

# Stroud College of Further Education

REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
**1999-00**

THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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*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

## Stroud College of Further Education

### *South West Region*

#### **Inspected November 1999**

Stroud College of Further Education is a general further education college. Its main site is in Stroud and it has small additional sites in the surrounding communities of south Gloucestershire. The college produced a lengthy and detailed self-assessment report. The self-assessment process involved all staff and was valued by them. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but found that some weaknesses had been omitted particularly in management and governance and the importance of others had been underestimated. Inspectors awarded lower grades than those in the self-assessment report to two curriculum areas and three aspects of cross-college provision.

The college has had only partial success in dealing with the weaknesses identified during the last inspection some three and a half years ago. The proportion of lessons graded outstanding or good by inspectors was well below the national average for 1998-99. Students' achievements are good in some curriculum areas, for example in art and design, but there are also some poor retention and achievement rates. Students are well supported and advised by their tutors. They receive

effective financial advice and support. The monitoring of students' attendance is inadequate. The college has widespread and effective links with schools, other colleges, business and community organisations. Much of the accommodation at the main Stroud site provides a good learning environment, but facilities at Dursley and Nailsworth are unsatisfactory. Students on IT courses have sufficient computers and software but there are insufficient computers for more general purposes. The library is inadequate. There has been an ineffective response by governors and managers to important strategic issues facing the college. It has not met its funding targets for the last two years and the achievement of current targets is in doubt. Budgets have been based on inaccurate assumptions and the college's strategic direction has not been effectively managed or monitored. Financial management is weak. The management and quality assurance of the college's franchised work has been unsatisfactory, but is now improving. Governors are fully committed to the college, but have not insisted on adequate information and effective analysis from senior managers. Some corporation committees are not fully effective and other aspects of corporation business require improvement.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Mathematics, science and computing	4	Support for students	3
Business, administration and management studies	3	General resources	4
Health and social care	3	Quality assurance	3
Art, design and media	1	Governance	4
English, communication and languages	3	Management	4

## The College and its Mission

1 Stroud College of Further Education is a general further education college in Gloucestershire. From the main site in Stroud and small centres in Stroud, Nailsworth, Dursley and Yate it serves a semi-rural area of market towns and small villages with a population of 110,000. Most of the college's work is of a vocational and technical nature, and 85% of its students attend part time. In the Stroud district 72% of young people stay on in education after the age of 16. There are two 11 to 16 schools and seven schools with sixth forms, two of which are grammar schools. The nearest other further education colleges are at Filton (31 miles), Gloucester (16 miles) and Cirencester (14 miles).

2 In the area served by the college, there are a small number of large employers and many small and medium-sized businesses. Manufacturing accounts for 35% of the workforce, and 23% of workers are self-employed. Unemployment is below 3%. There are small pockets of high unemployment and areas of rural isolation.

3 In 1998-99, 6,273 students enrolled on Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) funded courses at the college. Of these, 920 were full time and 5,353 were part time. Students studying at level 1 made up 43% of the total, with 24% at level 2 and 18% at level 3. One hundred and fifty-seven students were enrolled on higher education courses. Most full-time students were working towards vocational qualifications. The college offers a relatively small range of general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects. In 1998-99, 11.5% of enrolments were on courses provided in collaboration with local partner organisations. Many of the students on these courses were working towards qualifications in information technology (IT) and business applications. In

the college as a whole, the largest programme area was science, mathematics and IT, and the largest number of full-time students was in art and design.

4 The senior management team comprises the principal, the vice-principal, the director of resources and the director of enterprise and quality. Teaching is managed by five heads of school. In November 1999, the college employed 229 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 170 were teachers or were involved in directly supporting teaching and learning.

5 The college's mission is 'to be first choice provider for those individuals and organisations who seek to increase their confidence or competence through learning; thereby increasing the ability of those individuals and organisations to make a contribution to the improvement of quality of life and to economic growth.'

## The Inspection

6 The college was inspected during the week beginning 15 November 1999. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and studied information about the college held by other directorates of the FEFC. Inspectors used data on students' achievements derived from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1997 and 1998. The college submitted its own data on students' achievements for 1999. Following the correction of historical inaccuracies, most of the data proved reliable. The exceptions were in some areas of franchised provision, and in relation to some national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses. The inspection was carried out by 10 inspectors and an auditor working for 46 days in the college. They observed 65 lessons, examined students' work and inspected college documents. They met governors, managers, staff and students.

# Context

7 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, 54% were judged to be good or outstanding compared with 65% nationally; 11% were less than satisfactory compared with 6% nationally.

## Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	0	3	2	0	0	5
GCSE	0	2	4	0	0	6
GNVQ	4	3	10	3	0	20
Other vocational	1	13	4	2	0	20
Other	4	5	3	2	0	14
Total (No.)	9	26	23	7	0	65
Total (%)	14	40	35	11	0	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*

8 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 (%)
Stroud College of Further Education	11.1	81
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

## Mathematics, Science and Computing

### Grade 4

**9 Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report. However, they found that the report contained insufficient analysis of students' achievements and did not give sufficient emphasis to poor achievement rates.**

#### Key strengths

- high pass rates on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) IT courses in 1999
- good library resources for computing
- good teaching materials

#### Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates in mathematics and on franchised courses
- low retention rates on some courses
- ineffective teaching of groups which include students with different abilities
- unsatisfactory management of GCSE mathematics

10 There is a narrow range of courses available in science and mathematics. There are very few science courses and enrolments on the GCSE mathematics course have fallen by one-third since 1997. However, there is a wide range of computing and IT courses. There are GNVQ courses in IT at intermediate and advanced level and, since September 1999, students can progress to a higher national certificate in computing. Students on some IT courses can study at times of their own choosing.

11 Most of the teaching observed by inspectors was satisfactory and a few lessons were good. In many lessons, well-prepared handouts enable students to work at their own

pace. Students on computer literacy and information technology courses are provided with good study packs. In a GNVQ lesson, students were asked to make themselves familiar with a popular drawing programme, and then to write an on-line help manual for it. The lesson effectively incorporated many aspects of programming and file transfer techniques. GNVQ students benefit from field trips to organisations that have notable computing operations, such as Disneyland in Paris. An awareness of the practical uses of IT is evident in some students' written work. In some lessons, teachers fail to take account of the wide range of abilities of students in the group. In one IT lesson, some students quickly completed a written exercise and were left idle until the rest of the class caught up. Conversely, in a mathematics lesson, some students did not have time to complete an exercise before the teacher moved on to another topic. These students were then struggling to understand the new topic without having fully grasped the previous one. Some students have poor practical skills. For example, in a biology lesson some students were unable to manipulate a syringe correctly when measuring out fluids.

12 Achievement rates are poor on some courses. Examination results on the GCSE mathematics course are consistently well below the national average. For students aged 16 to 18, the grade C or above pass rate for 1999 was only 7%. Franchised courses account for approximately 30% of the college's provision in science, mathematics and computing. Achievement rates on these courses are poor. Only 11% of students achieved their qualifications in 1998. Fully reliable information for 1999 was not available at the time of the inspection. None of these poor achievement rates are acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Pass rates are good for some IT courses. In 1999, all students who completed their studies for GNVQ advanced and intermediate IT courses were awarded the



# Curriculum Areas

qualification. On the intermediate level course, the retention rate was around the national average at 79%. However, retention on the advanced level course was poor at 50%. In 1999, the retention rate for GCE A level students in mathematics and science was only 58%. The self-assessment report acknowledges that some retention rates have been low.

13 The tracking of individual students' progress is good. Students have individual action plans. The close monitoring of the use made by students of the IT learning centre ensures that resources are well used. This monitoring has increased the number of students who successfully complete IT courses. Pass and retention rates for IT courses in the college are better than those at franchised

centres. There are regular course team meetings at which action points are identified and followed through. However, there is insufficient analysis of students' achievements. The self-assessment report acknowledges that the management of mathematics has been less than satisfactory and a development plan has been produced to tackle this weakness.

14 Specialist resources for science meet the needs of the students. Mathematics students are provided with good handouts. Computing students make use of appropriate modern equipment. Outdated computers are dismantled and used effectively to teach students about the various internal components of a computer. The library is well stocked with materials for computing students.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in mathematics, science and computing, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Franchised provision	1 to 3	Number of starters	*	1,076	**
		Retention (%)	*	93	**
		Achievement (%)	*	11	**
In-house computer literacy and information technology courses	1	Number of starters	498	517	560
		Retention (%)	80	68	79
		Achievement (%)	41	52	55
GCSE mathematics (students aged 16 to 18)	2	Number of starters	91	48	50
		Retention (%)	68	65	62
		Achievement (%)	12	23	7
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	Number of starters	+	10	14
		Retention (%)	+	80	79
		Achievement (%)	+	38	100
GNVQ advanced IT	3	Number of starters	20	16	20
		Retention (%)	75	56	50
		Achievement (%)	66	89	100
GCE A levels	3	Number of starters	51	17	43
		Retention (%)	61	35	58
		Achievement (%)	63	66	80

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*information unreliable

\*\*incomplete data at the time of the inspection

+course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Business, Administration and Management Studies

### Grade 3

**15 The comprehensive self-assessment of this curriculum area reflected many of the judgements arising from the inspection. However, inspectors identified additional weaknesses, particularly in teaching and learning and students' achievements.**

#### Key strengths

- good achievement and retention rates on supervisory management courses
- effective student tracking in learning centres
- teachers' detailed written feedback on students' work
- well-equipped rooms

#### Weaknesses

- poor lesson planning which leaves some students with nothing to do
- low achievement rates on some courses
- lack of data on students' achievements for courses taught in learning centres
- lack of recent industrial updating for staff

16 There is a wide range of courses in business administration. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the three flexible learning centres constitute a strength. The centres have an efficient booking system. Adult learners are able to work on their own at foundation, intermediate or advanced level, using self-study materials. Enrolments have increased over the last three years and a new centre was opened in 1999. There is a video link to the Dursley centre which is used to support and advise students. Enrolments on those courses which are not delivered in the flexible learning centres have generally been declining. Enrolment targets for full-time

courses have not been met. As a result, on some courses teaching hours have been reduced after the course has started. The proportion of full-cost training, which is not funded by the FEFC, is increasing. Closer links are being developed with employers. Course teams work well together, for example to ensure proper standards of internal verification.

17 In the most effective lessons, students are clear about their aims and work well individually and in groups to achieve them. On most courses, students' progress is effectively monitored. Teachers mark work promptly and provide appropriate written feedback. Some students undertake work experience, for example those on GNVQ advanced and administrative and secretarial courses. Supervisory management and accountancy students are particularly effective at analysing problems and sharing their work experiences with the group. Most lessons and workshops in IT skills are managed effectively and provide for students working at different levels. The pace of some lessons is too slow. Some students who complete the work required of them are left with nothing to do. Too many lesson plans lack explicit aims, objectives and timescales. The proportion of lessons judged by inspectors to be outstanding or good was well below the national average for business studies. Weaknesses in teaching and learning were not given sufficient emphasis in the self-assessment report.

18 Retention rates are high on professional and management courses, but consistently below the national average on GNVQ advanced business. In 1999, the retention rate on the certificate in secretarial procedures was more than 20% below the national average. Pass rates for stage 2 of the information and business technology course have been consistently below the national average. The pass rate for GNVQ advanced has risen over the past three years and in 1999 was 6% above the national average of 74%. The college was unable to provide reliable data on students' achievements for the

# Curriculum Areas

full range of courses offered in the flexible learning centres. The self-assessment report acknowledges that some retention and attendance rates are poor. The monitoring of students' attendance is being improved. The average attendance rate in the lessons observed during the inspection was 77%, which is close to the national average of 78%. Students were generally positive about their courses. Some were critical about the amount of time they spend in college between lessons. In response to this concern, the teaching week on the administrative and secretarial procedures course has been condensed from five to four days.

19 Teachers are generally appropriately qualified, but teachers working on business administration courses have not had sufficient recent commercial experience to ensure that their teaching is up to date. Most students have ready access to computers with a good range of appropriate software. There are not enough business books in the library. Many teaching rooms are bare, and do not provide a stimulating learning environment.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in business, administration and management studies, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Certificate in administration and secretarial procedures	2	Number of starters	+	+	16
		Retention (%)	+	+	62
		Achievement (%)	+	+	80
Information and business technology stage 2 (one year)	2	Number of starters	19	95	103
		Retention (%)	84	65	71
		Achievement (%)	25	46	40
Diploma in administration and secretarial procedures	3	Number of starters	15	13	14
		Retention (%)	93	69	69
		Achievement (%)	71	67	55
NVQ business administration	3	Number of starters	35	44	30
		Retention (%)	63	61	67
		Achievement (%)	68	78	80
Certificate in supervisory management (one year)	3	Number of starters	15	23	25
		Retention (%)	93	100	96
		Achievement (%)	71	91	86
Certificate in management	4	Number of starters	16	23	39
		Retention (%)	75	91	87
		Achievement (%)	92	71	76

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)  
+course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Health and Social Care

### Grade 3

**20 Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but identified some additional weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- well-planned teaching and learning
- good pass rates on some courses
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- good resources and accommodation
- effective internal verification

#### Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on some NVQ programmes
- low retention rates on some courses
- underdeveloped key skills on childcare courses
- ineffective monitoring of progress on NVQ programmes
- insufficient monitoring of work placements

21 The school of health and social care offers a good range of programmes in health and social care, nursery nursing, childcare and education, pre-nursing and counselling. Courses leading to NVQs in care, childcare and playwork are offered, together with a broad range of short courses.

22 Students are well supported in their studies. They meet their tutors regularly to complete reviews and identify goals. Their progress towards these goals is monitored closely by their tutors. These strengths are noted in the self-assessment report. Students on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses have timetabled lessons during which they receive additional individual support with their coursework and assessments.

23 Teaching and learning are well planned, as indicated in the self-assessment report. There are detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. Learning objectives are made clear to students. Most of the lessons observed by inspectors were good or satisfactory. Students undertake research and develop their presentation skills by feeding back their findings to the rest of the class. Tutors challenge students' findings in a constructive way and encourage them to engage in critical discussion. The teaching was less effective when tutors simply gave information to students and did not encourage them to think about the issues or to draw on their own experience. In some lessons, insufficient time was allowed for students to complete the tasks which had been set. Key skills are effectively integrated with other aspects of the GNVQ courses, but underdeveloped in the childcare courses. Numerical skills in particular are not being developed on these courses, a weakness not included in the self-assessment report.

24 Work experience forms an integral part of the curriculum of all full-time courses and students spoke highly of the value of the work experience in their training. Students are visited during their work placements by their tutors, who monitor their progress carefully. The tutors arrange some work placements, but others are arranged by the students. Placements arranged by students are not adequately checked to ensure that they can provide training of an appropriate standard.

25 In 1998 and 1999 there were 100% pass rates on the GNVQ advanced in health and care, the diploma in nursery nursing, the foundation management in care course and the home nursing stage 1 course. On some other courses, pass rates have been poor. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course were well below the national average in 1998 and 1999. The self-assessment report did not acknowledge that a number of NVQ programmes have had poor pass rates over the last three years. There are poor retention rates on some courses. The

# Curriculum Areas

GNVQ advanced retention rate was below the national average in 1999. The low GNVQ intermediate retention rate in 1998 was identified in the self-assessment report and there has been an improvement in 1999.

26 Teachers use grading sheets to provide constructive general feedback on assignments but rarely give detailed comments directly on the assignments. For example, they generally do not correct students' errors in spelling and grammar. Courses are well managed and tutors keep detailed records of students' progress. There is a very good internal verification system that is fully implemented across all courses. Assessment schedules are produced for the students which identify which tutor will mark the assignment and who will act as internal

verifier. A weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment report and confirmed by inspectors is the poor system for monitoring the registration, progress and completion of NVQ candidates. As a result, many have failed to complete their programmes. The college has recently introduced a helpdesk and new tracking systems for NVQ candidates.

27 The accommodation for all health, social care and childcare courses is good. The rooms are of a suitable size and all have overhead projectors, whiteboards and videos. The specialist resources in the classrooms are good. Displays of students' work in classrooms effectively improve the learning environment.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in health and social care, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GNVQ foundation in health and care	1	Number of starters	5	10	8
		Retention (%)	80	90	75
		Achievement (%)	75	78	100
NVQ direct care	2	Number of starters	98	111	*
		Retention (%)	100	60	*
		Achievement (%)	21	60	*
GNVQ intermediate in health and care (one year)	2	Number of starters	9	8	6
		Retention (%)	*	60	83
		Achievement (%)	*	50	60
GNVQ advanced health and care	3	Number of starters	15	11	14
		Retention (%)	73	73	57
		Achievement (%)	64	100	100
Foundation management in care	3	Number of starters	16	12	6
		Retention (%)	94	92	100
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
Diploma in nursery nursing	3	Number of starters	36	33	37
		Retention (%)	89	100	93
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*fully reliable information unobtainable

# Curriculum Areas

## Art, Design and Media

### Grade 1

**28 Inspectors observed lessons in all the full-time and part-time vocational courses in art, design and media and some of the part-time National Open College Network (NOCN) and GCE A level courses. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.**

#### Key strengths

- consistently good and often outstanding teaching
- high standard of students' work
- high pass rates on most courses
- high retention rates on most courses
- good progression within the college and to higher education courses
- effective management and teamwork
- good resources and studios for most courses

#### Weaknesses

- poor pass rate on the media course
- insufficient specialist graphic IT facilities and inadequate IT facilities at the Nailsworth annexe

29 Large numbers of students are attracted to the wide range of art and design and media courses offered by the school of arts. In addition to the students on full-time and part-time vocational courses, there are over 600 part-time students entered for NOCN qualifications in arts and crafts and over 300 students on adult education courses. The school has developed good links with local schools and with higher education institutions in the region. Students progress from the adult education and NOCN courses to the access to higher education course. The majority of students completing the level 2 intermediate course progress to GNVQ

advanced or pre-degree foundation studies. Opportunities for progression are further enhanced by the new higher national certificate courses in radio broadcasting, textiles, ceramics and jewellery. Guidance on careers and higher education applications is thorough. Of the 105 students leaving the access, GNVQ advanced and foundation courses last year, 87% gained higher education places, the majority at degree level. The school is well managed. The staff work well together and support each other. There are regular meetings and thorough reviews of courses which lead to continual improvement.

30 On all the courses, high-quality teaching leads to effective learning. Courses are well planned, although the part-time and media courses would benefit from closer links to the art and design vocational courses. Assignments are often innovative and challenging to students. For example, a one-week assignment for GNVQ advanced and foundation students required them to sample the separate, but related skills required in fashion and surface textiles. They constructed a removable fabric cover for a chair and decorated the surface in a style that reflected an aspect of their personality. The students found the work exciting and the results were ingenious and flamboyant. The working atmosphere in this, and in many of the other practical studios, was lively. Staff make frequent references to contemporary artists and designers. They provide good tutorial support for students. There are regular discussions and critiques of students' work. Self and peer assessment are used successfully to develop students' confidence. Students regularly receive carefully written analyses of their progress. Staff keep full records of tutorials and students' progress. Key skills are not yet fully integrated with other aspects of the courses.

31 The achievement rates for 90% of the provision are well above national averages. No access or foundation student has failed in the last three years. The pass rate on the national diploma in media course has been below the

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national average, but improved in 1999. Retention rates on all full-time and part-time vocational courses are above national averages. Retention on the part-time GCE A level courses is low, but improved in 1999. The quality of students' work is high. All students are developing strong drawing skills. Most folios contain large-scale vigorous drawings that use a range of media. Many of these are very expressive. There are good standards of photography, and careful attention to the technical skills of developing. Students at all levels are selecting images in a sensitive way. The development of ideas in graphic design is thorough and the finished images often include drawn images combined with an appropriate use of computer manipulation. Sculpture, three-dimensional design and product design is ambitious. During the inspection, a number of students were making large woodcarvings for specific sites. Students make good reference to contemporary artists, designers and filmmakers. Many of the concepts in their work are personal yet sophisticated. Media students work well as teams and develop appropriate technical skills in video making and sound recording. However, the content of their work sometimes lacks originality.

32 There are generally good studios and resources for art, design and media at Stroud and Nailsworth. The GNVQ intermediate art and design, access course and part-time courses are at the Nailsworth site. The studio facilities there are good, and include an excellent purpose-built ceramics studio, a good three-dimensional workshop and large bright studios. The college recognises that IT facilities at this site are inadequate. Students, particularly access students, enjoy the informal atmosphere at the site. At Stroud there are good photography, video, construction and print studios. The specialist graphic facilities have insufficient industry standard machines for the number of students. Both sites benefit from specialist art libraries, each with a very good

specialist bookstock. These are available for reference and are continually in use in the studios. At Stroud there are additional video, slide and CD-ROM resources. The full-time staff are well qualified and supported by part-time staff who, as practising professionals, bring industrial relevance to the students' work.

# Curriculum Areas

**A summary of retention and achievement  
rates in art, design and media, 1997 to 1999**

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	Number of starters	15	13	17
		Retention (%)	93	100	82
		Achievement (%)	79	83	86
GCSE fine art and three-dimensional design	2	Number of starters	47	19	8
		Retention (%)	87	65	100
		Achievement (%)	71	67	83
Full-time and part-time access to higher education art and design	3	Number of starters	29	34	31
		Retention (%)	83	85	68
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
Foundation pre-degree art and design	3	Number of starters	26	28	39
		Retention (%)	100	96	100
		Achievement (%)	100	100	100
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	Number of starters	30	30	32
		Retention (%)	87	90	91
		Achievement (%)	100	96	96
National diploma media	3	Number of starters	19	16	15
		Retention (%)	74	88	80
		Achievement (%)	71	64	73
GCE A level art and design fashion/three-dimensional ceramics (part time)	3	Number of starters	34	17	49
		Retention (%)	56	45	59
		Achievement (%)	31	100	100

*Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)*



# Curriculum Areas

## English, Communication and Languages

### Grade 3

**33 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report, but considered some were overstated. Weaknesses in teaching and learning were given too little weight or omitted.**

#### Key strengths

- much good teaching
- good pass rates on most courses
- effective schemes of work on English courses
- a broad range of modern languages

#### Weaknesses

- low retention on GCSE English and GCE A level courses
- ineffective co-ordination of modern language provision
- poor library support for modern languages
- low attendance in some lessons

34 English is offered, full time and part time, at GCSE, GCE advanced supplementary (AS) and GCE A level. There is a pre-GCSE group for students who need particular help with English. English literature is an option on the access course. Communication is offered as a GCE A level subject, and as an additional study for media students. Modern languages are available to adults in the evening, at NOCN level 1 and at GCSE. Languages offered include Spanish, Italian and German. Numbers taking language courses have declined from 122 in 1998, to 49 in 1999. This is partly caused by the development of leisure courses in languages. Adults can progress from leisure and NOCN to GCSE courses in languages.

35 Most teaching is satisfactory or better. As indicated in the self-assessment report, lessons are well prepared. Handouts and teaching materials are of good quality. In the most successful lessons, students' interest is effectively sustained by a variety of teaching methods, including group work, improvisation and effective question and answer sessions. With the proximity of Armistice Day, literature students' understanding of Owen's poems was enhanced by close examination of a contemporary journal kept by a soldier in the trenches. English language students examined the stylistic characteristics of nineteenth century written English through a letter written by a private soldier in the Crimean war. Some GCSE English students built their own curriculum vitae prompted by the teacher's sympathetic questioning. In another GCSE group students enjoyed improvising an additional scene to a Hardy short story. Students' progress is carefully monitored. Literature courses are enriched by regular trips to the theatre. Modern language courses are all conducted in the language being learned. Emphasis is put on the students' development of confidence and enjoyment in speaking the language. Teachers willingly provide extra help for students who need it. On some occasions, group work lacks direction and students lose interest. Attendance at a number of lessons was poor. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

36 Pass rates in GCE A level English literature have been 100% for the past two years. English GCE AS and all GCSE modern language pass rates at grades A to C were all well above national averages in 1999. NOCN language courses, with 98% and 97% pass rates in 1999, were also very good. However, GCE A level communication results have been poor in the last three years with pass rates below 60%. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. The report also identifies retention as a weakness across a number of courses. In 1999

# Curriculum Areas

it was below 70% in GCSE English, and GCE A level literature and communication. Students' written work is generally satisfactory. A few pieces are of a particularly high standard. One GCE AS language task, for example, involved students writing creatively using the stylistic characteristics of the eighteenth century. One letter written from Newgate prison was particularly powerful in its evocation of destitution.

37 Communication between English teachers is effective. Good practice is shared. Teamwork has resulted in effective work schemes. Modern language teachers are all part time. They have little opportunity to meet to develop good practice. They operate autonomously in terms of planning, and assessment. In the programme

area as a whole teachers are generally effectively deployed, though there are a number of very small teaching groups.

38 All teachers are well qualified and have a teaching qualification. Accommodation is spacious and well furnished. There are displays of posters and students' work. Library provision for English is good, but there are not enough books and magazines for modern languages. Satellite television is available. A technician supports the small, but well-equipped language laboratory. However, this facility is rarely used.

## A summary of retention and achievement rates in English, communication and languages, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
NOCN language proficiency	1 and 2	Number of starters	*	106	122
		Retention (%)	*	70	80
		Achievement (%)	*	98	97
GCSE modern languages	2	Number of starters	162	44	33
		Retention (%)	62	70	76
		Achievement (%)	12	74	72
GCSE English	2	Number of starters	93	70	70
		Retention (%)	70	73	69
		Achievement (%)	55	65	60
GCE A level English literature	3	Number of starters	23	23	26
		Retention (%)	91	65	69
		Achievement (%)	86	100	100
GCE A level communications	3	Number of starters	19	10	14
		Retention (%)	84	70	64
		Achievement (%)	50	57	56
GCE AS English language	3	Number of starters	11	16	14
		Retention (%)	82	50	85
		Achievement (%)	100	100	83

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

\*data unreliable

# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 3

**39 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but identified others of significance. Personal tutors had little involvement in preparing this section of the report.**

#### Key strengths

- productive links with local schools and community organisations
- effective pre-entry guidance
- well-planned, supportive tutorial arrangements
- effective financial and welfare advice and support

#### Weaknesses

- many students' learning support needs unmet
- inadequate monitoring of students' attendance
- inadequate assessment of the quality of tutorial support
- insufficient staff development for personal tutors

40 Support for students has improved since the last inspection, but weaknesses remain. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that pre-entry guidance and advice are effective. There are good links with local schools and community organisations. College staff make presentations to prospective students at careers events in local schools. Year 10 and 11 students can sample different vocational areas of the college. A well-organised series of interviews helps applicants with their course choices. Students can seek guidance from the careers service as well as from college tutors. Advice from guidance workers is available to adults attending courses at community venues.

41 Students are well supported by their personal tutors. As the self-assessment report states, tutorial programmes are carefully planned to give students a variety of useful experiences. Personal tutors monitor their students' progress closely, but some students' action plans are incomplete. Monitoring of the quality of tutorial provision has been inadequate in the past but is now improving. As the self-assessment report notes, tutors need to be better informed about the full range of support available to their students. Little staff development is directed at improving tutorial practice.

42 The college has a good range of courses for students with learning difficulties. This provision has improved since the last inspection. There are strong links with a wide range of appropriate community organisations. Students now participate in a much wider range of vocational activities across the college. Support workers provide an effective service. Specialist careers advice is available. Work experience and residential opportunities are used well.

43 There have been detailed reviews of courses to determine how well students are being helped to improve their basic skills. All full-time and many part-time students take tests at the start of their courses to determine if they need such help. Study support teachers discuss the results of these tests with each student. The test results show that 20% of students need extra literacy support and 35% of students need numeracy support in order to succeed on their courses. Only half the students who have been identified as needing support are receiving it. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. College records of attendance at tutorials are often incomplete. Those which are complete show that attendance is often poor. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the monitoring of students' attendance is inadequate. The college is about to introduce a weekly reporting system to enable it to monitor attendance centrally.

# Cross-college Provision

44 Many students receive good careers education and guidance, which is an important part of tutorial programmes. Some courses, for example in health and social care, have visiting careers speakers. In art and design, students are well supported, especially when applying to higher education. Staffing changes over the last year have affected some longstanding and productive contacts in the local careers service. New arrangements give specific careers responsibility to six tutors across the college. These arrangements have yet to prove their worth.

45 Students are offered advice on financial and welfare matters. A private nursery on the main site provides care for students' children at substantially reduced rates. The student welfare officer and student liaison officer have links with local support organisations. In 1998-99, students received about £70,000 in financial help with childcare, travel, fees and equipment costs. Nearly all the students who received help from these funds successfully completed their courses. These strengths were not fully recognised in the self-assessment report.

46 There are few opportunities for students to engage in sports, music or drama. This is not mentioned in the self-assessment report. The college has arranged reduced fees for students at the adjacent leisure centre. It is working to reinvigorate the students' union, which was not successful last year. A new student liaison officer has recently been appointed to work with the union executive.

## General Resources

### *Grade 4*

**47 Inspectors agreed with the majority of strengths and weaknesses in the detailed self-assessment report.**

#### **Key strengths**

- good condition of the main college buildings in Stroud
- well-used computer-based learning centres
- access for wheelchair users to most areas
- welcoming reception and customer services areas

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor facilities at Dursley and Nailsworth
- inadequate library
- small, poorly located study skills centre
- excessive litter on parts of the main site
- insufficient 'drop-in' computing facilities

48 The main Stroud site accounts for three-quarters of the college's accommodation. The main building is in good condition. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment judgement that most classrooms and specialist facilities provide pleasant working conditions for staff and students. The site has a spacious and welcoming reception area. The customer services area provides a good environment for meeting students. Plants, pictures and photographs enhance circulation areas and corridors. Temporary classrooms comprise a quarter of the accommodation on the main site. Some of these buildings are nearing the end of their life. Overall they are satisfactory. Many classrooms are enlivened by wall displays. A few are bare and unwelcoming. Classrooms have suitable furniture and most are well equipped with whiteboards, overhead projectors and screens. There are adequate television and video facilities.

# Cross-college Provision

49 The staff common room on the main site is comfortable and well used. The student common room is unwelcoming and the furniture is in poor condition. The bright and modern refectory is too small. A popular shop sells snacks and stationary. The study skills centre provides support for students who need help with literacy and numeracy. Staff from the centre often work in other parts of the college, but the centre itself is too small and is poorly located in a temporary classroom inaccessible to wheelchair users. Most of the main site is accessible to people with disabilities. The grounds at the front of the building are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Some other areas are overgrown and suffer from an unacceptable level of litter and discarded equipment.

50 The Nailsworth centre accommodates some art and design programmes and adult and community education. There is no clearly identified individual with responsibility for managing the centre. The poorly maintained grounds are subject to vandalism. The reception area is not staffed. The refectory offers only a restricted range of food. The Dursley centre provides IT and community education. It comprises a listed Victorian building and several huts. The two computer rooms in the main building are satisfactory. The huts cannot be used for teaching because of their poor condition. There are no library facilities. Part of the site is inaccessible to wheelchair users; the remainder is difficult to access. About 10% of provision is based at Nailsworth and Dursley. The self-assessment report acknowledges the poor condition and very low utilisation of these sites. The college also leases small centres at Yate and at Brunel Chambers in Stroud. These provide appropriate computing facilities in pleasant environments.

51 The college library is too small. It contains 80 study spaces and 20 computers, of which 10 have Internet access. The study area is often noisy. Although there are less than 16,000 volumes in the library, there is insufficient space for all of them to be displayed. In several curriculum areas there is a shortage of books, for example in modern languages and childcare. There are many out-of-date books and insufficient copies of popular textbooks. A section for students with reading difficulties is well stocked. There are adequate numbers of appropriate periodicals in most curriculum areas and a good range of videos and CD-ROMs. The large art and design library is split between Nailsworth and an art room at the main site. These books are catalogued by the library, but they are not easily accessible to anyone other than art and design students. Lending arrangements for the art and design books are informal and they are not subject to effective security arrangements.

52 The college has approximately 280 modern computers for students' use. The computing facilities are inadequately managed. The computers in the learning centres at the main site, Yate, Brunel Chambers and Dursley are dedicated to courses in IT applications. Other students may not book these machines. Computer rooms throughout the college are used for timetabled classes. There is no provision for other students to use machines when they are not timetabled. Only the 20 machines in the library are bookable on demand by individual students. There are enough computers to meet the needs of timetabled classes, but insufficient to meet students' individual needs. The self-assessment report does not mention this weakness. The college has a strategic objective to improve access to learning by using IT in the community. However, it has no IT strategy or development plan indicating how this objective will be achieved.

# Cross-college Provision

## Quality Assurance

### Grade 3

**53 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment of its quality assurance arrangements, but concluded that some key weaknesses had been understated, especially the arrangements for assuring the quality of franchised work and the lack of improvements in students' achievements.**

#### Key strengths

- thorough self-assessment process
- clear and well-documented course review process
- rigorous course file management and monitoring
- systematic and well-managed internal verification of vocational courses

#### Weaknesses

- quality assurance arrangements slow to improve teaching and students' achievements
- quality assurance policy unclear to many staff
- inadequate monitoring of franchised provision
- overgenerous assessment of the quality of teaching and learning

54 The college has improved its quality assurance arrangements since its first FEFC inspection. The director of enterprise and the quality assurance manager have made progress in remedying some of the weaknesses identified in the report of that inspection.

55 The college adopted a systematic approach to its second self-assessment report. The process was valued by staff. The report was validated by the governors' quality committee. The college has been overgenerous in its

assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment process included the observation of 91 lessons by managers. The college judged 73% of these lessons to be good or outstanding, compared with 54% of lessons judged good or outstanding by inspectors. The national average for 1998-99, as reported in *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*, was 65%. The quality of teaching and learning has not improved since the last inspection. The college's grading of lessons was not externally moderated and grades were not included in the self-assessment report. Staff training to support self-assessment procedures was well managed. The college quality review panel, comprising senior managers, oversaw the self-assessment process. It checked the validity of supporting evidence and self-assessment reports from curriculum teams and support areas. Actions to address weaknesses were described in a separate annex. Progress on these actions has been monitored effectively. Inspectors concluded that the length and complexity of the self-assessment report hindered its usefulness to staff.

56 The quality assurance policy, covering all aspects of the college's work, is set out in the staff operating manual. Procedures described in the manual include the arrangements for course reviews, the arrangements for collecting and using feedback from students and employers, and the conduct and follow-up to internal and external verification. A quality focus group has been established to provide a cross-college forum to discuss quality issues. Teaching staff are unclear about the role and function of this group and its relationship to the quality review panel. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that monitoring of quality assurance procedures across the college is inconsistent.

# Cross-college Provision

57 Since the last inspection, quality assurance arrangements have been slow to result in improvements in students' achievements and retention rates. Several performance indicators have been consistently below the sector median. Whilst there was an overall improvement in students' achievements from 44% in 1996-97 to 56% in 1997-98, this is still 14% below the median value for general further education colleges. Early data for 1999 show some further improvement in both retention and achievement.

58 There is an established pattern of course reviews. Reviews take place in November, March and June each year. Reviews are well managed within a clearly specified college framework. Outcomes are recorded consistently across the college, and include consideration and publication of retention and achievement data. Action plans and new targets resulting from the final review of the year are monitored by course teams. Feedback from students and employers, and comments in internal and external verifiers' reports are taken into account in course reviews. Rigorous target-setting has been introduced for the first time this year. Targets are regularly considered by course teams and support areas. Service standards have been established for most support areas. There is a sound approval process for new courses. Internal verification of vocational provision is systematic and well managed. There is a good college framework for course file management.

59 Inspectors agreed with the college that franchised provision has been inadequately monitored. The impact of this is understated in the self-assessment report, to which franchised centres did not contribute. Levels of achievement and retention on franchised courses are unsatisfactory. The college's quality assurance procedures do not fully cover franchising provision. Recent progress has been made in addressing this weakness.

60 Staff value the opportunities provided for professional development. Training is linked to the outcomes of appraisal procedures, consistently evaluated and, where possible, linked to NVQ assessment. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that staff development priorities are linked to the strategic plan. However, staff development activities are not monitored, making it difficult to judge the effectiveness of the programme in supporting the strategic priorities of the college. Appraisals are up to date, properly documented, and well regarded by staff.

61 The college charter sets out the college's commitment to its students, and is summarised in the student handbook. Most students were aware of its existence, but not of its purpose. Most complaints are dealt with promptly, but the complaints procedure is insufficiently publicised.

# Cross-college Provision

## Governance

### Grade 4

**62 The self-assessment of governance was not effective. It failed to identify some significant weaknesses, particularly with regard to the corporation's response to strategic and financial issues.**

#### Key strengths

- broad range of governors' skills and local knowledge
- high level of commitment demonstrated by board members
- careful attention to the college's self-assessment

#### Weaknesses

- inadequate monitoring of college finances
- slow strategic response to shortfalls in funding
- some committees not fully effective
- insufficiently rigorous monitoring of students' achievements and retention
- incomplete monitoring of corporation performance

63 Inspectors agreed with the college's view that governors bring to the corporation considerable commitment, a wide range of experience of the professions, business and administration, and a thorough knowledge of the local community. Their commitment is reflected in the amount of time they devote to the college and its difficulties. Corporation and committee meetings are well attended. The chair and principal meet regularly. However, the college has failed to achieve its target funding units in each of the last two years. This had led to operating deficits in 1997-98 and 1998-99. Governors have made well-intentioned attempts to address these difficulties but they have not been sufficiently

insistent when asking senior managers to provide better quality information on which to base strategic decisions. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is weak. The corporation does not conduct its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of governance. It also does not substantially fulfil its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

64 The corporation has not effectively reviewed the college's strategic direction in the light of its underachievement of funding targets. The 1997 to 2000 strategic plan has not been fully updated. Strategic planning has yet to reflect adequately the changes in the pattern of recruitment and the college's worsening financial position. Unrealistic assumptions about the college's future income have been used in financial forecasting. Governors have responded to problems that have been brought to their attention but they have been slow to take appropriate action. For example, although they expressed concern about the accuracy of the college's financial forecasting, they eventually accepted insufficiently rigorous contingency plans. During the inspection, a number of governors expressed concern about the management of the college's franchise provision but they have approved a budget that relied in part on franchised units of activity. Recently governors have responded more decisively to the college's situation by ensuring that staffing costs have been reduced to reflect lower than expected enrolments. Weaknesses in the corporation's strategic oversight of the college were not adequately identified in the self-assessment report.

65 The corporation has an appropriate range of committees but some of the committees have not functioned effectively. For example, the college has not fulfilled its terms of reference with regard to internal audit. The quality committee discusses students' achievements, but its minutes show insufficient analysis of trends



# Cross-college Provision

or follow-up action. The finance and general purposes committee has not been sufficiently rigorous in monitoring the finances of the college. Although the committee met four times between September 1998 and April 1999, it only formally considered the December 1998 and the February 1999 management accounts.

66 The transition to the new instrument and articles of governance has been generally well managed. However, inspectors did not agree with the judgement in the self-assessment report that the conduct of the corporation's business is a strength. Deficiencies remain. For example, there are no standing orders for the conduct of corporation and committee meetings and minutes of meetings do not always reflect the full extent of business discussed. The code of conduct has not been updated to reflect best practice on openness and there is a lack of oversight of equal opportunities by the board.

67 New governors are provided with appropriate guidance documents on appointment. There is an annual training event for governors. Governors are also kept informed of developments and issues affecting further education through occasional presentations at committee and corporation meetings, and attendance at relevant seminars. The search committee was established in 1996 but has only recently been formally constituted in line with recommended best practice. Governors gave careful attention to the college's self-assessment. The self-assessment report was considered by the quality committee and by the board prior to its approval. Governors produced their own section on governance in the self-assessment report, but they have not yet agreed performance indicators to monitor and evaluate their own performance.

## Management

### *Grade 4*

**68 Inspectors agreed with some strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but considered that important weaknesses had been omitted and that some strengths were overstated.**

#### **Key strengths**

- effective teamworking fostered by line managers
- involvement of staff in operational planning and target-setting
- productive external links and collaboration with a wide range of partners

#### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate response to important strategic issues facing the college
- weak financial management
- insufficient provision of reliable information to inform corporation decision-making
- weaknesses in the management of franchised provision

69 Managers have been slow to address some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, although there have been some improvements, for example in support for students and quality assurance. In the past two years, the college has failed to achieve some of its key strategic objectives associated with finance, recruitment, retention and achievement. A number of new initiatives have been introduced over the last year, some of which are yielding improvements, but overall there has not been an effective strategic response to the college's difficulties. Senior managers have not provided the corporation with sufficiently comprehensive and reliable information on which to base their decision-making. The

# Cross-college Provision

college has yet to develop a successful marketing strategy to address the decline in enrolments of full-time 16 to 19 year-old students. Despite these significant weaknesses there is much good operational planning by curriculum and cross-college teams. All staff teams are involved in the preparation of annual operating plans and targets. There are regular reviews of performance against operating plans. Staff are aware of the importance of monitoring performance against targets and line managers foster effective teamworking.

70 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is weak. The college has not achieved its target funding units for the last two years. Annual budgets have consistently been based on unrealistic assumptions. The financial position of the college has deteriorated during 1998-99 and the financial forecast for the current year is proving to be inadequate. Senior managers have not recognised trends soon enough and have not taken action quickly enough to remedy problems. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report. Management accounts are produced promptly each month and the summary includes a graph of the current and forecast cash position. There is, however, no month-by-month cashflow analysis or rolling 12-month cashflow forecast. Although the principal and the director of resources review the management accounts before they are submitted to the governors, the senior management team does not review them with sufficient rigour. Financial regulations and procedures are updated regularly.

71 The senior management team comprises the principal and three directors responsible for enterprise and quality, curriculum and resources. The college managers' group meets monthly and comprises the senior management team, heads of school and services managers. Since the last inspection there have been a number of structural changes to the management structure. Staffing levels, including

the number of management posts, have been reduced. Staff understand the structure and their roles within it. Communication in the college is improving. Formal and informal communication within individual teams is good. Communication between the principal and the teaching staff is less good.

72 The last inspection identified the need for improvements in management information. The college has been slow to take effective action and has had difficulty in providing consistently reliable information on student attendance, retention and achievement. This continuing weakness was acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Attendance registers, which act as the source of much of this information, do not always clearly identify whether a student is absent, has withdrawn or has transferred to another course. The difficulty in providing reliable data about students has hindered management monitoring and decision-making. However, the situation has much improved since the appointment of new staff to work on management information systems early in 1999.

73 There is a comprehensive staff manual that is reviewed annually. It contains policies and procedures including an equal opportunities policy. Although an equal opportunities working group has recently been established, monitoring is not yet effective. Health and safety policies and procedures are actively pursued, monitored and regularly reported.

74 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are productive links with many partners, for example the local training and enterprise council (TEC), the employment service and local businesses. The college works with other further education colleges and with local schools, for example in the delivery of the national curriculum. Local franchised provision accounts for 12% of enrolments and 6% of FEFC funding units. The management and monitoring of this work has been unsatisfactory, although

# Cross-college Provision

there have been recent improvements. Data required for the effective management of franchised provision have been incomplete. Forecasts of activity have been inaccurate and, until recently, franchise centres have not been monitored by appropriate curriculum specialists. The college is making rapid progress in addressing this weakness.

## Conclusions

75 The self-assessment report was lengthy and detailed. Although its layout was complicated, it provided a useful basis for planning and carrying out the inspection. However, despite sound judgements about strengths and weaknesses in some areas, significant weaknesses were omitted or not given sufficient emphasis, particularly in relation to governance and management. At the time of the inspection, improvements were in hand to remedy some of the weaknesses identified through self-assessment. Leading up to the inspection, much work went into correcting inaccurate historical data on students' achievements. This process identified improvements which can be made to the student data collection systems.

76 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

## FEFC-funded student numbers by age (November 1999)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	1
16-18 years	15
19-24 years	13
25+ years	71
Not known	0
Total	100

*Source: college data*

## FEFC-funded student numbers by level of study (November 1999)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Level 1 (foundation)	43
Level 2 (intermediate)	24
Level 3 (advanced)	18
Level 4/5 (higher)	2
Non-schedule 2	13
Total	100

*Source: college data*

## FEFC-funded student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (November 1999)

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	161	1,728	30
Agriculture	1	0	0
Construction	23	63	1
Engineering	78	289	6
Business	146	1,350	24
Hotel and catering	91	85	3
Health and community care	118	764	14
Art and design	183	159	5
Humanities	91	595	11
Basic education	28	320	6
Total	920	5,353	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 (November 1999)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	76	1	34	111
Supporting direct learning contact	57	2	0	59
Other support	57	2	0	59
Total	190	5	34	229

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

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£6,974,000	£6,642,000	£6,242,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£18.88	£18.30	£17.60
Payroll as a proportion of income	65%	65%	70%
Achievement of funding target	100%	90%	89%
Diversity of income	30%	32%	33%
Operating surplus	£9,000	-£164,000	-£445,000

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	400	305	297	882	841	661
	Retention (%)	83	76	69	79	75	65
	Achievement (%)	47	80	52	47	93	49
2	Number of starters	665	539	511	937	1,067	1,157
	Retention (%)	79	75	65	80	79	59
	Achievement (%)	70	57	69	59	63	62
3	Number of starters	459	551	436	860	728	661
	Retention (%)	74	77	73	80	81	67
	Achievement (%)	60	80	68	56	75	65
4 or 5	Number of starters	13	6	5	58	49	78
	Retention (%)	92	50	80	79	69	77
	Achievement (%)	29	100	33	82	85	61
Short courses	Number of starters	298	192	241	549	664	518
	Retention (%)	80	70	71	79	75	75
	Achievement (%)	63	88	87	27	67	52
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	372	420	409	2,252	3,414	3,458
	Retention (%)	91	92	97	88	91	94
	Achievement (%)	51	97	72	39	84	57

Source: ISR

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