

Westminster College
Reinspection of Leisure and Tourism: March 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.

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**Westminster College
Greater London Region**

Reinspection of leisure and tourism: March 2000

Background

Westminster College was inspected in May 1998 and the findings were published in inspection report 108/98. Provision in leisure and tourism was graded 4.

The strengths of the provision were: some well-planned, effective teaching on NVQ sports and fitness courses; high standards of students' work on the NVQ sports and fitness courses; well-equipped fitness facilities and a working travel agency. The main weaknesses identified were: some poor teaching on GNVQ courses; generally low attendance and retention rates; unsatisfactory pass rates on many courses; poor management of leisure and tourism courses; and inadequate internal verification on GNVQ courses in 1997-98.

The college produced two useful self-assessment report updates in December 1999 and March 2000 which included actions taken to address weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the reports but found that weaknesses in teaching and learning and students' achievements were still understated.

One inspector reinspected the provision over three days in March 2000. Eleven lessons were observed, including a tutorial. The inspector scrutinised a wide range of students' work and documentation provided by the college. Meetings were held with senior managers, course co-ordinators and students.

Assessment

The leisure, tourism and sports provision is now organised by a single school and the provision is effectively managed. Team meetings are held regularly and are well attended. The length of most lessons has sensibly been reduced to either one, or one-and-a-half hours. The quality of teaching has improved. A variety of effective teaching methods was in evidence during the reinspection. Lessons, generally, have clear aims. In the better lessons observed, lively teaching ensured that all the students paid attention. The teachers questioned the students closely to make sure that they had understood what they were doing. Teachers managed lessons well; students were well disciplined and keen to learn. There are now good opportunities for students to develop their communication and numerical skills. A programme of external visits has been introduced on some courses which helps students to understand better the relevance of material covered in their course. Internal verification arrangements for courses are now working well. Student retention has improved and, generally, is similar to the picture nationally. On most courses students' achievements in 1999 were better than in the previous year. The achievement rate on the GNVQ intermediate course in leisure and tourism is around the national average. Achievements on NVQ courses are around the national average.

Some weaknesses remain. Some teachers do not check sufficiently that students are learning. Students' attendance continues to be poor and punctuality is still a problem. Some students are not fully engaged in learning. The achievement rate on the advanced GNVQ course in leisure and tourism remains below the national average despite recent improvements. The rate on the air fares and ticketing programme fell in 1999.

Revised grade: leisure and tourism 3.