

**Woolwich College**  
**Reinspection of Information Technology: 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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**Woolwich College**  
**Greater London Region**

**Reinspection of information technology: March 2000**

**Background**

Woolwich College was inspected in November 1998. The findings were published in inspection report 23/99. The provision in information technology (IT) was awarded a grade 4.

The main strengths of the provision were: effective lesson planning; good relationships between students and teachers; well-presented work by some students; high retention on short courses and on the GNVQ intermediate course in IT; outstanding specialist equipment. These strengths were outweighed by weaknesses which included: the students' over-reliance on help received from teachers; the failure of some teachers to sustain the momentum of lessons and to ensure that students undertook appropriately demanding activities; students' lack of punctuality and poor attendance; low retention on some courses and generally low achievement rates. The college's most recent self-assessment report for IT emphasised the steps taken to address these weaknesses.

The provision was reinspected by one inspector in March 2000. Twelve lessons were observed. The inspector scrutinised a range of students' work, held meetings with college managers and teaching staff, examined student achievement and retention data and looked at a range of documentation relating to the college and its courses.

**Assessment**

The college has made some progress in addressing weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Effective learning materials have been developed which enable students to make progress in their work without becoming overdependent on the teacher. The planning of lessons continues to be effective and many lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good. Lessons are conducted in a friendly, supportive atmosphere. There are effective procedures for improving the attendance and punctuality of students. Students' work is marked appropriately, often with constructive comments from teachers on how grades could be improved. Achievement and retention on short courses is good. Students on these courses also receive useful guidance on progression opportunities. Computing facilities continue to be of a high standard. Despite these improvements, there are still significant weaknesses. Retention and achievement on most courses is poor. Retention rates on the GNVQ courses in IT, the GCSE computer studies course and on GCE A level computing were substantially below the national average in 1999. Retention this year is also low. Achievement rates on GCE A level and on the GNVQ intermediate and advanced IT programmes are below the national figures. No students on the GCSE computer studies course achieved a pass at grades C or above in 1999. Students' achievements on the computer literacy and information technology course continue to be poor.

**Revised grade:** information technology 4.