

**Dewsbury College**  
**Reinspection of Governance: November 1999**  
**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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**Dewsbury College**  
**Yorkshire and Humberside Region**

**Reinspection of governance: November 1999**

**Background**

Dewsbury College in West Yorkshire was inspected in January 1998 and the findings were published in the inspection report 22/98. Provision in governance was graded 4 and the audit service opinion was that governance was weak.

The strength of the provision was the close involvement of governors in revising the mission of the college and in strategic planning. The major weaknesses identified in the inspection were: failure of the corporation to ensure the financial health of the college; failure of audit committee to secure improvements in the college's internal control system; ineffective financial monitoring by the finance and general purposes committee; and failure of the corporation to ensure sufficient financial expertise in the senior management team.

Following the inspection the college prepared an action plan to address the weaknesses. The action plan, together with a new self-assessment report, provided the main basis for the reinspection. The reinspection took place in November 1999, by two inspectors working for a total of four days and an auditor whose three days also involved the reinspection of financial management. They held meetings with governors, managers and the clerk and examined a wide range of college documentation including data on students' achievements and retention and targets set by the college.

**Assessment**

The corporation has addressed the key weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is adequate. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC. The finance and general purposes committee meets frequently, receives a range of detailed reports on the college's actual and forecast financial position and has overseen the college's financial recovery. Audit reports indicate that the college has established appropriate systems of internal control. The college's financial position has improved and historic cost surpluses have been made in each of the last two years.

Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that governors continue to make a valuable contribution to the establishment of the college mission and strategic aims and have played an appropriate part in monitoring the post-inspection action plan and in the production of the college's self-assessment report. Members debate issues and adopt a corporate approach to business. The corporation has a membership of 15 governors. There are two vacancies. The governors have revised their membership according to modified articles and instruments. However, some governors have not been properly appointed. A new standards committee has been established and governors are creating links with individual programme areas, addressing a weakness noted in the last report.

The college has contracted with a local firm of solicitors to provide a clerking service. The self-assessment report identifies weaknesses in this arrangement. The clerk does not provide sufficient independent advice to governors. There have been procedural weaknesses. Some of the reports to governors should be more detailed. For example, the equal opportunities report is insufficiently analytical. Governors receive insufficient information on recruitment and retention and on the achievement of funding targets.

**Revised grade:** governance 3.