

**Warrington Collegiate Institute
Reinspection of English
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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**Warrington Collegiate Institute
North West Region**

Reinspection of English: January 2000

Background

The college was inspected in November 1998 and the findings published in February 1999, report 21/99. Provision in English was awarded grade 4.

The key strengths were: good practice in marking and assessment of students' work; effective arrangements for reviewing students' progress; good teaching on access to higher education courses. The major weaknesses were: poor and declining retention rates; poor achievement on the GCE A level literature course; unsatisfactory attendance at lessons; ineffective management of teachers' performance; some dull and unimaginative teaching; little use of available resources to support learning.

Reinspection took place in January 2000. Inspectors observed lessons across a range of courses, had meetings with students and staff, examined a range of documents, examined students' work and scrutinised students' retention and achievement data.

Assessment

Since the last inspection, changes have been made to staffing in English and to the management of the area. There is now much good teaching. In all lessons, there is a positive working atmosphere. Teachers have a good rapport with students. Most lessons are well planned, purposeful and contain a variety of activities that engage students' interest. In a small number of cases the timing and pace of lessons is less well managed. There is a high level of student participation. Students respond well to questions and answers and work well with their fellow pupils. A minority of students find it hard to maintain concentration. Teachers provide sound guidance and direction to students. New entry requirements and initial assessment procedures have been introduced to ensure that students are enrolled on courses at the appropriate level. Student progress is reviewed regularly. Students and teachers carefully complete review documentation and targets for improvement are set.

Teachers mark and assess students' work carefully. Comments on students' work are detailed and give specific guidance on how to improve. Students speak highly of the help they receive. Teachers regularly meet to standardise their marking. Course planning is underdeveloped. Schemes of work have improved but most provide only a broad outline of the topics to be covered. They seldom contain reference to learning outcomes and to teaching and learning strategies. Little emphasis is given to strategies to support students' independent learning. In the GCSE English course students are provided with a range of well produced booklets and handouts. These have been produced jointly by the team.

The impact of some of the changes in subject staffing and course management have yet to have a significant impact on key performance indicators in the subject. Retention rates on most courses have improved in the last year. However, they remain unsatisfactory. Retention on GCE A level English literature was 42% in 1997 and 55% in 1998. In GCE A level English language, the retention rates for the three years 1997 to 1999 were 32%, 31% and 46%, respectively. GCSE courses form the largest part of the provision. Retention rates on these courses have been well below the national average for the last three years.

Achievement on some courses is good. In GCE A level English language, OCR English language stage 1 and on the access to higher education course, results have been above the national average for the last three years. Achievement in English literature is poor. In 1997 the pass rate was 51% and 75% in 1998. The college has identified a number of strategies to improve attendance in lessons. Students are closely monitored and careful records are kept. Absence from GCSE lessons remains high.

Revised grade: English 3.