Lewisham College

Contents

Grade Descriptors

Inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use 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 the 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.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas, for colleges inspected during 1997-98, are shown in the following table.

| | Grade | | | | |
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Curriculum areas	9	60	29	2	–
Cross-college provision	18	54	24	4	–

Source: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report
Sample size: 108 college inspections

Student Achievements

Where data on student achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in three ways:

• as expected completions, which is the number of initial enrolments on qualifications where the student expected to complete the qualification in a given year. For example, a student on a two-year programme who began their programme in October 1995, would appear in the results for 1996-97 because this is the year in which they expected to complete their qualification

• as a retention rate, which is the percentage of qualifications which the students have completed as expected (or are continuing with the prospect of late completion). For programmes of study of two years or more, retention is calculated across the whole programme, that is, from the start to the end of the qualification

• as an achievement rate, which is the number of qualifications students have fully achieved as a percentage of completed qualifications with a known outcome. Partial achievements are not shown.

Lewisham College

Greater London Region

Inspected December 1998

Lewisham College is a successful general further education college which provides a wide range of educational opportunities for the community. In preparation for inspection the college produced a detailed, clear self-assessment report. The judgements in the report are supported by comprehensive evidence. Staff, corporation members and representatives of external organisations were involved in the self-assessment process. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements made by the college about the strengths and weaknesses of its programme areas. Since the last inspection, there have been many measurable improvements in the quality of the college's provision.

The college has a strong commitment to the economic regeneration of the area in which it is situated. It is doing its utmost to widen the participation in education of people in Lewisham and to enable all its students to progress to employment or to further or higher education. The college promotes inclusive learning in all areas of its provision. The principal takes responsibility for equal opportunities. Students are treated with respect and feel valued as individuals. Governors, managers and staff work exceptionally well together and are all appropriately involved in planning the development of the college. Strategic objectives are set within the context of the college's values. Senior management provides strong, confident leadership and has established a self-critical environment within which everyone values and evaluates their performance openly and honestly. Inspectors found no significant weaknesses in governance and management. The quality of the computing provision is outstanding. Inspectors saw outstanding teaching in most subjects and little teaching was less than satisfactory. The college has forged strong links with public and private employers and all programme areas have established links with European organisations. A notable strength of the college is the support it provides for students. Its approach to the many difficult problems faced by students is often innovative. The college is successful in encouraging students to undertake creative projects which benefit the local community. In keeping with the college's ethos particular attention is paid to the quality of accommodation. Quality assurance systems have led to many improvements in the college's work. The college should address: inadequate planning of some lessons, some less-effective tutorials, low pass and retention rates on some courses, and the poor attendance of some students.

The grades awarded as a result of the inspection are given below.

Curriculum area	Grade
Computing	1
Construction	2
Engineering	3
Hospitality and catering and leisure and tourism	2
Art and design and performing arts	2
English/other humanities	3

Cross-college provision	Grade
Support for students	1
General resources	1
Quality assurance	1
Governance	1
Management	1

The College and Its Mission

1   Lewisham College is a large general further education college. It is based on two sites, one, the long-established campus on Lewisham Way, close to the centre of Lewisham, the other, a new campus in Deptford, opened in 1996, following an £11 million capital programme. The current student population is drawn primarily from north Lewisham and the London boroughs of Southwark and Greenwich. This catchment area is one of high economic deprivation. Lewisham is ranked eleventh on the local authority indices of deprivation and Southwark is ranked second. Of the college's students, 79% live in wards designated by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) as deprived.

2   The educational achievements of school-leavers in Lewisham are significantly below achievements nationally. In 1997, only 29.7% of year 11 students from Lewisham schools gained five or more GCSEs at grades C or above, compared with 45% nationally. The three local schools which have formed a consortium with the college had rates ranging from 7% to 27%. Figures from the local training and enterprise council (TEC) indicate that only 33% of Lewisham residents hold level 3 qualifications and only 11% have degrees. According to a Basic Skills Agency (BSA) survey carried out in 1998, 31% of people aged 16 to 60 in Lewisham have very low or low numeracy skills while 16% have low or very low literacy levels.

3   The FEFC has identified the college as one of a group which typically recruits a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas. In 1997-98, the college enrolled a total of 12,709 students. Of these, 3,951 were on full-time courses. There were 1,815 students on courses leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs), 469 on general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs), and 964 on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses. The average age of students was 29 and 49% of students were from minority ethnic groups. About 50% of students claim benefits. The college employs 626 full-time equivalent members of staff, 380 of whom have direct learning contact with students and 75 of whom support direct learning. This makes the college one of the largest employers in Lewisham.

4   The college's mission is to be a force for change. Its strategy is to develop a provision which fully meets the needs of individual students in all subject areas. This concept of inclusive learning lies at the heart of all of the college's activities. The college, therefore, attempts to move beyond traditional concepts of the nature of a further education college by exploring new ways of enabling learning to take place. It also recognises that education has to extend beyond the delivery of qualifications to address those issues which impact on students and their learning. As a result the college's key strategic goals include:

- delivering innovation in education and training
- collaborating with others on innovative approaches to learning
- attracting stronger participation from priority groups
- developing programmes which offer tangible achievement to more learners
- fostering a learning environment which inspires learners to achieve beyond their initial expectations
- creating skills development opportunities to bridge the gap between qualifications and the labour market.

The college has made substantial progress in areas such as curriculum design and delivery, support for students and partnerships with outside bodies. As a result of its success it is involved in a range of regional and national initiatives.

5   The college offers courses in all of the FEFC programme areas and has developed a

wide variety of ways of supporting and motivating students, and promoting higher rates of achievement. The college has also developed a broad range of partnerships which have led to innovative approaches to the provision of education and for the support of lifetime learning. Examples include the development of local community businesses and the establishment of a Trades Union Congress education centre. The college is an associate college of the University of Greenwich.

The Inspection

6   The college was inspected in December 1998. Before the inspection, inspectors reviewed the college's self-assessment report and information about the college held by other divisions of the FEFC. The college submitted data on students' achievements for 1998. These data were validated against primary sources, such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. Data for 1996 and 1997 were taken from the FEFC's individualised student record (ISR). The college was notified of aspects of provision to be inspected approximately two months before the inspection. The inspection was carried out by 14 inspectors and an auditor working in the college for a total of 64 days. They observed 96 lessons and examined students' work and documentation relating to the college and its courses. Meetings were held with governors, managers, teachers, students, support staff and employers.

7   The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Of the lessons inspected, 66% were rated good or outstanding and about 3% were less than satisfactory. These figures are slightly better than the average figures for colleges in the sector inspected during 1997-98.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	1	6	8	1	0	16
GCSE	0	2	3	0	0	5
GNVQ	1	5	2	0	0	8
NVQ	3	11	5	1	0	20
Other vocational	10	15	12	0	0	37
Other	5	4	0	1	0	10
Total (No.)	20	43	30	3	0	96
Total (%)	21	45	31	3	0	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98 (%)	19	46	29	6	0	100

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report

Context

8   The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1997-98. Attendance varied across the areas inspected. For example in computing and performing arts it was at the national average of 77% but in English and humanities it was well below, at only 53%.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Lewisham College	12.2	69
National average, all inspected colleges 1997-98	10.4	77

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1997-98: Chief inspector's annual report

Curriculum Areas

Computing

Grade 1

9   Inspectors observed 12 lessons. The college's self-assessment report was clearly written and comprehensive. Inspectors agreed with its identification of the key strengths and weaknesses of the computing provision.

Key strengths

- excellent course management
- range of modularised qualifications providing good progression pathways
- appropriate range of learning activities for students of different abilities
- highly effective work experience opportunities
- good retention and achievement on most courses
- well-qualified and experienced teachers
- constant review and updating of courses
- good specialist computing facilities and accommodation

Weaknesses

- low attendance on a few courses
- limited opportunities for the professional updating of teachers
- some constraints on students' access to computing resources

10   Inspectors agreed that the college provides a comprehensive range of computing and information technology (IT) courses, including London Open College Network introduction to computing modules, BTEC first and national computing, GCE A level courses and higher national courses in computing. Most courses are modular in design, enabling students to be accredited at each stage of the course. Flexible modes of study are available to both full-time and part-time students. This innovative approach reflects the college's commitment to widen participation and facilitate progression.

11   Staff are well qualified and work effectively together. Lessons are well planned and assignment schedules adhered to closely. The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers use a range of methods including lectures, workshops, and support sessions for individual students. The internal verification system works well. Staff are highly committed to supporting students. Many excellent examples of teaching addressing the different needs of students were observed. Students are encouraged to work at their own pace in a non-competitive and supportive environment. In a few lessons observed, the work was pitched at the level of the most able students and a few students struggled to complete it. The college identified this weakness in its self-assessment report. Staff provide good informal tutorials. All students receive a well-designed course handbook at the start of their course.

12   Teachers meet regularly to review students' progress and course developments. The minutes of meetings clearly record actions to be taken. Validated teaching materials are held in a central resource centre. These high-quality materials are widely used by staff and constantly updated. Due to the pace of change in IT, some staff are finding it difficult to keep up to date in the subject. The college is addressing this issue. Courses are well managed and the specialist accommodation and resources are of a high standard. Demanding targets are set for all courses and appropriate action taken if targets are not met. All computers are being systematically upgraded. Students have good access to the internet and to electronic mail facilities. The range of software is excellent but not all packages are available to students when they move between centres. The self-assessment report recognised this and an action plan is in place to address this.

13   Retention and achievement rates are mostly good, particularly at foundation and

higher education level. The college's self-assessment report recognised that GCE A level computing results are poor, although only a small number of students take the courses. On some courses there is low attendance. The standard of students' practical and written work is high. Assignments and coursework are appropriately marked and the majority of students are achieving at the required level. Most students clearly enjoy studying and in all observed lessons there was a clear sense of purpose and industry. Work experience placements complement the students' academic study. Students spoke highly of the work placement process, the support received from college staff and the amount they learned. Progression possibilities are well established. The majority of students on the national certificate course designed for women were offered jobs as a result of their work experience placements and all BTEC national final-year students were offered university places. Destination data are collected at team level but systematic monitoring of students' progress has yet to be devised. The college is addressing this.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
Introduction to IT	1	Expected completions	73	90	105
		Retention (%)	79	69	81
		Achievement (%)	96	92	92
BTEC first diploma IT applications	2	Expected completions	74	69	69
		Retention (%)	72	73	68
		Achievement (%)	32	74	74
Access to computing	3	Expected completions	14	13	18
		Retention (%)	64	46	75
		Achievement (%)	50	62	86
BTEC national computing	3	Expected completions	291	108	82
		Retention (%)	87	59	70
		Achievement (%)	26	76	91
BTEC higher national certificate in computing	4	Expected completions	74	90	40
		Retention (%)	80	60	82
		Achievement (%)	28	70	88

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

Curriculum Areas

Construction

Grade 2

14   Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3, the course for technicians and some provision in the community. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses included in the college's self-assessment report, and the progress already made in overcoming weaknesses.

Key strengths

- wide range of courses
- continuous improvement in retention rates
- good specialist accommodation
- effective links with the local community
- support and guidance given to students

Weaknesses

- lack of planning in a few lessons
- the need for teachers to update their industrial experience
- poor attendance by some students

15   Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the construction provision provides a wide range of full-time and part-time technician and craft courses. Students are well informed about the career pathways available in construction. A large proportion of craft and technician students use their qualifications to obtain work or continue with their studies. Most programmes are modularised allowing students to accumulate credits towards whole qualifications.

16   Courses are effectively managed. As the self-assessment report indicated, schemes of work are clear, lessons are planned effectively and teachers regularly monitor the extent to which students are developing key skills in communication, the application of number, and

the use of IT. The school of construction has been successful in developing extensive links with the local community, with schools and employers locally and with a college in Berlin. Some of these links have led to college students and staff being involved in refurbishment work, garden design, and the construction of outdoor play and sports facilities. The schemes are imaginative and include designs for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

17   Most teaching and the promotion of learning is effective. The self-assessment report drew attention to the variety of teaching methods used and to the use of computer-aided learning material as strengths and inspectors agreed. High-quality visual teaching aids are used. Students are encouraged to relate their work placement experience to topics covered in their course. Inspectors observed a high work rate in most of the practical lessons with students demonstrating good skills in planning their work, selecting the appropriate tools to carry it out and working on their own. A feature of all practical work is the way that students learn from each other. They discuss how to carry out their tasks and often resolve problems without their teachers' help. In a few lessons observed, teachers had not planned the work adequately and failed to engage the attention of all of the students.

18   The quality of practical work in craft subjects is good and generally reflects industrial standards. The students' work on technician courses is also good. Over the last three years, retention rates on most courses have improved. Pass rates on courses leading to NVQ levels 1 and 3 are higher than the national average. However, NVQ level 2 and technician level 3 pass rates are lower. The college's self-assessment report identified these strengths and weaknesses.

19   Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced for the courses on offer. Several have broadened their range of skills to facilitate the development of multi-craft work. There is a

Curriculum Areas

need for some teachers to update their knowledge of current industrial practices. The school's staff development plan recognises industrial updating for teachers as a major priority.

20   Workshops provide a good training environment, simulating various aspects of site working. Equipment and handtools are similar to those used in industry and are adequately maintained. Larger items of equipment and machinery are new and also compare favourably with those used in industry. The good-quality training facilities and equipment are valued by students and are identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Library and learning resources are good and provide a comfortable study environment. Students have good access to modern computing facilities and an appropriate range of software.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	**1997**	**1998**
NVQ construction crafts	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	168 65 *	235 75 28	148 90 58
NVQ construction crafts	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * 57	447 74 41	396 76 48
NVQ construction crafts	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	77 70 80	78 78 44	67 87 81
Higher national certificate building	4	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	118 89 *	49 57 11	9 100 89

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
*data not available

Curriculum Areas

Engineering

Grade 3

21 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering courses in motor vehicle engineering, electronics, mechanical engineering, refrigeration and air conditioning, and computer-aided drafting. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report, but considered that the college had overestimated the quality of teaching.

Key strengths

- effective links with employers and schools

- a range of courses which provide progression opportunities from foundation to advanced level

- effective teaching of engineering theory

- effective teaching of students with different abilities

- good specialist accommodation and equipment

- improved pass rates on some courses

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning of some lessons

- lack of tutorial provision for part-time students

- declining retention rates on several courses

- poor pass rates on some foundation and level 2 courses

- some low student attendance

22   The school of engineering is effectively managed. Following a rigorous review and evaluation of the provision, a number of underperforming courses have been withdrawn and some new programmes have been introduced. As acknowledged in the self-assessment report, the provision has been well planned to meet the needs of students and employers, enabling students to progress from foundation to advanced levels. The school has strong links with employers who participate at termly Employers' Forum meetings which are attended also by a governor of the college. A number of specialised short courses are also provided for employees of local companies. Many engineering students benefit from equipment and materials donated by manufacturers. The school has recently received approval to offer a European modern apprenticeship programme in office equipment maintenance and repair in collaboration with employers in Germany and Holland. There are effective links with local schools, enabling school pupils to attend short, introductory engineering courses.

23   Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Some theory lessons are effective and well planned. In the better lessons, teachers use a variety of appropriate methods to assist students' learning. In some lessons, teachers catered particularly effectively for the different abilities of students by setting a range of appropriate tasks. Students respond well and are enthusiastic about their work. A few lessons observed were inadequately planned. Consequently, many students were unclear about the purpose of the lesson. The attendance of students at many lessons is low. Inspectors found the self-assessment report overestimated the quality of teaching.

24   Students are provided with course handbooks which explain the content and assessment procedures of the course for which they are studying. Generally, workshop safety procedures are observed. Full-time students benefit from a weekly tutorial which enables them to review their progress with the tutor. Formal review opportunities are not available to part-time students. Students' work is marked appropriately, although the written feedback provided by teachers is often insufficient and spelling mistakes are rarely corrected.

Curriculum Areas

25   The achievement rates on many courses have improved and in some cases are now satisfactory or better. Achievements on the access to higher education and BTEC national diploma courses are now good. However, the pass rate for the GNVQ intermediate course remains below the national average. The self-assessment report recognised weaknesses in some retention rates and pass rates. Retention rates on some courses have declined over recent years.

26   The college recognises that its engineering accommodation is good. There is a range of modern, specialist equipment and computer systems. Library staff work closely with engineering teachers and there is a good stock of engineering books in the library. Teachers are appropriately qualified and many hold assessor and verifier qualifications. A few teachers lack recent industrial experience.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
C&G 2240 part 1 electronic servicing	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	61 72 63	72 71 53	55 89 60
NVQ motor vehicle maintenance and service replacement	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	** ** **	* * *	94 49 78
C&G 2240 part 2 electronic servicing	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	125 77 51	59 73 39	41 68 50
GNVQ engineering and precursor (first diploma)	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	27 67 *	17 76 46	21 67 50
BTEC national diploma engineering	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	73 88 *	37 70 57	18 56 90
Access to higher education engineering product design	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	** ** **	35 74 38	14 71 80

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
*data not available
**course not running

Curriculum Areas

Hospitality and Catering and Leisure and Tourism

Grade 2

27   Inspectors observed 11 lessons covering hospitality and catering, and leisure and tourism. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good course management and course teamworking
- well-planned teaching
- effective assessment procedures
- good standard of practical work
- large numbers of students progressing to related employment
- high-quality specialist resources

Weaknesses

- low attendance in a few classes
- failure by some students to achieve a full qualification
- little use of IT within the curriculum area

28   The college offers a wide range of courses leading to NVQ levels 1 and 2 in catering. Students are able to obtain a range of additional qualifications including basic food hygiene and aspects of wines and spirits. GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses in leisure and tourism are also available.

29   Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that the standard of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and involve students in a broad range of learning activities. Assignment briefs are clearly written. Students receive detailed feedback on their assignments from teachers. Tutorial support is effective. During practical catering sessions, students were attentive to their professional roles and

responsibilities. At the commencement of a busy restaurant lunch session, two students were particularly impressive in laying out the bar counter with a range of equipment and sample drinks of the day. Students develop good skills within a high-quality, well-designed working environment. At the time of the inspection the school managed a large conference and lunch which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales attended. The college regularly provides similarly high-profile functions from which students gain valuable experience. Levels of attendance and retention amongst students are low on some courses. The college acknowledges this and is taking steps to address it.

30   The school recently won the Beacon Award for the excellence of its learning materials and for widening participation on the NVQ level 1 counter service course. The college has been successful in obtaining European social funding for its leisure and tourism courses, which has been used to support students on study visits and exchanges. Students are given comprehensive additional learning support by well-qualified specialists in curriculum areas.

31   Inspectors agreed that the college is successful in working with local employers and the local community. With a grant of £200,000 received from the single regeneration budget the college has started a project in Deptford to provide work opportunities for people within the 16 to 29 age range. Two railway arches have been converted into a modern catering business, a retail shop and a modern style cafe. These provide a fast developing business and are being used by students to improve their skills in preparing and serving food. Eventually they will become self-financing. Business targets have been set with this in mind.

32   On some courses, retention rates have declined and some students do not achieve a full qualification. However, this does not give the full picture of students' achievements. Many students commence their courses with low skill

levels and low personal esteem. The college has been particularly successful in helping students to develop specialist practical skills, improve social skills and build confidence in working with people. Many students take up employment before the completion of their course of study. For example, of the 22 students who started the NVQ level 1 course, five obtained related employment before obtaining the full award. The standard of practical catering is good. Work carried out by students displays well-developed technical skills. Students worked hygienically and safely.

33   Catering work areas are of a high quality. The restaurants are well designed and well equipped. The college's Phoenix Restaurant is a popular venue for the business breakfast club, conferences and business lunches. Extensive kitchens and support areas, including a community-based catering project, provide students with realistic working environments. A coffee bar is run by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Dedicated learning resources in leisure and tourism have been provided which include computers and specialist software packages. Well-qualified teachers are assisted by a high number of qualified, experienced support staff.

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

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
NVQ chef's diploma food preparation	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	30 83 84	39 77 83	22 66 32
NVQ chef's diploma food preparation	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	60 75 33	49 80 79	48 79 62
Hotel and Catering International Management Association certificate	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	21 90 42	11 91 100	20 65 69
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	16 63 80	17 59 60	18 72 69

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

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design and Performing Arts

Grade 2

34   The inspection covered courses in art and design, fashion, drama, music, dance and technical theatre arts. Inspectors observed 29 lessons. The inspection identified many of the strengths and weaknesses noted in the self-assessment report but the significance of some weaknesses in the report was underestimated.

Key strengths

- well-planned courses and lessons catering for a diverse range of students
- good management and teamwork
- much good teaching
- the impact of visiting professionals on students' work
- some outstanding performance work
- high levels of achievement on drama courses
- good specialist accommodation and resources

Weaknesses

- pass rates on some art and design courses below the national average
- some poor retention rates
- some poor levels of attendance

35   Provision in performing arts is large and distinctive, and has grown rapidly in art and design. There are courses from foundation to advanced level for students of all ages and aspirations, including adults who have not participated in education for many years. Skilful curriculum design and appropriate accreditation have enabled the college to adapt its provision to suit the needs of students. Adult students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been successfully integrated with many courses.

The work of all students is enhanced by visits to cultural events.

36   Courses are well managed. Staff work together closely and much of the teaching is good. Schemes of work are clear and most lessons are well prepared and interest the students. Teachers use effectively a variety of appropriate teaching and learning methods. They brief students carefully and use their subject expertise to good effect. Practical work is well integrated with relevant theory. In the performing arts, there is much outstanding teaching. Teachers make good use of the multi-disciplinary opportunities provided by play productions and most design students undertake a work placement. Visiting professional dancers present the students with exciting and creative challenges. Links with professional performers, artists and designers enhance the students' learning. Students' work is carefully assessed and teachers' comments are constructive and supportive. In art and design, drawing is taught in a lively, interesting manner. Fashion teachers give students a good grounding in garment production skills. However, the self-assessment report underestimated some weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning in art and design. In fashion, students' design, drawing and presentation skills are not as well developed as other aspects of their work.

37   Students undertake real commissioned work and projects for external organisations. GNVQ intermediate art and design students are creating a mosaic mural for a local primary school. Performance students have presented their work at many community and professional venues. Some outstanding results have been achieved. All drama students who completed their courses achieved a pass in 1998. City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) part 1 creative fashion pass rates have been well above the national average for the last three years. All but a few intermediate level dance students who completed their studies have achieved the qualification in the last three years. However,

on some courses there have been instances of low achievement and retention rates which were not identified in the self-assessment report. For example, pass rates for the GNVQ intermediate in art and design and the national diploma in foundation studies in art and design have been below the national average for the past few years. Retention rates for BTEC first and national diplomas in music and performing arts have slipped below the national average. Inspectors agreed with the college that poor punctuality and attendance affects some courses. Many students progress to higher education or employment in arts-related areas. Some dance students have secured places on prestigious higher education and vocational training courses.

38   Many teachers are practising professionals. Performance studies are underpinned by the teachers' level of professional expertise. The purpose-built art and design accommodation is of a high standard and encourages learning. An appropriate range of specialist equipment is available to students. Graphic design students have good access to computers. Studios have interesting displays of work by students. The Tresillian Theatre is equipped to a professional standard. There are three high-quality dance studios. Music is less well accommodated, an issue the college plans to address. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that art and design and performing arts were generally well accommodated and resourced.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in art and design and performing arts, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
C&G 7900 creative studies: part 1 fashion (one year and two year)	1	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	39 77 76	45 72 71	79 76 76
GNVQ intermediate art and design (one year)	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	38 90 65	43 77 41	24 67 44
Dance vocational full-time courses	2 and 3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	66 82 78
Drama vocational full-time courses	2 and 3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	59 73 100
Music vocational full-time courses	2 and 3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	* * *	* * *	78 67 87
National diploma in foundation studies in art and design (one year)	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	30 83 63	40 92 63	21 77 85

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
*data incomplete because course profile has changed

Curriculum Areas

English/Other Humanities

Grade 3

39 The inspection of humanities covered GCSE and GCE A level courses in English, French, law, politics, psychology and sociology and access to higher education courses in social science and humanities. Twenty lessons were observed. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Some additional weaknesses were highlighted by inspectors.

Key strengths
- thorough course documentation
- some high-quality teaching
- effective tutorial support for students
- good pass rates on GCE A level English courses
- good progression to higher education from access courses

Weaknesses
- failure of some teachers to set sufficiently demanding work
- some poor punctuality and attendance
- poor retention
- some low pass rates

40   The college offers a range of part-time and full-time humanities courses. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum offer has been changed through the modularisation of the GCE A level courses and through the introduction of access courses, and by reducing the number of subjects available at GCSE and GCE A level. Courses are effectively organised and course documentation is thorough. Course teams meet regularly, and attendance at meetings is good. Minutes are kept and action to be taken is monitored carefully. Targets are set and monitored for students' attendance, retention and pass rates.

41   Teaching is satisfactory overall. The best teaching is demanding, lively, and well planned. For example, in a law lesson, students listened attentively to a clear exposition by the teacher of a complex and contentious debate on law and morality which had contemporary implications. Students were encouraged to adopt a critical approach to the law, to consider its context, and to understand the evidence for and against the contestants in the debate. They responded by asking probing questions which showed that they were developing a good level of knowledge and understanding. Teachers checked regularly how much students had understood, and helped them to improve their understanding where necessary. However, in a few lessons teachers had low expectations of students and the teaching was insufficiently challenging and stimulating. The aims and objectives of lessons were not always made clear and teachers sometimes failed to check that the students were learning. In group discussion work teachers were observed accepting inadequate answers and failing to take the opportunity to extend students' language skills. Attendance varied across lessons observed but was poor overall at 53%. Teaching was frequently disrupted by students arriving late for lessons. The self-assessment report identified some strengths in teaching and learning but failed to recognise the weaknesses.

42   Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report on assessment and tutorials. Assessment procedures are well managed and fair, and grades are monitored. Most of the comments written by teachers on students' work give clear evaluations of its quality, and useful guidance on how they might improve their work. Students regularly review their work with teachers and, where necessary, make plans to improve their performance.

43   Pass rates in most subjects are above the published benchmarks for colleges in deprived areas. The GCE A level English language pass rate in 1998 was good. Retention rates are poor overall, as the self-assessment report

recognised. Two-thirds of those who start the access to higher education courses finish their studies. However, retention rates on GCSE and GCE A level courses are below the national average. Pass rates in GCE A level sociology and psychology have been poor. The college subscribes to an external consultancy which calculates the value added for students taking GCE A level who have GCSE qualifications. These figures indicate that GCE A level English language students have done better than anticipated and those taking sociology and psychology have done worse.

44   The number of students progressing to higher education has increased substantially since the last inspection. Nearly all the students who successfully completed access courses in 1997 and 1998 progressed to higher education.

45   Staff are suitably qualified for their work. Most teaching accommodation is good. The English base room contains a good range of specialist material, including IT equipment. The learning centre's stock of books and other materials provides students with useful support.

A summary of achievement and retention rates in English/other humanities, 1996 to 1998

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1996	1997	1998
GCSE (all subjects)	2	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	641 60 *	859 61 69	530 52 78
GCE A level (all subjects)	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	460 60 40	596 58 62	397 53 52
Higher education access to social sciences and humanities	3	Expected completions Retention (%) Achievement (%)	** ** **	26 62 81	66 68 82

Source: ISR (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
*data unavailable
**course not running

Cross-college Provision

Support for Students

Grade 1

46   Inspectors considered that the self-assessment report was thorough and agreed with its assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of students' support. Detailed action plans have been prepared to improve further the quality of support.

Key strengths

- the college's commitment to raising students' aspirations and helping them to achieve their full potential

- the development of entry criteria which are effective in enabling students to select the most appropriate course

- outstanding information, guidance, careers advice and support services

- innovative and flexible approach to tutorial support

- outstanding learning support

Weaknesses

- some less effective tutorial support

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47   Inspectors agreed with the college's view that the learning support services are outstanding. Support services and procedures are clearly documented and a series of service standards set out what students can expect. The college is effective in using staff, successful business people and representatives of the community to act as role models to support and inspire students. Students confirmed that they are treated with respect and feel valued as individuals. More than 90% of students surveyed by the college said that they would recommend their course or the college to others. The college is successful in developing strategies which enable students to help one another. For example, some students act as 'study buddies' to provide learning support for their colleagues.

The high level of student support has contributed to the recent improvement in retention on some courses.

48   Students make contact with the college in person, by letter, telephone or electronic mail and there is a video link with a number of community centres. All college information is well designed and available in a variety of languages. Information about the college and its courses is also available on tape and the internet. Last year, a range of open evenings and other events attracted over 1,000 visitors. Once enrolled, students are effectively inducted on to their course.

49   The guidance centres are run by well-trained, qualified staff who offer impartial educational guidance, counselling and advice on an extensive range of matters covering finance, accommodation, benefits, immigration and personal problems. Staff have good contacts with many external agencies to which they refer students when necessary. A range of booklets gives information on topics such as career planning and childcare. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that advice and guidance and information services are a notable strength.

50   The college has an innovative and flexible approach to tutorial support. Staff are given useful guidance on tutoring, induction, and on monitoring attendance and punctuality. Within a common framework, detailed arrangements for tutorial support are made by individual schools to suit the needs of their students. The college acknowledges that some of its tutorial provision and monitoring of students' attendance and punctuality needs further development. Action plans to address these issues are devised, and deadlines are set for their implementation.

51   The college has developed many courses at foundation level to meet the needs of students who enter the college with few qualifications and poor basic skills. Good additional learning

support is available for students. Students joining full-time foundation or intermediate level courses take screening tests to assess their level of basic skills. Most foundation level courses include language and number skills development. Students on higher level courses receive appropriate support through individual tuition, group work with a communications or numeracy tutor, and workshops in the learning centre. Last year, the college provided specialist help for 50 students identified as dyslexic. The college also provides effective support for students with other learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as hearing or visual impairment. The good support available to students has contributed to a situation where retention rates on some courses are above the benchmark figures given for colleges with a large proportion of students from disadvantaged areas.

52   The college is committed to helping students to get jobs. An excellent range of careers advice and guidance material is available to students. Many students take advantage of the sessions offered in 'The Job Shop' which is based in the learning centre. The shop provides up-to-date information and advice about job vacancies, and how to apply for jobs. The college has productive partnerships with employers. About 800 employers provide students with work placements. The business start-up initiative offers students help in setting up their own businesses. The Action for Better Lewisham Employees is another innovative scheme which delivers free training to staff from the Metropolitan Police, National Health Service trusts and other public sector employers. The college has developed effective links with a local careers service. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are successful in gaining supported employment through a number of local agencies with the help of the college. The college has received the Investor in Careers award and the Charter Mark.

General Resources

Grade 1

53   Inspectors agreed with the strengths and most of the weaknesses identified by the college in its self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good, well-maintained accommodation
- well-decorated classrooms and public areas
- good attention to all aspects of the college environment
- well-resourced and well-used learning centres
- good IT resources

Weaknesses

- a few areas of poor access for students with restricted mobility

54   The college has made significant progress in improving its accommodation since the last inspection. It has disposed of several sites and buildings. It now occupies two sites, at Lewisham Way and Deptford. The newly-acquired Deptford campus offers high-quality, modern accommodation. The Docklands Light Railway extension will provide a Lewisham College station in 1999. The college also operates from locations in the community. These strengths were acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Despite the reduction in sites, the utilisation of space within the college is still low. There is a well-managed programme of maintenance and refurbishment. As a result, most teaching rooms meet the high standards set by the college. They are well decorated, furnished and equipped. Staff workrooms provide suitable facilities.

55   In keeping with the college's ethos, particular attention is paid to the quality of accommodation. Premises staff take pride in their contribution to the students' experience.

Cross-college Provision

Public spaces are clean and attractive. Works of art and other material, such as poetry, are prominently displayed. These are carefully chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the students. Students themselves contribute to the improvement of the accommodation. For example, construction students have made a fountain and sundial; horticulture students have provided tubs of plants and maintain garden areas. There are effective, yet friendly, security arrangements, provided by a team of skilled, caring staff. There is an efficient system for monitoring and adjusting the college's use of energy which has saved considerable sums of money. The self-assessment report noted all of these strengths.

56   Most areas of the college are accessible to people with restricted mobility. One of the main buildings at the Lewisham Way campus currently has no lift to its upper floors. Plans have been agreed to address this by September 1999. Lea House, a listed building dating from 1820, has no access for people with restricted mobility. The college is investigating ways of addressing this and other problems at Lea House, by relocating courses.

57   The college has devoted considerable resources to the well-designed, attractive learning centres at both sites. The centres provide good facilities for students to study on their own. They are well used and appreciated by the students. Following consultations with students, private study areas have been introduced, as well as areas where students can work in small groups. The learning centres also include a library of 45,000 books. There is currently an annual budget of £124,000 for books and learning resources. In addition to the library staff, a team of eight learning facilitators assists the college in developing resources to support teaching and learning, and enable students to study on their own.

58   There are good IT resources for students and staff. There are 670 computers available for students' use, giving a ratio of computers to full-time equivalent students of 1:7. All the computers for students' use are on a single network which links both sites. There is a separate staff computer network which includes electronic mail facilities. Staff and students have access to the internet. Multimedia software and CD-ROM resources are available in the learning centres. Computer services are being carefully and imaginatively developed to provide resource-based learning facilities which allow people to learn in the workplace or community locations. Pilot outreach learning projects are already in place: for example, in Lewisham's central library, training for shop workers and introductory IT courses for families are operational. A total of £495,000 is available for computer equipment and development during 1998-99. Approximately 40% of these funds have been obtained from external sources.

59   Students are provided with good-quality refectory facilities at both sites. The services include a coffee bar and two restaurants staffed by students. There are indoor and outdoor seating areas for students as well as small common rooms. Other facilities include general shops and a bookshop. Students have access to a well-equipped gymnasium at the Deptford campus.

Quality Assurance

Grade 1

60   The college's self-assessment process is thorough and leads to effective action to address weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They saw evidence of improvements made since the report was prepared and of improvements in quality since the previous inspection.

Key strengths

- exceptional commitment to maintaining high-quality provision
- improvements in the quality of the college's work
- comprehensive self-assessment process
- rigorous, effective annual review of all aspects of the college's work
- highly effective quality assurance committee
- involvement of external agencies and individuals in quality assurance procedures
- strong involvement of governors in quality assurance

Weaknesses

- overestimation of the quality of teaching and learning in a few areas

61   The quality assurance systems have led to significant improvements in many aspects of the college's work. Increasing numbers of students, including many with long histories of failure and disaffection, complete their courses, gain a qualification, enter employment, or set up their own businesses. The number of students progressing to higher education has risen from 220 to about 275 over the past three years, and retention on some courses has recently increased from 60% to over 80%. However, as identified in the self-assessment report, some courses still need to improve retention and achievement. Students express increasing levels of satisfaction with the services they receive.

62   The college holds all members of staff, in every area of the college, individually responsible for providing students with the highest-quality service. Staff understand this and take the responsibility seriously. The college's policy on quality amplifies the college's aim of continually improving the services offered to all students. To fulfil the requirements of the policy, a clear and effective quality assurance process has been developed which is responsive to the changing needs of the college and its students, and to national trends and developments in further education. The self-assessment report noted the college's strong commitment to setting and achieving high standards in all it does.

63   The influential quality assurance committee, which meets monthly, has a key role in quality assurance. It comprises the principal, vice-principal, faculty directors, the directors of academic quality, learner services, finance and planning, and the registrar. At one meeting each term, this group is joined by external members, including the principal of another college, the head of a local secondary school, and a local health trust manager. The committee produced the college's action plan for quality assurance, the quality handbook and guidance notes which support teams in their self-assessment work. All new courses are subjected to a rigorous internal accreditation procedure. Members of the quality assurance committee, with external representation where appropriate, examine the need for each proposed course and consider the resource implications. All new courses must contribute to the delivery of the college's strategic plan. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the quality assurance committee plays a key role in promoting high quality across the college.

64   Reviews and evaluations are undertaken of all aspects of the college's work. Reports are verified by heads of school or corporate services, who then draw up summary reports for their areas. These are combined with the reports on student services, management and governance to form the draft self-assessment report. The quality assurance committee receives and verifies the report, which is then presented to the academic board for validation. The report is presented also to the governors' quality assurance group and then discussed at a full corporation meeting. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that these procedures are rigorous and effective. However, the quality of teaching and learning has been overestimated in a few subjects and some annual reviews are not of good quality. These issues are identified in the self-assessment report.

65   Appropriate targets for recruitment, retention and achievement are set for each course. Courses which do not achieve recruitment and retention targets are reviewed annually. Course recovery plans can be put in place, or courses can be closed. The college has a robust approach to courses identified as weak. Many courses have been discontinued as an outcome of this process. External verifiers reports are all scrutinised by the principal. Action plans are required and rigorously monitored. Students' complaints are swiftly acted on and outcomes are used as a valuable source of information for monitoring quality. Surveys of students' perceptions have led to changes. For example, improved induction arrangements. Local employers are pleased with the way students are prepared for work. Advisory groups of employers assist the college in monitoring the quality of its vocational provision. Governors monitor the effectiveness of quality systems through the annual plan. Each year staff development is more firmly linked to areas of need identified through self-assessment, and to the requirements of the college's strategic plan. In its self-assessment report, the college noted the beneficial impact

that staff development has had on the quality of provision. In 1997, the college obtained the Investor in People award.

Governance

Grade 1

66   Inspectors and auditors agreed with the college's assessment of governance.

Key strengths

- governors' involvement in determining the college's values and strategic direction
- the commitment to the community the college serves
- the implementation of Nolan principles
- the consistent observance of the boundaries between governance and management
- high-quality clerking arrangements
- the work of the audit committee
- governors' rigorous monitoring of students' achievements
- the appraisal and development of the principal

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

67   Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that governance is outstanding. There is a recognition that the quality of governance and the board's partnership with senior managers are central to the effectiveness of the college. Considerable thought has been given to the membership of the board, for example, the balance of gender, skills and experience, and the inclusion of members to reflect the very diverse community the college serves. The corporation has a membership of 18. At the time of the inspection, the board was seeking to fill four vacancies through its

governance development committee. The recruitment process includes advertising. There is an improving induction procedure for new governors, and continuous training through briefings by senior managers, external seminars and an annual governors away day.

68   Governors have a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and management. The board recently reviewed and endorsed a definition of its working relationship with the college senior managers. They are actively and appropriately engaged in strategic planning. They are also involved in searching for opportunities that will help students and monitoring curriculum developments through their alignment with schools. Members of the corporation critically consider papers presented by senior managers who ensure that governors have complete and up-to-date information and advice to assist them in determining policy and the strategic direction of the college. Governors take decisions within the context of the college's values set out in the strategic plan. These commit the college to doing its utmost to widen participation in Lewisham and to enable all its students, especially those from groups which would not usually have entered further education, to progress to further or higher education or employment. The self-assessment report noted all of these strengths.

69   The work of the corporation is guided by a code of conduct, which includes the seven principles of public life set out by the Nolan committee, and standing orders for the conduct of corporation business. There is a register of interests which has been completed by members of college staff who have significant financial responsibility as well as by all governors. There are effective arrangements for the clerking of meetings of the corporation and its committees. Informative agenda papers are distributed in advance of meetings. Draft minutes, providing a clear record of proceedings, are produced promptly. The corporation is committed to a policy of openness. Staff observers attend corporation meetings. In addition to the public availability of corporation meeting papers and the register of interests, there is an annual general meeting at which the college's annual report is presented. The board has also approved a 'whistleblowing' procedure. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that these procedures are rigorous and effective.

70   The corporation has established committees which are working effectively. These committees cover: finance and general purposes; personnel; estates; audit; governance development; and the remuneration of senior postholders. The work of the audit committee is particularly noteworthy. The committee effectively monitors audit planning and reporting and ensures that the board is kept fully informed of its activities. The attendance of governors at committees and the board is consistently good.

71   The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

72   Governors are assessed by senior managers and have also commissioned external consultants to assess their performance. These assessments confirm that governors give high priority to the well-being and progress of students. A student forum has been established to allow governors to meet directly with students and obtain a realistic appreciation of students' perceptions of the college. A governors' quality assurance working group enables the board to monitor more effectively students' achievements. Inspectors observed vigorous debate and questioning by governors following a presentation on retention and achievement statistics to the full board. The principal's appraisal is conducted by the chair and a vice-chair. It is based on a rigorous review of

performance against objectives which are both corporate and personal to the principal. They include the consideration of staff morale and the reputation of the college.

Management

Grade 1

73   Inspectors and auditors agreed with the college's assessment that management is outstanding. The few weaknesses identified by the college in its self-assessment report have already been addressed.

Key strengths

- strong and effective leadership
- highly effective college management team
- the commitment to the personal and professional well-being of all staff
- the clear, effective management structure and efficient deployment of staff
- strategic planning involving all staff at all levels of the college
- good financial management
- robust management information
- the central role of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

74   The college benefits from inspirational leadership. There are effective, working relationships between the principal, senior managers and governors. High expectations of commitment and performance have led to the establishment of a common concern for continuous improvement and development. 'Supported autonomy', the policy of empowering managers to perform their roles effectively within a rigorous framework of accountability, permeates the college. This policy involves a

clear delegation of authority, the assessment of individual potential and development needs, and identifying opportunities for advancement. The result is a dedicated, confident and creative management team. Communications throughout the college are excellent. All staff are valued, supported in their role and encouraged in their personal development and training.

75   An executive, led by the principal, includes the vice-principal, and the directors of finance, business development, student services and quality. Its weekly meetings are concerned with formulating policy, strategic development, and resource allocation and monitoring. The college management team, which brings together the executive and other senior managers, oversees the operational management of the college. There is a simple but effective curriculum management structure involving four faculties broken down into a total of 10 schools which have been subdivided into programme areas. An academic management team, which meets fortnightly and is chaired by the principal, oversees curriculum developments and issues. The effective management structure was noted in the college's self-assessment report.

76   There are rigorous procedures to ensure that staff are effectively deployed. Enrolment and retention targets are set for each school. These are reviewed regularly during the year to assess the college's overall performance.

77   Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that its strategic planning process is effective and is informed by sound market research. A researcher works closely with college managers to ensure that the provision is continuously relevant to the needs of the local community and industry. Each directorate has to produce development plans which are incorporated into the college's strategic plan. The plan is thoroughly costed before its submission to the board for approval. The annual plan defines the college's key objectives

against which progress and success will be measured. Inspectors agreed with the college's assessment that it has been consistently successful in achieving its objectives and targets.

78   In its mission statement, the college states its commitment to promoting the economic development of the area and to improving the employability of its students. To fulfil this role, the college has forged strong links with a wide range of public and private employers and agencies. The college's recent participation in the New Deal initiative has attracted over 100 trainees. The college's partnership with a local schools consortium involves about 100 students. The college is perceived by public services and private employers as a responsive and effective partner in providing training and in increasing the skills of its existing employees. These initiatives and many others result from the college's strong desire to serve the community and to help bring inward investment to the college and the borough of Lewisham.

79   Inspectors and auditors agreed with the college's assessment that its financial position is sound. The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. Monthly management accounts, which are easy to understand, comprise a commentary, income and expenditure against budgets and a forecast to the year end, a balance sheet, and a cashflow forecast to the year end. The accounts are distributed to managers and governors and are subject to detailed scrutiny at meetings of the finance and general purposes committee. There is appropriate delegation to budget holders who have on-line access to the financial management database. The college's financial regulations and procedures were updated during 1998.

80   The college has developed a robust management information system. The system is networked throughout the college providing staff with on-line access to essential information. The college has accurate enrolment and retention records.

81   The college has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy with clear procedures for monitoring and dealing with complaints. The effectiveness of the policy and procedures is reinforced by the unequivocal commitment of governors and senior managers. The personnel directorate maintains a watching brief on developments in employment law and industrial relations to ensure that procedures are up to date and appropriate to changing circumstances and needs. Helpful notes are given to managers to guide them in all aspects of their work. There are comprehensive procedures for the monitoring of health and safety in the college. Policies are updated routinely. There are termly reports to the corporation board's estates committee and an annual report to the full board. These policies and systems constitute good practice.

Conclusions

82   The self-assessment report used by the inspectors was the second one produced by the college. The inspection team found that the report provided an effective basis for planning the inspection. Staff, corporation members and representatives of external organisations were involved in the self-assessment process. The report presented a clear and comprehensive evaluation of the college's work. It was supported by comprehensive evidence. Most of the findings of the inspection team were in line with those of the college. They agreed with four of the six curriculum grades and four of the grades awarded for cross-college provision. In two of the other areas the inspectors' grades were one grade better than the college's; in two other areas, the inspectors' grades were one grade worse than the college's.

83   Strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection are listed under each section of this report. The main strengths and weaknesses are identified in the summary.

College Statistics

Student numbers by age (July 1998)

Age	%
Under 16	2
16-18 years	19
19-24 years	19
25+ years	60
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (July 1998)

Level of study	%
Foundation	33
Intermediate	34
Advanced	25
Higher education	8
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (July 1998)

Programme area	Full time	Part time	Total provision %
Science	617	1,994	21
Agriculture	12	0	1
Construction	311	1,104	11
Engineering	413	784	9
Business	414	1,400	14
Hotel and catering	279	395	5
Health and community care	355	564	7
Art and design	625	425	8
Humanities	416	1,046	12
Basic education	509	1,046	12
Total	3,951	8,758	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 79% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (July 1998)

	Perm-anent	Fixed term	Casual	Total
Direct learning contact	176	6	198	380
Supporting direct learning contact	67	8	0	75
Other support	143	28	0	171
Total	386	42	198	626

Source: college data, rounded to nearest full-time equivalent

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1996	1997	1998
Income	£20,795,000	£21,781,000	£20,645,000
Average level of funding (ALF) Out-turn to 1997; funded 1998	£21.19	£19.29	£19.14
Payroll as a proportion of income	69%	55%	56%
Achievement of funding target	114%	124%	100%
Diversity of income	12%	16%	17%
Operating surplus	-£370,000	£458,000	£29,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)
ALF – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1998)
Payroll – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)
Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1996-97 (1996 and 1997), college (1998)
Diversity of income – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)
Operating surplus – Council Circulars 97/35 (1996), 98/43 (1997), college (1998)

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
1	Expected completions	291	616	724	1,589	2,321	1,901
	Retention (%)	64	75	80	71	70	70
	Achievement (%)	61	42	44	69	51	70
2	Expected completions	1,009	1,240	1,206	2,483	2,364	1,720
	Retention (%)	69	66	62	71	70	79
	Achievement (%)	41	60	64	45	51	67
3	Expected completions	700	722	535	2,141	1,968	2,171
	Retention (%)	78	70	65	80	64	81
	Achievement (%)	19	62	69	36	57	71
4 or 5	Expected completions	5	8	0	776	563	671
	Retention (%)	100	63	–	84	72	85
	Achievement (%)	100	20	–	57	62	68
Short courses	Expected completions	300	355	180	2,840	3,355	1,861
	Retention (%)	96	91	83	89	87	91
	Achievement (%)	97	78	71	92	50	84
Unknown/ unclassified	Expected completions	472	835	–	1,321	1,350	–
	Retention (%)	86	80	–	81	80	–
	Achievement (%)	97	82	–	93	64	–

Source: ISR
–ISR data not collected

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