

Queen Mary's College
Reinspection of leisure and tourism: March 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. 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.

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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Queen Mary's College South East Region

Reinspection of leisure and tourism: March 1999

Background

Queen Mary's College was inspected during February 1998 and the findings published in inspection report 57/98. Provision in leisure and tourism was graded 4.

The key strengths in the provision were: high retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course in 1997; management of the GNVQ intermediate course; and the integration of key skills with GNVQ courses. The main weaknesses were: some ineffective teaching; no course handbook or assignment schedule for GNVQ advanced students; the retention rate of GNVQ advanced students; GCSE travel and tourism results in 1996-97; GNVQ advanced course management in 1996-97; no staff with appropriate industrial qualifications and experience; no base room for students and few resources. Other weakness included the low level of motivation and achievement in Spanish, lack of work experience for intermediate students, few external visits, some unduly long lessons and few course meetings

The provision was reinspected in March 1999 by one inspector. Ten lessons and two tutorials were observed. Meetings were held with managers, teachers and students. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised and students' work examined.

Assessment

Most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed. The college has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching. More than half of the lessons observed were good or outstanding. Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching methods. In one intermediate lesson on sports injuries, the teacher demonstrated different types of bone fracture using pieces of wood and supplied resources to enable students to practise the treatment of minor injuries on each other. Classrooms are properly laid out for group work. Most lessons are well planned and well managed. Detailed lesson plans are supported by clear schemes of work. Some assignments have been rewritten since the last inspection and are clear. In the weaker lessons the assignments need further development, the pace was slow and materials inadequately prepared. A new teacher has been appointed for Spanish since the last inspection and improvements have taken place as a result.

Achievement rates increased significantly for GCSE travel and tourism from 31% in 1997 to 85% in 1998. Retention remains high. On the GNVQ intermediate course retention fell in 1998 to 69%. However, although achievement fell it still met the national average. Retention also fell in 1998 on the GNVQ advanced course but achievement increased by 3% to 70%. At the time of reinspection, retention was higher at both intermediate and advanced level for those completing in 1999 and significantly higher for advanced students completing in 2000.

Curriculum organisation and management of the leisure and tourism GNVQ advanced course has improved greatly and is now the direct responsibility of the head of department.

A choice of a leisure or tourism route is now offered to new entrants at advanced level. The tourism route lacks opportunities for students to do relevant additional qualifications apart from GCSE travel and tourism. Links with local industry have increased particularly for leisure but are still restricted for tourism students. Progress is slow in staff acquiring industrial experience although two members have a short placement soon. There has been an increase in external visits with a trip to France for GNVQ advanced students and a residential in the United Kingdom for intermediate students. Work experience is still not compulsory for intermediate students. Those who wish to do it can join the college's programme of voluntary work experience organised centrally. Effective academic tutorials have been introduced to monitor students' progress. Course team meetings take place fortnightly and have improved communication among the teaching team. Comprehensive handbooks containing an assignment schedule have been developed for GNVQ advanced students.

The timetable has been amended to reduce the length of lessons which has met with student approval. A new base room has been established which is shared with GCE A level geography. Although this is an improvement, appropriate resources for leisure and tourism courses are still very limited. Two new computers have been installed which will soon be linked to the internet. However, there are no CD-ROMs or other relevant software. There are no travel and tourism trade journals or manuals. The head of department is pursuing closer links with local travel and tourism providers as one method of increasing resources.

Revised grade: leisure and tourism 3.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in leisure and tourism, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	Expected completions	24	21	32
		Retention (%)	75	86	69
		Achievement (%)	50	84	68
GCSE travel and tourism	2	Expected completions	16	16	15
		Retention (%)	100	88	87
		Achievement (%)	8	31	85
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	Expected completions	*	40	42
		Retention (%)	*	60	48
		Achievement (%)	*	67	70

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)

***figures in bold relate to expected completions and retention of current students at the time of reinspection. All except advanced students completing in 1999 were recruited after the inspection*