are fully documented and reported to governors. They include a personal action plan related to college objectives. The governing body's arrangements for reviewing its own performance are underdeveloped. Governors have completed a questionnaire on relative strengths and weaknesses. They have

not yet determined clear criteria for assessing their own performance.

## Management

### *Grade 2*

**61 Inspectors broadly agreed with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report but considered that a number of the strengths were overstated. They identified some additional weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- effective leadership in the implementation of the college mission
- excellent communications
- good responsiveness to the needs of students
- effective involvement of staff and students in decision-making
- close and productive working relationships with a wide range of external organisations

#### Weaknesses

- some inadequate curriculum management
- insufficient formal links between the planning, review and self-assessment processes
- gaps in the monitoring arrangements of the equal opportunities policy

62 Inspectors agreed that there is effective leadership in implementing the college mission. There is a clear management structure. The principal, deputy principal, finance director and two assistant principals make up the senior management team. They are joined by the five faculty heads to form the curriculum management team. Both meet weekly. Working relationships between managers, staff, students and governors are good. Staff understand and



# Cross-college Provision

support the mission. It is reflected well in college activities and valued by students, their parents and other interested parties. The college has a strong community identity. Individual achievements of staff and students are regularly celebrated. There have been significant achievements since the last inspection. The college has met its growth targets for 16 to 19 year olds, introduced a range of part-time adult and community courses and improved retention and achievement rates so that they are now above national averages. Curriculum management is not wholly effective. Some departmental development plans are incomplete. The role of the head of faculty in co-ordinating and monitoring the work of their subject teams is not well developed. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

63 Inspectors agreed that formal and informal communications within the college are excellent. Staff and students have easy access to the principal and other managers through an effective and much valued open door policy. The principal leads a weekly briefing for all staff. This includes an act of worship. He meets weekly with students to hear their concerns personally. There are weekly bulletins for staff and students, and a clear and comprehensive meeting structure which facilitates a two-way flow of information. Students are represented on most college committees and are trained for these roles. As stated in the self-assessment report, they contribute effectively to college decision-making. The college is responsive to students' needs. For example, it took swift action to reverse a proposed closure of the library at certain times in response to students' representations.

64 There is a clearly defined strategic planning cycle which is well understood by staff. Staff, students and governors contributed to a review of the planning process undertaken by external consultants. Curriculum teams and most support teams prepare development plans

which indicate how they intend to contribute to the achievement of college objectives. Performance against targets is monitored regularly at subject and college level. Managers pay particular attention to teaching and learning. Retention and achievement have improved consistently as a result of a range of contributing actions. However, these are not drawn together by senior managers to inform a coherent cross-college strategy. A weakness not recognised in the self-assessment report is that there are insufficient links between course review, the self-assessment process and strategic planning. The plan does not always build on an analysis of previous performance. Staff and managers have confidence in the recently introduced management information system. There is a published schedule of reports for governors, managers and staff. In addition, the service is responsive to requests and some information is available to staff through the intranet.

65 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is adequate. Returns to the FEFC are timely. Management accounts are produced monthly and include an income and expenditure account with a detailed commentary, a balance sheet, and a rolling 12-month cashflow forecast. They do not include progress reports for some key financial objectives. Budget holders receive informative monthly reports on expenditure. The financial regulations are not comprehensive and have not been recently reviewed by internal audit. The college does not have a fraud and irregularity policy. Neither the internal nor the external auditors have identified any significant weaknesses in the college's systems of financial control. Internal audit resources in recent years have been low.

66 As the self-assessment report recognises the college has close and productive working relationships with a wide range of external organisations. These include Blackburn College,

# Cross-college Provision

Liverpool Hope University and Blackburn with Darwen LEA. The college has recently launched a range of successful collaborative initiatives which have widened participation and addressed the needs of the local community. Links with feeder high schools are particularly strong and include joint meetings of senior management teams. The college has an equal opportunities policy that is well publicised and reviewed annually. Inspectors agreed with the statement in the equal opportunities policy that the college fully supports equality of opportunity. However, the college has taken insufficient steps to carry out a regular and systematic review of its progress in achieving the aims stated in the policy.

## Conclusions

67 The college's self-assessment report provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. It was evaluative and provided a realistic view of the college's strengths and weaknesses. Each section contained action plans but they lacked detail. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum areas and found that substantial progress had already been made in addressing some weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grades awarded by the college in three cross-college areas. They gave a higher grade in one area and lowered the grade in another. Important weaknesses in some cross-college areas had not been identified.

68 Strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection are listed under each section of this report. The main strengths and weaknesses are identified in the summary.

# College Statistics

## Student numbers by age (November 2000)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	0
16-18 years	91
19-24 years	1
25+ years	8
Not known	0
Total	100

*Source: college data*

## Student numbers by level of study (November 2000)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Level 1 (foundation) and entry level	1
Level 2 (intermediate)	9
Level 3 (advanced)	86
Level 4/5 (higher)	0
Level not specified	4
Non-schedule 2	0
Total	100

*Source: college data*

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

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full-time</i>	<i>Part-time</i>	<i>Total provision (%)</i>
Science	195	56	26
Business	75	0	8
Hotel and catering	107	0	11
Health and community care	89	23	12
Art and design	29	0	3
Humanities	374	0	40
Total	869	79	100

*Source: college data*

## Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1998-99 ISR data, the college recruited 20% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' Index of Local Conditions.

## Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 2000)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	59	0	0	59
Supporting direct learning contact	12	0	0	12
Other support	23	0	0	23
Total	94	0	0	94

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

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1998	1999	2000
Income	£2,593,000	£2,733,000	£2,978,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£18.43	£17.69*	£17.49
Payroll as a proportion of income	72%	72%	74%
Achievement of funding target	107%	107%	104%
Diversity of income	10%	9%	11%
Operating surplus	£41,000	£11,000	£6,000

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

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

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

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

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

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

\*provisional data

### Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
1	Number of starters	89	76	62	2	0	4
	Retention (%)	91	79	94	100	0	100
	Achievement (%)	47	83	100	0	0	100
2	Number of starters	438	301	453	2	2	40
	Retention (%)	83	81	90	100	100	60
	Achievement (%)	88	95	95	100	50	100
3	Number of starters	1,545	1,504	1,498	28	24	32
	Retention (%)	72	75	72	100	71	91
	Achievement (%)	88	91	91	100	100	100
4 or 5	Number of starters	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Retention (%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Achievement (%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Short courses	Number of starters	35	54	72	41	21	137
	Retention (%)	54	100	100	98	100	94
	Achievement (%)	53	89	93	0	100	100
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	1,019	1,132	1,117	24	11	2
	Retention (%)	93	90	96	96	91	100
	Achievement (%)	45	64	100	17	50	0

Source: ISR

# **FEFC Inspection Report 34/01**

**Published by the  
Further Education Funding Council  
© FEFC 2001**

## **February 2001**

**Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial educational or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings are not misrepresented.**

**This publication is available in an electronic form on the Council's website ([www.fefc.ac.uk](http://www.fefc.ac.uk)).**

Further copies can be obtained by contacting  
the communications team at:

The Further Education Funding Council  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT

Telephone 024 7686 3265

Fax 024 7686 3025

E-mail [fehcpubs@fefc.ac.uk](mailto:fehcpubs@fefc.ac.uk)

The print run for this document was 1,400 copies

Please quote the reference number below when ordering.  
Reference INSREP/1175/01