

Morley College
Reinspection of Quality Assurance: March 2001
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.

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**Morley College
Greater London Region**

Reinspection of quality assurance: March 2001

Background

Morley College in central London was inspected in May 2000 and the findings published in inspection report 104/00. Quality assurance was awarded a grade 4.

The key strengths were: productive arrangements for consulting and liaising with students; thorough and well-documented teaching observation scheme. The major weaknesses were: underdeveloped quality assurance systems; unsystematic course monitoring and reviewing; insufficient analysis of retention and achievement; underdeveloped staff performance and review process; insufficient use of service standards and performance indicators.

Reinspection took place over three days in March 2001. Inspectors had meetings with college managers, teaching staff and governors. They reviewed a wide range of college documentation, including self-assessment reports, the quality assurance handbook, performance reviews, student evaluation forms and minutes of meetings.

Assessment

The college has made progress in addressing areas of weakness identified during the last inspection. Most post-inspection action plan targets have been met, though some were over-ambitious and have had to be revised. A quality assurance system has been agreed with governors and staff and is in the process of being implemented. It contains revised procedures and documentation and sets out where responsibility lies for assuring quality throughout the college. Some elements are still in draft form, others have been piloted with a sample of course groups and are now being used by all teachers. The quality assurance manual is clearly written and documentation is user-friendly. Governors have taken a close interest in monitoring the progress towards improved arrangements for quality assurance. A governor attends meetings of the academic board as an observer. Curriculum managers meet regularly to discuss quality improvement issues and teachers are now much more aware of the importance of quality improvement. The introduction of standardised documentation has led to more systematic course monitoring and reviewing. The views of students are a key element in the new arrangements. Course review forms do not yet include comparisons with national benchmarks. The college is addressing retention issues through staff development activities and the appointment of 'tracking officers' who monitor attendance, follow-up absences and give regular reports to teachers and managers. The staff appraisal scheme is now being fully implemented and the college is on target to review all full-time staff by the end of this academic year. The lesson observation scheme has been extended to all teachers, though it is too early yet to judge the overall impact of the scheme in raising standards of teaching. Quality assurance arrangements for business support staff are less developed than in curriculum areas.

The college has made some improvements to the reliability and quality of data provided by the management information system. However, inspectors agreed that it is still not robust enough to give clear and accurate information about retention and achievement, and to be used in course reviews and target-setting.

Revised grade: quality assurance 3.