

**The Bournemouth and Poole College
Reinspection of Science: February 2000
Report from the Inspectorate
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 assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum, disseminates good practice and advises the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

REINSPECTION

The FEFC has agreed that colleges with provision judged by the inspectorate to be less than satisfactory or poor (grade 4 or 5) should be reinspected. In these circumstances, a college may have its funding agreement with the FEFC qualified to prevent it increasing the number of new students in an unsatisfactory curriculum area until the FEFC is satisfied that weaknesses have been addressed.

Satisfactory provision may also be reinspected if actions have been taken to improve quality and the college's existing inspection grade is the only factor which prevents it from meeting the criteria for FEFC accreditation.

Reinspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circulars 97/12, 97/13 and 97/22. Reinspections seek to validate the data and judgements provided by colleges in self-assessment reports and confirm that actions taken as a result of previous inspection have improved the quality of provision. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work they inspect. The opinion of the FEFC's audit service contributes to inspectorate judgements about governance and management.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

Assessments use grades on 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 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.

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 02476 863000
Fax 02476 862100
website: <http://www.fefc.ac.uk>*

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The Bournemouth and Poole College South West Region

Reinspection of science: February 2000

Background

The Bournemouth and Poole College was inspected in November 1998 and the findings published in the FEFC inspection report 25/99. Provision in science was graded 4.

The key strengths were: good GCSE chemistry and physics pass rates; and good technical support for practical work. The main weaknesses were: poor pass rates and retention rates on many courses; many teachers' low expectations of their students; the inadequate range of teaching styles; poor attendance rates; some poor health and safety practice; and ineffective academic leadership of the science provision.

Since the last inspection the college has reorganised and has reduced the number of schools involved in teaching science from four to three. The college has also started to consolidate the academic courses onto the Poole site and the part-time and applied science courses onto the Bournemouth site. GCSE provision has now been changed. The college is concentrating on providing GCSE science and human physiology and health courses, rather than the large selection of single science subjects offered previously which had poor retention and achievement rates.

Reinspection took place in February 2000. Inspectors observed 12 lessons, examined a range of documents including students' marked work, scrutinised students' achievement and retention data, considered the specialist accommodation and resources as well as the learning resource centres and held meetings with teachers, managers and students.

Assessment

The college has made some progress in addressing weaknesses identified in the original inspection. Teaching has improved and the grades awarded for lessons observed by inspectors shows a similar profile to the national picture for this programme area, as set out in *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*. However, some major weaknesses in the quality of teaching remain, particularly in the use of teaching aids to motivate students. Retention rates and pass rates for most courses remain below the national average for the sector. In the assessment of students' work there is insufficient correction, identification of omissions and encouraging comment.

The leadership and management of the science provision are better than was found at the previous inspection. Staff across both sites meet more frequently and the health and safety issues have been addressed. This includes the rationalisation and improvement to the storage of chemical stock. The accommodation and access to computers in laboratories are also better. All laboratories have computers and some are used for data-logging during experiments. Students do not routinely use IT for wordprocessing, analysis of data or research on the Internet. Some staff remain ill at ease with IT, although in-service training has taken place and more is planned to improve staff skills. The technical support for practical work is good.

Revised grade: science 4.