

**Ealing Tertiary College**  
**Reinspection of Management: September 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>*

© FEFC 2000

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

## **Ealing Tertiary College Greater London Region**

### **Reinspection of management: September 2000**

#### **Background**

Ealing Tertiary College was inspected in February 1999. The inspection findings were published in inspection report 49/99. A grade 4 was awarded to management.

Inspectors identified one strength, good financial management. They found the following weaknesses: inadequate strategic and operational planning in 1998; ineffective co-ordination of the curriculum; inconsistent use of performance indicators and targets; unreliable retention and achievement data; and inconsistent monitoring of the equal opportunities policy.

Management was reinspected in September 2000. The inspection team considered the updated self-assessment report and evidence provided by the college. The team held meetings with senior and middle managers, and staff.

#### **Assessment**

The college has taken action to address weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Management initiatives, including the introduction of managers responsible for each of the college's four centres, have improved communications across the college and the support provided to staff. The style of management is more open. Management information provides more reliable data on retention and achievement. Course teams now use these data in managing the curriculum. Staff are more aware of the college's priorities and participate well in developing the curriculum. A well-conceived equal opportunities policy has been devised. Implementation and monitoring of the policy are in the early stages. The college, in partnership with a wide range of agencies, is developing more education and training opportunities to meet the needs of local people.

Some aspects of management have not improved and some have deteriorated. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is weak. The college's financial health has deteriorated significantly. The college made operating deficits in the last three years. It has failed to meet its funding targets in the last two years. The college's latest financial forecast indicates an operating deficit in excess of £1 million in 1999-2000, with negative general reserves. Financial forecasts do not include contingency plans to deal with any risks, nor is there a comprehensive risk management plan. The college has taken some action since the significant shortfall in income was identified; for example, the control of costs and liaison with the FEFC to stabilise its financial position. Recently, the college has introduced a more rigorous planning system. It is too early to judge the system's effectiveness. Internal auditors have identified some significant weaknesses in the college's systems of internal control.

Strategic planning and operational management remain underdeveloped. For example, a strategic decision to close a curriculum area was announced to staff and students and then rescinded. The operating plan for 2000-01 is not complete and its relationship to the strategic plan for 2000 to 2003 is not sufficiently clear. Few teams have development plans or targets relating to the college's key strategic objectives. Co-ordination of the curriculum has improved but some important management and curriculum priorities are not developing consistently or effectively. For example, the majority of individual performance reviews

scheduled for 1999 were not achieved. Staff deployment in 1999 was ineffective. There are wide differences in the workloads of managers and in the administrative support provided to them. Some curriculum teams do not respond effectively to cross-college developments. For example, key skills are not always developed consistently within the same curriculum teams operating on different sites. The academic board is meant to advise the principal on curriculum and quality issues. Its terms of reference are unclear and it is not operating effectively. The curriculum management group discusses curriculum and quality issues but it does not report to the academic board. Managers failed to provide governors with some of the information necessary to support their decision-making.

The college needs to improve financial management, strategic planning and operational management. It should clarify the relationship between committees in the management structure and ensure their effective operation. It should ensure that the corporation receives timely and detailed information on retention rates and examination results.

**Revised grade:** management 4.