

Bradford College

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1999-00**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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 inspects other further education provision funded by the FEFC. In fulfilling its work programme, the inspectorate assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum, disseminates good practice and advises the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circulars 97/12, 97/13 and 97/22. Inspections seek to validate the data and judgements provided by colleges in self-assessment reports. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work they inspect. A member of the Council's audit service works with inspectors in assessing aspects of governance and management. All colleges are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

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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 1998-99, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	10	53	30	7	–
Cross-college provision	14	54	23	7	2

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*
Sample size: 104 college inspections

Student Achievements

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

- as number of starters, which is the number of enrolments on qualifications where the student was expecting to complete the qualification that college 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 students have completed as expected or where they are continuing their studies beyond the expected end date of the qualification. 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 included.

Summary

Bradford College

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

Inspected February 2000

Bradford College is a large further and higher education college in West Yorkshire. Of the college's students, 43% are recruited from disadvantaged areas as defined in the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions. In preparation for the inspection the college produced a comprehensive self-assessment report. Staff from all areas of the college contributed to its production. In some curriculum areas the report did not place sufficient emphasis on weaknesses in teaching and learning. The college makes provision in all of the 10 FEFC programme areas. Seven programme areas were inspected, together with aspects of cross-college provision.

The college devotes considerable resources to the implementation of its policies for equality of opportunity. It has successfully widened participation amongst people who would not normally attend college, and has enabled these people to progress to further study or employment. The college makes provision at more than 100 venues throughout the city. Support for students is good. The counselling

and welfare services are extensive. There has been substantial investment in, and improvement to, accommodation in the last three years. The college has a strong commitment to quality improvement. Governors have given strong support to managers during extensive developments to the estate and the reorganisation of management and the curriculum. In previous years, the college has experienced considerable difficulties in recording the achievements of its students. The college has worked hard to improve its centrally held management information. Managers have skilfully implemented a major reorganisation during a period of falling income. The quality of science and art and design provision is outstanding.

The college should address: some poor students' achievements; the quality of teaching and learning in some areas; poor co-ordination of basic skills provision across the college; low take up of additional learning support for literacy and numeracy; restrictions on student access to IT; inconsistencies in the application of the procedures for course review; the lack of rigour in the lesson observation process; weaknesses in aspects of the operation of the corporation's committees; and unreliable data on students' performance.

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Cross-college provision	Grade
Science	1	Support for students	2
Construction	3	General resources	2
Motor vehicle engineering, fabrication and welding	3	Quality assurance	3
Mechanical and electrical engineering	2	Governance	3
Hospitality and catering	2	Management	2
Art and design	1		
English and modern foreign languages	2		
Basic skills	4		
ESOL	2		

The College and its Mission

1 Bradford College is a large further and higher education college located in West Yorkshire. It has two main sites in central Bradford, close to the University of Bradford, and a large adult education centre in the north of the city. It also makes provision in more than 100 adult and community education venues across the Bradford Metropolitan District.

2 The college serves a large and diverse population in central Bradford and the surrounding areas of West and North Yorkshire. The Bradford Metropolitan District has a population of over 470,000. The younger than average population profile includes substantial communities of people whose origins are in South Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. Approximately 16% of the population have a South Asian or Afro-Caribbean background. In some inner city wards around 50% of the population have such backgrounds. The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has identified the college as one of a group which typically recruits a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas. The local unemployment rate is 9%, but youth unemployment is over 16%. Men, and people from minority ethnic groups, experience levels of unemployment higher than the local average. The traditional manufacturing industries of woollen textiles and heavy engineering have declined significantly since the 1960s. However, the local electronics industry is buoyant. There has been growth in the financial and service sectors. Only 6% of businesses employ more than 50 employees.

3 Over 30,000 students enrolled at the college in 1998-99. Approximately one-third of the college's full-time equivalent students were following higher education programmes. Courses are offered from entry to postgraduate level and include pre-vocational, general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), general national vocational

qualification (GNVQ) and a wide range of vocational and professional programmes. The college offers provision in all of the FEFC's programme areas. Partnerships with the Bradford and District Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and with local and regional training providers and employers support a wide range of vocational provision.

4 The metropolitan district presents the college with a challenging educational environment. In 1999, 32% of the district's school-leavers achieved GCSE results of five grades C or above compared with the national average of 48%. Within the metropolitan district there are two other general further education colleges, 22 schools with sixth forms, four grant-maintained schools, two direct grant schools with sixth forms and a city technology college which specialises in new technology.

5 During 1998-99, the college was reorganised. There are 11 teaching departments, whose heads report to the principal. The directorate comprises the principal and the directors of academic programmes, human resources and finance and resources. The college has 383 full-time and 606 part-time teaching staff, and 435 full-time and 461 part-time support staff.

6 The college has well-established links with a wide range of local partners, including voluntary and community organisations and statutory bodies. The Bradford Lifelong Learning Strategy Partnership, established in April 1999, has sponsored a number of successful applications for external funding.

7 The college's mission is 'to promote and underpin the local and national economy and the social fabric of Bradford by providing comprehensive education and training of recognised quality'. Its corporate objectives for 1999 to 2002 are:

- to maintain and, where appropriate, to develop the character and volume of further education and higher education provision

Context

- to increase the number of enrolled students drawn from groups which are prioritised nationally
- to achieve improvements in the quality of the college's support for learning and support for students
- to achieve improvements in the quality of college practice.

The Inspection

8 The college was inspected in February 2000. The inspection team had previously evaluated the college's self-assessment report and considered information about the college held by other directorates of the FEFC. Initially inspectors used data on students' achievements drawn from the college's individualised student record (ISR) returns to the FEFC for 1997 and 1998. However, in a number of curriculum areas these data proved to be unreliable and inspectors used data held by curriculum

managers to help them form their judgements. They checked the data where possible, during the inspection, but much remained unconfirmed and are not included in this report. The college's data on achievements in 1999 were checked by inspectors in advance of the inspection, using primary sources such as class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. Sixteen inspectors and one auditor, working for a total of 64 days, carried out the inspection.

9 The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected and the national profile for all colleges inspected in 1998-99. Of the lessons observed, 61% were judged to be good or outstanding and 6% were less than satisfactory. This compares with the national averages of 65% and 6%, respectively. The proportion of lessons judged to be outstanding, at 13%, is less than the average.

Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A/AS level	1	4	5	0	0	10
GCSE	0	6	2	1	0	9
GNVQ	2	2	1	0	0	5
NVQ	1	10	16	1	0	28
Other vocational	6	20	9	0	0	35
Other*	7	21	10	3	3	44
Total (No.)	17	63	43	5	3	131
Total (%)	13	48	33	4	2	100
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99 (%)	20	45	29	6	0	100

Source for national average: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report*

*includes tutorials, basic education, ESOL and access courses

Context

10 The following table shows the attendance rates in the lessons observed and the national average for all colleges inspected in 1998-99.

Attendance rates in lessons observed

	Average number of students	Average attendance (%)
Bradford College	9.7	71
National average, all inspected colleges 1998-99	11.2	78

Source for national average: Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1998-99: Chief inspector's annual report

Curriculum Areas

Science

Grade 1

11 Inspectors observed 11 lessons, covering a range of full-time and part-time vocational courses, an access to higher education course, and GCE A level biology, chemistry and physics. They agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the college's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- excellent retention and pass rates on most courses
- good progression within the college and to higher education
- a wide range of courses meeting both local and national needs
- strong links with industry and professional bodies
- well-managed provision
- excellent resources in newly refurbished accommodation

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

12 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college offers an exceptionally wide range of science-related courses. Courses such as those leading to the BTEC national and higher national certificates in textile coloration and the ophthalmic dispensing certificate, recruit nationally. Many of the courses have been successful in furthering the college's aim to widen participation. Currently more than half the students studying on science programmes are from areas of social deprivation. Industrial links between the department and national and local professional and industrial bodies are strong. There is an active science advisory committee. Students regularly visit employers,

undertake work placements and hear talks by visiting speakers. The two part-time access to higher education courses recruit adults. The range of vocational science courses at different levels provides excellent opportunities for progression within the college. There is close collaboration with local universities to encourage progression to higher education. In 1999, 77% of students who completed GCE A level, advanced vocational or access courses proceeded to science or science-related courses in higher education.

13 Teachers prepare effective learning resources for their students; a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Staff are careful to ensure students comply with safety policies and procedures. Teachers regularly and effectively check students' knowledge and understanding through questions and tests. They mark and correct students' work carefully, and provide constructive comments that help students to improve. Students are given time, help and encouragement to maintain their portfolios of work and their records of assessment systematically. This motivates them to do well. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to meet with them individually in tutorials and at lunchtimes. In one lively lesson on an access course, the students drew on their own experiences of the subject. The teacher then carefully questioned the students and gave them extra information to ensure they fully understood the topic. Excellent learning resources were used to support the lesson.

14 The high quality of students' work is recognised by external verifiers and external examining and professional bodies. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there are many good examination results. High pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course and the part-time national certificate course in science are particularly noteworthy. Retention rates on most vocational courses are high. For example, in two of the last three years, retention

Curriculum Areas

rates have been over 90% on the GNVQ intermediate science, the national certificate in pharmaceutical science and on the ophthalmic dispensing certificate course. Pass rates and retention rates on most GCE A level courses are above the national averages for general further education colleges. However, value-added data are not available to course teams to aid planning or for individual student reviews.

15 Teachers are well qualified and regularly take part in staff development activities. Recent topics have included the introduction of curriculum 2000 and widening participation. A number of teachers are involved in curriculum development work with awarding bodies and professional examining bodies or are external examiners or verifiers. In the summer of 1998, science was relocated to the Appleton Science Building. The building now houses all of the

college's science provision. Its laboratories are of a very high standard and there is excellent technical support. The science workshop includes computers with up-to-date and relevant software, other information technology (IT) equipment and private study spaces. Students can readily access the facilities. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the science workshop is well equipped and well utilised.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in science, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE sciences (biology, chemistry and physics)	2	Number of starters	102	111	103
		Retention (%)	87	75	73
		Achievement (%)	30	46	46
GNVQ intermediate science	2	Number of starters	18	20	23
		Retention (%)	89	95	91
		Achievement (%)	85	100	100
GCE A level sciences (biology, chemistry and physics)	3	Number of starters	*	91	71
		Retention (%)	*	89	72
		Achievement (%)	*	69	83
GNVQ advanced science	3	Number of starters	10	17	22
		Retention (%)	90	94	77
		Achievement (%)	100	100	77
National certificates in science, pharmaceutical science and textile coloration	3	Number of starters	53	65	60
		Retention (%)	100	89	95
		Achievement (%)	100	90	96
Ophthalmic dispensing certificate	3	Number of starters	98	152	204
		Retention (%)	100	99	99
		Achievement (%)	71	76	80

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Construction

Grade 3

16 Inspectors observed 13 lessons covering national vocational qualification (NVQ), GNVQ and higher technician courses. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses included in the self-assessment report. They identified some additional weaknesses in students' retention and achievements.

Key strengths

- good-quality learning materials
- well-presented student files and portfolios
- career development opportunities for students
- good specialist accommodation

Weaknesses

- lack of key skills in NVQ programmes
- insufficient checking of students' understanding
- insufficient feedback to NVQ students on standards of attainment
- poor pass rates on intermediate craft courses and on advanced courses in 1999

17 The college offers an extensive and appropriate range of construction courses at craft and technician level. A foundation level construction programme has widened participation by successfully attracting low achievers, school pupils aged 14 to 16, people from minority ethnic communities, and women. As identified in the self-assessment report, effective links with the city council enable the college to provide real work experience on community projects for young people on NVQ courses. Strong links have been established with eight local secondary schools through a construction partnership. At the time of the inspection, over 200 pupils followed short

courses that provided them with the opportunity to achieve NVQ level 1 units in a range of construction crafts. In 1999, 48 school-leavers from partnership schools enrolled on construction courses. There is an effective construction advisory committee, which is well supported by industry, the Construction Industry Training Board, and other partners. Good links with industry enable teachers to arrange site visits and work experience for most full-time students. Internal verification procedures are effective.

18 The standard of teaching is satisfactory but only five lessons were judged by inspectors to be good or better. Few lesson plans specify learning objectives or student activities. Teachers have produced appropriate learning materials to help them teach students in mixed-ability groups. However, in some lessons, students just copy notes and diagrams from the overhead projector into booklets and teachers do not check that students understand the theoretical aspects of their craft. In most theory lessons, teachers use a narrow range of teaching methods and make little use of visual aids. Handouts are poorly reproduced and some are dated. These weaknesses in teaching were not recognised in the self-assessment report. Key skills are not delivered as part of NVQ construction craft courses, and few craft students study IT. Assignments for technician students include relevant industrial topics. Teachers do not provide sufficient written feedback to craft students on the quality of their portfolios. Students' marked work is not always returned promptly.

19 Students produce good-quality work in practical lessons. They pay appropriate attention to health and safety. The self-assessment report indicated that retention and pass rates were above national averages for the sector. However, inspectors found that there were poor pass rates on most construction craft courses in 1998, and that retention and pass rates on many advanced level courses have

Curriculum Areas

fallen from above the national average in 1997 to below in 1999. Most construction craft students complete their NVQ portfolios to a high standard. GNVQ portfolios are well organised, and many are completed to merit or distinction standard. A significant number of students progress from craft to higher national courses. Construction students regularly take part in competitions and some have had notable success in winning national and regional medals and awards.

20 Construction crafts are based in a tastefully refurbished mill. Construction management and building services are situated nearby, also in good-quality accommodation. There are good displays in workshops and classrooms of construction materials and students' work. As the self-assessment report noted, most

workshops provide realistic work simulations. However, the roof rig in joinery is at ground level and workbenches for carpentry and joinery students are too small. The brick workshop has poor storage, and is untidy. Technical support staff are not always able to meet all the demands for their services. Suppliers regularly donate materials to the college, but in some areas hand tools are worn and poorly maintained. With the college's international partners, teachers are developing an IT-based package on scaffolding, to be made available through the Internet.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in construction, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Foundation vocational (construction crafts)	1	Number of starters	24	24	+
		Retention (%)	*	*	+
		Achievement (%)	*	*	+
Intermediate vocational (construction crafts)	2	Number of starters	127	156	300
		Retention (%)	*	*	73
		Achievement (%)	*	*	49
Intermediate vocational (technician studies)	2	Number of starters	45	36	**
		Retention (%)	*	*	**
		Achievement (%)	*	*	**
Advanced vocational (construction crafts)	3	Number of starters	33	47	38
		Retention (%)	*	*	84
		Achievement (%)	*	*	71
Advanced vocational (technician studies)	3	Number of starters	36	51	63
		Retention (%)	*	*	66
		Achievement (%)	*	*	52
Higher vocational (technician studies)	4	Number of starters	78	55	36
		Retention (%)	*	*	94
		Achievement (%)	*	*	67

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

**course not running

+fewer than 10 starters

Curriculum Areas

Motor Vehicle Engineering, Fabrication and Welding

Grade 3

21 Inspectors observed 13 lessons in motor vehicle engineering and fabrication and welding. They agreed with some of the strengths in the self-assessment report but considered that some strengths were overstated. They identified some important additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- wide range of courses
- good use of questioning by teachers to develop students' understanding
- high retention and pass rates on some advanced level courses

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate teaching methods
- low pass rates on intermediate level courses
- some poor accommodation

22 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the wide range of provision in this curriculum area provides good opportunities for progression. Courses are well matched to the needs of the local community. A high proportion of students are from areas with high levels of deprivation. Motor vehicle provision is offered from level 1 to level 3 and welding and fabrication at levels 2 and 3. Institute of the Motor Industry and process planning courses provide progression beyond level 3. In conjunction with the local education authority (LEA), courses are provided for disaffected school pupils. School-leavers with low levels of achievement can take part in car maintenance courses. Courses in motor vehicle engineering, offered specifically to women, recruit successfully. Course teams meet regularly. Internal verification procedures are well

documented and external verifiers report positively about the provision. Course handbooks provide useful information about the courses and the college. Students' attendance and progress are monitored closely and reports are issued to employers and managing agents.

23 Teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers make good use of questioning. For example, in a lesson on service liability, the teacher used the experiences of students to share and develop their understanding of the topic. In a drawing lesson, effective questioning by the teacher ensured that all students were involved in learning. Good use is made of an extensive range of technical information booklets and resources such as videos to help students develop their subject knowledge. Strengths in the delivery of key skills include: the mapping of opportunities to develop key skills across the motor vehicle vocational assignments; the support provided by teachers to develop these skills; and the correction of draft reports, in fabrication and welding, before they are entered in students' portfolios. Teachers do not sufficiently develop students' understanding of theoretical concepts alongside their practical work. Some theory lessons are overlong. Teachers comment on the technical content of students' written work, but rarely correct errors of grammar and spelling. The self-assessment report did not recognise any weaknesses in teaching.

24 Students respond enthusiastically in lessons when teachers use questioning effectively. Most take their written tasks seriously and produce work of an appropriate standard, often using IT. Many are motivated by practical work and work purposefully in such lessons. Retention rates are generally good and there are high pass rates on the motor vehicle courses at advanced level. However, the self-assessment report recognised weaknesses in achievements on some courses. Pass rates at intermediate level are generally poor and a low proportion of students who enrol on these courses achieve the target qualification.

Curriculum Areas

25 Teachers are appropriately qualified; all hold vocational qualifications and a high proportion hold teaching and assessor qualifications. There are sufficient internal verifiers. There is a wide range of equipment. Much of it is old but serviceable. Recent purchases have enhanced the welding facilities, which are of good quality. Good use is made of customers' cars to overcome a shortage of modern motor vehicles. All the college's engineering provision has recently been consolidated on the Randall Well site. The fabrication and welding workshop is attractively laid out. The self-assessment report did not recognise some weaknesses in the accommodation. For example, there is

insufficient space in the motor vehicle workshops; classrooms lack wall displays, contain few demonstration models and are inconveniently located; the layouts of some classrooms, such as a drawing office, are poor and students are not always able to see the whiteboard or overhead projector screen.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in motor vehicle engineering, fabrication and welding, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
NVQ service replacement	1	Number of starters	**	34	18
		Retention (%)	**	*	*
		Achievement (%)	**	*	*
NVQ vehicle body fitting	2	Number of starters	+	+	31
		Retention (%)	+	+	80
		Achievement (%)	+	+	8
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems	2	Number of starters	20	69	58
		Retention (%)	85	74	77
		Achievement (%)	27	*	*
C&G 229 fabrication and welding competences	2	Number of starters	16	37	29
		Retention (%)	81	57	83
		Achievement (%)	38	86	29
C&G 229 fabrication and welding competences	3	Number of starters	46	31	29
		Retention (%)	91	94	90
		Achievement (%)	52	97	58
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems	3	Number of starters	24	29	25
		Retention (%)	75	93	80
		Achievement (%)	47	85	95

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

**course not running

+fewer than 10 starters

Curriculum Areas

Mechanical and Electrical Engineering

Grade 2

26 Inspectors observed 10 lessons in electrical, electronic and mechanical engineering. They broadly agreed with the self-assessment report, but found that some strengths were overstated and that some weaknesses had not been identified.

Key strengths

- good teaching
- well-managed courses
- good pass rates on one-year part-time courses
- high standard of students' work
- outstanding resources for electronics

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on full-time technician courses in 1999
- poor accommodation
- outdated equipment in mechanical engineering

27 The college offers a wide range of courses in electrical and mechanical engineering that provide clear progression routes. Under-represented groups are encouraged to join courses through a range of initiatives including women-only courses and training for the unemployed. Many students are from areas of social deprivation. Courses are well managed. Course files and other records are well maintained. Engineering students are provided with comprehensive handbooks which give course-specific information including, in most cases, the assessment programmes. Students can attend open access electronics workshops on two evenings each week to supplement their work in lessons. They have access to IT and other appropriate equipment. Inspectors agreed

with the self-assessment report that this is a particular strength of the college. Course teams do not consider comparative data sufficiently when making judgements about their students' achievements.

28 The majority of teaching is good. Most teachers follow detailed schemes of work. They use carefully prepared lesson plans, a strength noted in the self-assessment report. Teachers regularly check that learning is taking place through the use of directed questioning. For example, in one lesson the teacher demonstrated the use of an ultrasonic machine in the workshop, building on the previous week's theory lesson. He checked that students understood its use and compared the process being demonstrated with other similar processes. Handouts and other teaching materials are of a high standard. In most lessons, teachers use differentiated activities to suit the range of ability within the group. Assessment tasks are appropriate to the level of courses. The grading criteria are well presented, and teachers are careful to ensure that they are clearly understood by students. However, teachers do not always maintain an overview of each student's progress.

29 Students demonstrate high standards in their practical and written work. Most students are attentive and well motivated, but a few arrived late for their lessons and were not asked for an explanation. Retention and pass rates are above national averages on most craft courses. For example, pass rates on the intermediate level engineering manufacture course have exceeded 90% in each of the last three years. Retention and pass rates on full-time technician courses are poor. Only five of the 31 students who started the national diploma in engineering in 1997 successfully completed the course. Poor achievement rates were not identified in the self-assessment report, although they were identified as a weakness during the previous inspection.

Curriculum Areas

30 Teachers are appropriately qualified. All full-time teachers have a teaching qualification and most have assessor awards. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Workshop activities are well supported by technicians. Facilities for training in electronics are outstanding. Laboratories are well equipped with a wide range of industrial standard equipment. Employers and manufacturers donate large quantities of consumable materials, such as printed circuit boards and integrated circuits. The strength of the resources is understated in the self-assessment report. There are ample supplies of small tools. IT is readily available in the teaching areas. The mechanical engineering and computer numerical control workshops are

too small and contain outdated equipment. Many engineering classrooms are small or an awkward shape. In one drawing class, several students could not see the whiteboard or projector screen and it was difficult for the teacher to check that learning was taking place. Some rooms can only be reached through other teaching rooms. Many rooms lack natural light or adequate ventilation. The engineering building lacks clear signing.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in mechanical and electrical engineering, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G 2240 electronics servicing	1	Number of starters	30	13	28
		Retention (%)	73	69	71
		Achievement (%)	39	100	70
C&G 4351 computer-aided design	2	Number of starters	191	137	122
		Retention (%)	90	80	81
		Achievement (%)	79	84	89
NVQ engineering manufacture foundation	2	Number of starters	88	71	37
		Retention (%)	85	100	92
		Achievement (%)	100	100	91
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	Number of starters	29	26	29
		Retention (%)	*	*	79
		Achievement (%)	*	*	22
National certificate in engineering	3	Number of starters	51	73	41
		Retention (%)	*	95	85
		Achievement (%)	*	65	57
National diploma in engineering	3	Number of starters	19	34	31
		Retention (%)	*	85	81
		Achievement (%)	*	67	18

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Hospitality and Catering

Grade 2

31 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering NVQ catering and hospitality, GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering and CENTRA cake decorating. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified some additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- effective monitoring of each student's progress and achievement
- close and productive links with industry
- well-devised learning materials for NVQ students
- well-managed provision, particularly for community-based students
- good achievement rates on NVQ programmes

Weaknesses

- narrow range of full-time provision
- insufficient development of key skills on NVQ courses
- training kitchens not reflecting current industry standards

32 The hospitality and catering division offers full-time courses for GNVQ advanced and NVQ level 2, but no foundation level courses. There are NVQ level 2 and 3 courses for part-time students. Study at NVQ level 1 is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by the department of administrative studies. Students on the college's community-based provision can work towards NVQs at levels 1 to 4, and almost 80% of basic food hygiene courses are delivered in community centres. Full-time students undertake well-organised and well-supervised work experience. The management of catering and hospitality is

effective. Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the curriculum is effectively planned. Courses are appropriately structured and strategies to implement inclusive learning are effective. Schemes of work and assessment schedules ensure that teachers meet the course requirements. Course documentation is comprehensive. The system for internal verification is effective. Procedures to monitor students' progress are rigorous. Students' attendance is carefully monitored and reasons for absenteeism are quickly sought.

33 The majority of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned. In a GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering lesson, the teacher made effective use of visual aids and handouts to develop students' understanding of the main objectives of the lesson. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teachers have developed high-quality workbooks for use on NVQ courses. The workbooks contain a range of exercises that help students to understand the topics they are studying. Small class sizes, often due to low recruitment, inhibit the use of some teaching methods such as those involving group work. The pace of some lessons is too slow and little is demanded of students. Teachers keep detailed records of students' academic progress, and provide regular feedback to students to help them improve their performance. Students with learning difficulties receive good additional support in practical and theory lessons. Key skills are effectively integrated with other aspects of the GNVQ advanced course but are insufficiently developed on NVQ courses.

34 In the kitchens and restaurant, most students work competently. They undertake their tasks with enthusiasm and achieve a good standard of practical skills. A minority of students do not pay sufficient attention and do not work effectively on their own. Students' portfolios are well organised and provide a thorough record of their achievements. The self-assessment report noted some good pass

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and retention rates. All full-time students achieve the basic food hygiene certificate. Pass rates for NVQ level 2 full-time and outreach students in 1998 were at or above the national averages. In 1999, pass rates on all NVQ courses were above national averages. For example, all the students on the college's community-based provision, achieved their target qualification and the pass rate on NVQ level 3 courses was 91%. However, enrolment and achievement rates on the GNVQ advanced course have declined and the retention rate in 1999 was significantly below the national average.

35 Specialist accommodation for hospitality and catering is adequate for the number of students and level of courses, but inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the production and training kitchens do not reflect current industry standards. A computerised billing system has recently been installed in the training restaurant. Most courses are taught by full-time teachers, the majority of whom have teaching and assessor qualifications. Several teachers have relevant higher degrees. A few staff have recently undertaken a short period of industrial updating.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in hospitality and catering, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
Basic food hygiene	1	Number of starters	*	*	313
		Retention (%)	*	*	97
		Achievement (%)	*	*	93
NVQ food preparation and cookery	2	Number of starters	*	*	64
		Retention (%)	*	*	73
		Achievement (%)	*	*	87
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	Number of starters	+	14	+
		Retention (%)	+	71	+
		Achievement (%)	+	80	+

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

+fewer than 10 starters

Curriculum Areas

Art and Design

Grade 1

36 Inspectors observed 14 lessons across a wide range of art and design courses at intermediate and advanced levels. Inspectors broadly agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- extensive provision and effective course organisation
- a comprehensive approach to inclusive learning
- challenging and appropriately varied teaching
- good achievement rates and high levels of progression to higher education
- outstanding student work
- well-developed professional links with industry and the community
- a wide range of specialist resources and accommodation

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses

37 The college's provision in art, design and textiles includes a foundation diploma and a wide range of specialist full-time courses at intermediate and advanced levels in areas such as interior design, fashion and graphics. On part-time access courses, key lessons are repeated at different times during the week to meet individual students' needs. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the department is well managed. Course meetings are held regularly and course planning, monitoring and documentation are good. There are effective professional links through advisory groups, lecture programmes by visiting artists and designers, and external advisers from industry.

38 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching is good. Of the 14 lessons observed by inspectors, 11 were judged to be good or outstanding. A particular strength is the inclusion of cultural, moral and environmental ideas in projects and discussion. In a lively and challenging lecture on stereotyping and its impact on the media, the teacher engaged the attention and participation of graphic design students with humour and the surprise juxtaposition of images from advertising over the last 100 years. These covered race, gender and ethical issues. The students were from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, and the ideas provided an ideal stimulus for their written work. Participation in live projects and competitions is an important feature of all art and design courses. At a recent fashion show in support of a cancer charity, students and staff showed their work. The successful event was recorded in photography and multimedia. Students' experiences are enriched by local, national and European visits which provide original starting points for project work. Teachers encourage students to use primary sources for research. The assessment and internal verification of students' work is thorough, and students are given regular feedback on their progress. Teachers revise their teaching strategies to improve retention and raise awareness of inclusive learning and equal opportunities.

39 The portfolios of students on GNVQ advanced art and design courses are outstanding and demonstrate thorough development of ideas in two and three dimensions. Fashion and graphics students' awareness of design trends is good. Evening life drawing workshops are well attended by staff and students. The standard of work at the summer exhibition, which includes all courses, was very high. Many students come from areas of social deprivation and teachers work hard to support them. As highlighted in the self-assessment report, achievement rates are

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consistently above national averages on most courses. Of the students who started the national diploma in graphic design in 1997, 75% achieved the qualification. On GNVQ advanced art and design, 80% of students achieved high grades, compared with the national average of 50%. Retention and pass rates on foundation diploma studies have been above the national average for the last three years. Progression to higher education is good; for example 84% of advanced level students gained higher education places in 1999. Students are often successful in national competitions; recent entrants won four prizes in a competition designed to promote the use of colour.

40 A wide range of specialist accommodation is provided in three buildings, one a former mill. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that they have been converted to provide excellent facilities for most art and design disciplines. The new Yorkshire Craft Centre provides outstanding studio and gallery facilities

for students and the community. Some studios are untidy and make poor use of storage. The Grove Library provides an outstanding periodical and book resource. Specialist staff bring professional expertise to their teaching and they are supported in updating their research.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in art and design, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	Number of starters	64	37	38
		Retention (%)	61	54	66
		Achievement (%)	*	80	80
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	Number of starters	14	22	16
		Retention (%)	*	68	88
		Achievement (%)	*	87	93
National diploma design (graphic design)	3	Number of starters	22	30	34
		Retention (%)	100	63	82
		Achievement (%)	90	95	92
National diploma design (fashion)	3	Number of starters	13	16	13
		Retention (%)	*	75	69
		Achievement (%)	*	67	89
Foundation diploma studies art and design	3	Number of starters	78	77	85
		Retention (%)	92	90	98
		Achievement (%)	*	96	94

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

English and Modern Foreign Languages

Grade 2

41 Inspectors observed 21 lessons in English and modern foreign languages. They considered that the self-assessment report did not provide sufficient detail on the strengths and weaknesses in the subjects concerned. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the report but identified additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- English provision at intermediate level which meets students' needs
- good achievement rates in GCSE English language and GCE A level Urdu
- well-resourced communications workshop and languages centre
- well-developed systems for recording students' progress in English

Weaknesses

- insufficient integration of the work of subject teams
- some poorly planned and uninspiring teaching
- low levels of achievement on some programmes

42 The college offers an extensive range of English and foreign language courses at many venues in Bradford and the surrounding area. A few students follow distance learning courses. There are six levels from beginners to GCE A level for foreign languages. Until September 1999 the lower levels were not accredited. Intermediate level provision in English is well organised and meets the needs of a wide range of students who can start their studies throughout the year. There is good liaison between teachers of foreign languages and English as a foreign language (EFL). Curriculum management is unduly

fragmented. The self-assessment report did not recognise this weakness. Three English teaching teams work in different sections of the department of general education and opportunities to spread good practice are missed. Community language provision is insufficiently integrated with other foreign languages. Only two of the 34 language teachers are full time. This makes it difficult to achieve consistent standards of teaching. For the first term, students of English at intermediate level follow a common programme which gives them and their teachers the opportunity to assess their progress and decide which qualification to opt for.

43 Most English teaching is good. Most GCSE English is taught in the communications workshop, where students work individually and in groups using stimulating materials. Teachers mark students' work carefully and give helpful feedback. The systematic recording of students' progress is effective in maintaining student motivation. Most lessons in modern foreign languages are satisfactory. In some, teachers conduct lively lessons mainly in the language being studied. In others too much use is made of English. There is little group work, little use of the available learning resources and few imaginative activities. Teachers do not differentiate sufficiently between the needs of students with varying levels of previous attainment. As a result of poor lesson planning, some teachers of English and foreign languages allow insufficient time to achieve the objectives of the lesson. Weaknesses in teaching were not identified in the self-assessment report.

44 Pass and retention rates for GCSE English are significantly above national averages. In 1999, 57% achieved grade C or above compared with the national average of 47%. Over 70% of students who enrolled on the open English programme in 1999 were successful. Pass rates on GCE A level Urdu are significantly above the national average, and in 1999, 71% of students achieved high grades. Pass rates on other modern foreign languages at GCE A level

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are at or slightly below national averages. Poor achievement rates in GCE A level English literature were identified in the self-assessment report. Retention on the GCE A level English course was low in 1999. On some modern foreign language courses, many students leave without completing their course. Students on GCSE English courses produce written work of a high standard and participate well in lessons. The quality of some students' written work in foreign languages is poor. The average attendance rate in the 21 lessons observed was significantly below the national average for the programme area.

45 Teachers are well qualified. About two-thirds of foreign language teachers are native speakers of the language they teach. Learning resources in English and foreign languages are extensive and of high quality. As the self-assessment report stated, the communications workshop and the languages centre provide opportunities for a wide range of approaches to study. They contain up-to-date IT and audiovisual facilities. The languages centre is shared with students learning EFL, and the college arranges for English and foreign students to meet there in groups of four to speak in each others' language. The centre has only recently opened and is not yet fully accessible to students.

A summary of retention and achievement rates in English and modern foreign languages, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
GCSE modern foreign languages	2	Number of starters	*	155	94
		Retention (%)	*	*	71
		Achievement (%)	*	*	48
GCSE English language	2	Number of starters	*	*	502
		Retention (%)	*	*	89
		Achievement (%)	*	*	57
GCSE English literature	2	Number of starters	33	34	36
		Retention (%)	73	82	58
		Achievement (%)	*	25	24
GCE A level modern foreign languages	3	Number of starters	*	*	90
		Retention (%)	*	*	68
		Achievement (%)	*	*	87
GCE A level English language, and language and literature	3	Number of starters	55	94	99
		Retention (%)	63	76	52
		Achievement (%)	65	*	80
GCE A level English literature	3	Number of starters	66	75	18
		Retention (%)	79	80	78
		Achievement (%)	44	42	71
Modern foreign languages other than GCSE and GCE A level (one-year courses)	All levels	Number of starters	441	772	804
		Retention (%)	*	89	79
		Achievement (%)	*	7	10

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

Curriculum Areas

Basic Skills

Grade 4

46 Inspectors observed 20 lessons in basic skills across the college at 11 different venues. The self-assessment report presented judgements about basic skills provision in two departmental sections. In one of these sections, judgements about literacy and numeracy were aggregated with those for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The report did not include judgements about basic skills provision elsewhere in the college. Inspectors did not agree with some of the strengths identified by the college, and they identified some additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good-quality learning resources in the communication and mathematics workshops
- provision in community venues that encourages participation

Weaknesses

- high proportion of less than satisfactory teaching
- low proportion of students achieving a qualification
- lack of summative records of achievement for students without qualification aims
- inappropriate learning goals for some students
- insufficient co-ordination of basic skills provision across the college

47 The scope of the inspection included primary basic skills provision within the college and in the community, and basic skills provided as learning support. Provision of basic skills on the main college site, including learning support, is organised by the general education

department. This is provided in a mathematics workshop and a communication workshop. Provision in the community is organised by the department of adult and community education at 24 college centres, community centres and schools. The community venues encourage participation by students who might not otherwise attend courses at the college. In 1998-99, 614 students started basic skills courses at the main college; another 221 received help with literacy and numeracy as a part of the college's learning support programme; and there were 1,177 enrolments on basic skills courses in the community. The provision lacks coherence, so that the students' learning experiences and entitlements differ according to the course that they follow. Managers do not have a college-wide plan for basic skills provision, or an overview of standards. Management information is weak, especially for the community-based provision. Most teachers were not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process. There is insufficient sharing of good practice within, and between, the teams of teachers. These weaknesses were not recognised in the self-assessment report.

48 A low proportion of lessons were good or outstanding; 40% compared with the programme area average of 54% in 1998-99. The proportion of poor or unsatisfactory lessons was higher than the programme area average. Some of the teaching is effective. Tutors use appropriate learning tasks and materials, and are effective in helping students to learn. However, much of the teaching is uninspiring and the teachers are over-reliant on printed materials. In the weaker lessons, learning objectives are unclear to students. Some teachers give unclear instructions to students who then make inappropriate responses. Students do not always receive enough attention and help during lessons. Teachers do not check that students understand each topic sufficiently before they introduce the next topic. In one

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lesson, students who arrived on time waited 20 minutes before the teacher began the lesson. Some students' portfolios contained uncorrected errors in work completed several weeks earlier. Inspectors did not agree with the college's self-assessment that teaching was a strength.

49 Students gain in confidence and value the help and support that they receive. However, some students make unsatisfactorily slow progress, and have inappropriate learning goals. On community-based courses, teachers identify qualification aims for students late in the course. For this reason, some achievement rates are 100%. Pass rates are higher than national averages for some qualifications, including Wordpower level 1 and Numberpower level 1. Achievement rates of students following basic skills provision in the mathematics and communication workshops are satisfactory. More than half of the students starting these courses achieved their intended qualifications in 1998-99, and pass rates on some courses were 100%. Retention rates ranged from 48% to 100% in 1998-99 across the different strands of provision. There are wide fluctuations in rates of retention and achievement from year to year, and course to course. A low proportion of students who start community-based courses achieve a qualification; 37% did so in 1998-99. Teachers do not keep summative records of achievement for students who do not aim for a qualification. The college is not able to show that these students have achieved their learning goals. The college's self-assessment recognised a few of these weaknesses, but judged students' achievements to be a strength.

50 Teachers are well qualified and many have good experience of teaching basic skills. Inspectors agreed with this strength noted in the self-assessment report. Teachers, especially those working part time, do not engage sufficiently in training and development activities. College policies and practices for basic skills are not well known to some teachers. Most teaching accommodation is

satisfactory and some is good. Facilities in most community venues are adequate and these centres provide welcoming learning environments for adult students. Some lack access for students with restricted mobility. Computers are available for students to use in some centres, and most learning materials are of good quality.

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A summary of retention and achievement rates in basic skills, 1997 to 1999

Type of qualification	Level	Numbers and outcome	Completion year		
			1997	1998	1999
C&G 3794 numeracy (Numberpower)	Entry	Number of starters	58	30	**
		Retention (%)	100	100	**
		Achievement (%)	16	93	**
AEB achievement tests: literacy levels 1, 2 and 3 (one-year course)	Entry	Number of starters	15	62	112
		Retention (%)	100	76	94
		Achievement (%)	100	87	87
C&G 3794 numeracy (Numberpower, one-year course)	Entry	Number of starters	150	17	28
		Retention (%)	75	88	79
		Achievement (%)	33	80	100
C&G 3793 communication skills (Wordpower, one-year course)	1	Number of starters	676	671	224
		Retention (%)	61	73	81
		Achievement (%)	53	47	*
C&G 3750 numeracy (one-year course)	1	Number of starters	**	265	267
		Retention (%)	**	66	48
		Achievement (%)	**	24	68
London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Wordpower (short course)	1	Number of starters	109	327	**
		Retention (%)	92	87	**
		Achievement (%)	43	36	**

Source: ISR (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

*data unreliable

**course not running

Curriculum Areas

ESOL

Grade 2

51 Inspectors observed 13 lessons in ESOL. They agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but found some additional strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- effective and well-planned teaching
- good retention and pass rates
- opportunities for students to progress and gain accredited awards
- community-based provision meeting students' needs and widening participation
- bilingual teachers providing strong community links and effective support for language learning

Weaknesses

- lack of individual learning plans with appropriate goals
- inadequate recording and assessment of students' progress
- some poor-quality resources and accommodation

52 ESOL courses are conveniently provided in community centres and schools as well as at the college's Bolton Royd site. Courses are offered at three levels in most centres to meet individual needs. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the provision is culturally sensitive and encourages participation by both men and women who would not normally attend college. For example, there are separate lessons for men and women when this is appropriate. Courses which aim to improve literacy and job search skills, are successful in recruiting people of all ages. The programme area is effectively managed. There are good opportunities for

students to progress and gain accredited awards.

53 There is much good teaching. Schemes of work are used in all lessons. Most are detailed and specify clear learning outcomes. Teachers take into account the different abilities and skills of their students. In the best lessons, enthusiastic and lively teaching elicits good responses from students. Teachers make effective use of a variety of classroom activities, including role-plays, pair work and games to develop their students' oral skills. In most lessons, excellent use is made of flashcards, cue cards, and pictures to practise and consolidate the language structures being learnt. In one lesson, a teacher used money and a bag of groceries to role-play shopping, asking the students for change. In another lesson, a first-aid kit was used to teach language structure on the topic of health. Teachers, however, place an over-reliance on the use of reading texts to develop reading skills. An initial assessment is made of each student's language needs but the student's primary learning goal is not always identified, recorded or linked to subsequent learning activities. The planning of students' individual learning programmes is not always effective, and few teachers identify their students' short-term learning targets. Most teachers only record students' progress against accreditation criteria. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report. Many teachers do not provide sufficient written feedback to students on the standard of their portfolios.

54 Students are highly motivated, gain confidence during their programmes and develop relevant skills. The quality of their work is generally appropriate for the level being studied. Many students have few formal qualifications on entry but achieve well. Data on students' achievements supplied by the college were not reliable and a summary of students' achievements could not be produced. However, some data held by curriculum

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managers for 1998-99 were scrutinised. Inspectors agreed with the judgement in the self-assessment report that achievement rates in the speaking test are high. Over 85% of students who took the test in 1999 passed, some with distinction.

55 All teachers have a teaching qualification. Most have a specialist qualification in ESOL and many have over 10 years of teaching experience. Double staffing in some lessons provides good one-to-one support for students working on literacy tasks. Bilingual teaching staff have developed strong links with their communities, and provide good language support for learners during classroom activities. All teachers are provided with an adequate range of basic resources. At all centres there are in-house produced reading texts and other paper-based materials but few other resources such as dictionaries and sets of course books. Television, video and computing equipment is not available for students to use at venues other than Bolton Royd. Most teaching rooms are poorly furnished, and some are cramped. These weaknesses were identified in the self-assessment report.

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Support for Students

Grade 2

56 Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but concluded that some of the strengths should have been aggregated.

Key strengths

- effectively co-ordinated central admissions arrangements
- wide ranging school links
- extensive counselling and welfare services
- well-resourced learning support for students with disabilities

Weaknesses

- some failure to comply with college policy on tutorial support
- low take-up of additional literacy and numeracy support

57 A unified central admissions system was established during the college's recent restructuring process. Experienced admissions staff, mainly recruited from the former academic schools, provide effective initial guidance for prospective students. All contacts are logged and each step in the admissions process, from enquiries through to enrolments, is monitored. The admissions unit liaises closely with the academic departments and refers specific enquiries to course tutors. The well-established access and guidance centre provides a general pre-entry information service and, in 1998-99, dealt with over 6,500 enquiries.

58 The range of school links is extensive, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. For example, the college has collaborated with 10 secondary schools, where the proportion of students continuing in education after 16 is low, to promote vocational

'taster' programmes. In co-operation with the LEA, increasing numbers of excluded school pupils attend college courses; many subsequently enrol on full-time courses. An attractive prospectus, aimed at school-leavers, contains a comprehensive course guide and summaries in different minority ethnic languages. Open evenings for prospective students and their parents are well attended. An open day in February 1999 attracted over 1,500 visitors. Additional open days are organised in response to requests from schools. The college does not yet fully evaluate the impact of such events on subsequent recruitment to college courses.

59 A college-wide tutorial policy for full-time students was introduced in June 1999. Full-time students have an entitlement to regular tutorial support which includes group sessions, individual progress reviews, and the completion of a record of achievement. These entitlements are explained in a staff handbook, which also contains information about induction procedures and other student support services. Full-time students receive regular individual progress reviews, but the number of group tutorials is low. Tutors have identified a need for training to enable them to confidently deliver prescribed group tutorial topics such as citizenship and independent living. Tutorial arrangements for part-time students are often informal. Records of achievement are promoted in hairdressing and beauty therapy, but the practice is less consistent in other curriculum areas. The self-assessment report recognised that the amount and quality of tutorial provision varies between departments.

60 All full-time students are offered a screening test when they start college to determine whether they have any need for additional learning support in numeracy and literacy. Part-time students who feel they have such needs must refer themselves. Increasingly, additional support is provided in lessons, by learning support tutors who work with class

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teachers. Not all students who need additional support receive it, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. For example in 1999, only 111 students received support in communications and 90 in numeracy. Significantly larger numbers of students enrol for externally accredited qualifications delivered in the numeracy and communications workshops. Some departments provide additional support during key skills lessons. Retention rates for those receiving support are good, although in 1999 the percentage achieving their main qualification aim was only 57%. Learning support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities depends on self-referral. A large number of students receive valuable support from 62 specialist staff, including 42 part-time support assistants. The provision is well resourced, and specialist equipment is available on loan for installation in workshops.

61 Counselling and welfare services are extensive, as noted in the self-assessment report. Three full-time nurses promote health care campaigns and a family planning clinic in the college health centre and provide accident and emergency treatment. The counselling service is run jointly with the local university; three full-time staff are supported by 19 trained volunteers. The service is widely used by both staff and students. Childcare is provided in four nurseries and 35 community crèches. The students' union, housed in newly refurbished premises, is well resourced with facilities that include a cyber café and travel shop. Four sabbatical officers are responsible for welfare, communications, social and sporting activities. A youth and information centre, managed by a full-time youth worker, provides recreational facilities, mainly for 16 to 18 year old students.

62 Careers education and guidance is conducted in partnership with the local external careers agency, Careers Bradford. The careers library is well equipped and staff are well qualified. College records show that the take-up

of careers interviews by students has increased over the last year to almost 1,000 students, although numbers vary significantly between departments. Over 100 students who have left the college before the end of their course, or who are felt to be at risk of leaving, have been referred to external careers advisers. The arrangements for analysing students' reasons for leaving college before they complete their courses are at an early stage of development.

General Resources

Grade 2

63 Inspectors agreed with the majority of strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- substantial investment in, and improvement to, accommodation since the last inspection
- an effective accommodation strategy
- high-quality libraries and curriculum workshops

Weaknesses

- insufficient IT facilities
- some unsatisfactory accommodation

64 Following the sale of its Ilkley site in 1999, the college is now based on two main sites in central Bradford, close to the University of Bradford. The Westbrook site includes a range of specialist buildings for pure and applied sciences, business, construction, engineering, general education and art and design. The McMillan site houses health and social care, teacher training, applied social sciences and humanities. It is undergoing extensive building works to house higher education courses transferred from the Ilkley site. There is also a large adult education centre in the north of the

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city, Bolton Royd, the administrative centre for more than 100 adult and community venues across the district.

65 Implementation of the college's accommodation strategy has significantly improved the standard of accommodation and made more efficient use of the space available. Managers have been keen to involve teaching and support staff fully in planning the accommodation for their own curriculum areas. Since the last inspection, major improvements have included: the £4.5 million refurbishment of the Appleton Building to create excellent science facilities and up-to-date salons for beauty therapy and hairdressing; the refurbishment of curriculum workshops in the Old Building; the £4 million Yorkshire Craft Centre with specialist facilities for glass blowing, foundry and wrought iron work; and the relocation of construction and engineering. Despite these improvements, the college's self-assessment report recognised that some accommodation is still in poor condition. Corridors and some teaching areas in the Old Building are poorly decorated. Some teaching rooms in the Westbrook Building lack visual displays. Bolton Royd has some temporary buildings of poor quality. In a few areas, such as the Old Building, there are significant difficulties for people with restricted mobility. Signposting to and within some college buildings is inadequate.

66 The main college libraries on the Westbrook and McMillan sites are in high-quality accommodation. The comprehensive and well-organised library service meets the needs of staff and students effectively. It carries an appropriate range of books, periodicals, slides and videotapes. The non-staffing budget is significantly above the average for the further education sector. Computers are available for the electronic retrieval of information through CD-ROM and the Internet. Both libraries provide silent, quiet and small group study areas. Librarians are professionally qualified and ably assisted by experienced library

assistants. Subject librarians liaise effectively with staff in the curriculum areas. During term time, the libraries are open until 20.00 hours each weekday evening and on Saturday mornings. However, during holiday periods they are only open for two half-days each week. This was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The college has developed high-quality curriculum workshops for science, mathematics, communications and English language. Each of the centres has a comprehensive range of appropriate learning materials.

67 As part of its reorganisation, the college has centralised the management of IT resources. Over £2.5 million has been spent on IT equipment in the last two years. Access to electronic mail and the Internet is being extended to all students and staff. Computers are located in each department and are networked to a central server. However, the ratio of one computer to 10 full-time equivalent students is below the sector average. Staff and students often experience difficulties in logging on to the network at peak times. In some buildings, students are not always able to use computers outside timetabled classes. Technical staff who service the computers do not have sufficient time to meet all the demands from teachers and students. The self-assessment report recognised these weaknesses.

68 The college provides either a refectory service or snack bar facilities in most college buildings. However, only vending machines are provided in the buildings used by engineering and construction students. Catering facilities are heavily used by students and sometimes there are long queues at meal times. The snack bars in the Old Building and at Bolton Royd are uninviting. The college provides a sports and recreation programme at lunchtimes, evenings and on Wednesday afternoons. The range, condition and availability of recreational facilities on the college sites are limited, but students can use facilities such as the swimming

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pool, at the local university. The self-assessment report acknowledged the poor social, sporting and refectory facilities.

Quality Assurance

Grade 3

69 Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report but identified additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- good involvement by staff in self-assessment
- rigorous course validation and approval procedures
- effective college-wide internal verification arrangements
- regular involvement of students in quality assurance

Weaknesses

- slow progress in remedying some weaknesses identified during the previous inspection
- some poor annual course reviews
- lack of rigour in the lesson observation process
- aspects of quality assurance yet to have an impact on college provision

70 Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment report that there is a strong commitment to quality improvement. A quality assurance policy commits the college to assuring the quality of all aspects of its work. The director for academic programmes and the assistant director have responsibility for quality assurance, assisted by three academic quality officers. Departmental and service managers lead quality assurance developments in the areas for which they have responsibility. The college has, however, been slow to address some

of the weaknesses identified in the previous report. For example: the evaluation of staff development; the insufficient monitoring of, and reporting on, cross-college provision; and the use of value-added data to inform the review of GCE A level teaching.

71 The academic standards unit ensures that procedures for course validation and approval are followed. Teaching staff, and the college's support services, consider new course proposals carefully. Existing courses are formally reviewed every five years, and course teams must justify their continuance. Effective internal verification procedures are applied across all vocational areas of the college. The director of academic programmes monitors all external verifiers' reports and immediate action is required if the verifier raises concerns.

72 The annual review and evaluation of courses is a key part of the quality assurance arrangements. A comprehensive course review document has recently been introduced. It includes information from student surveys, external verifiers' comments and a proforma to record data on enrolment, retention, and achievements. Action-planning is an integral part of the process. Some course reviews include thorough evaluation of the quality of the provision and the effectiveness of previous actions. However, others do not pay enough attention to the analysis of data, the measurement of performance against benchmarks or the setting of targets for improvement. Some reviews are insufficiently self-critical, particularly on teaching and learning. These weaknesses were not acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

73 The college takes students' comments on the quality of its provision seriously. Student representatives attend most course committee meetings and receive training on how to fulfil their role. Student focus groups are used on some courses. Students speak positively about the way the college deals with their comments, a

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strength highlighted in the self-assessment report. All students receive a copy of the college charter in their handbook and are clear about their rights.

74 Since the last inspection, the college has successfully introduced a programme of lesson observations. Teachers speak positively about the process which is used to identify good practice and individual staff development needs, and to inform self-assessment. However, the standards set are not sufficiently rigorous. The college judged that 92% of its lessons were good or outstanding.

75 Aspects of quality assurance have yet to lead to improvements in some of the college's provision. The quality of teaching and learning in tutorials is insufficiently evaluated. The college operates staff appraisal through staff development discussions. However, the scheme is not implemented consistently across the college and many staff have not had an annual discussion. These weaknesses were recognised in the self-assessment report. The joint students' affairs committee monitors the standards in the charter, but there is no reporting of achievement against the standards.

76 Staff value the staff development activities they are offered. Of the staffing budget, 2% is earmarked for training and development activities within departments. In November 1999, the college appointed a staff development manager. The new manager's priorities are to co-ordinate staff development activities across the college and to introduce systems for their evaluation.

77 Self-assessment is an essential part of the college's quality assurance and planning cycle. Each team of staff, in departments and service areas, produced its own self-assessment that contributed to the college's overall self-assessment report. Teams of trained internal auditors validated the programme area and cross-college reports. A self-assessment review group, which included a governor and an external representative, considered the final

report. The report was comprehensive, but did not place sufficient emphasis on the quality of teaching in some curriculum areas.

Governance

Grade 3

78 Inspectors and auditors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but they found additional weaknesses.

Key strengths

- governors' strong commitment to the college's mission
- governors' depth of understanding of the main work of the college
- close monitoring and strong support for major college developments
- good appointment and induction arrangements

Weaknesses

- lack of formal monitoring of progress against the college's operating plan
- insufficient debate about academic issues at corporation meetings
- failure to record compliance with some statutory requirements
- aspects of committee operation

79 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is adequate. 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.

80 The corporation has 17 members including representation from the minority ethnic communities. Only three members are women. With one exception, the corporation has

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completed appointments to the recently revised membership categories. However, the adoption of the revised statutory instrument and the determination of the revised membership were not recorded in the corporation minutes. The corporation now restricts the tenure of its members to nine years. The search committee carefully considers re-appointments. One current governor had not been formally re-appointed on the expiry of his term of office. Induction arrangements for new governors are good, following action to address a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Both the principal and the clerk are involved in the induction process and newly appointed governors are assigned an experienced governor as mentor. Members have only recently been asked to identify their individual training needs. There has been some internal training for the whole corporation, but few members have participated in external training events.

81 The corporation meets twice a term. Individual attendance is monitored by the clerk, but not reported to the corporation. However, action is taken if a governor has a poor attendance record. The average attendance at corporation and committee meetings over the last 12 months is almost 80%. The clerk to the corporation, who is also the college registrar, has a detailed job description. Papers for meetings are distributed well in advance of meetings. There are no standing orders to determine the conduct of corporation and committee meetings. Minutes and papers of corporation and committee meetings are available to the public, as is the register of governors' interests. However, staff with significant financial responsibilities are not required to complete a declaration. The code of conduct requires updating to bring it into line with the Nolan committee recommendations.

82 The corporation is supported by committees for policy and resources, employment policy, audit, and search and remuneration, and by its advisory committees.

The search committee does not have terms of reference. The policy and resources committee reviews the financial position of the college at each meeting, but does not review the financial forecasts prior to submission to the corporation. The approval of certain recommendations of the remuneration committee was not recorded in the corporation minutes. Membership of the audit committee includes an external co-optee with relevant financial expertise. However, contrary to the guidance in Council Circular 98/15, *Audit Code of Practice*, the audit committee receives a detailed presentation on the college's financial statements prior to submission to the corporation. The self-assessment report did not identify these weaknesses in the operation of the corporation's committees. A recently constituted chairs' group meets to discuss issues such as the code of practice for corporation members. However, minutes from this group are not presented to the corporation.

83 Governors are firmly committed to the mission of the college. They have reaffirmed the mission, unchanged since incorporation, at each of their annual strategic planning meetings. The corporation receives many reports on items in the college's operating plan, but does not formally review progress under the plan during the year. Major projects, for example the extensive developments in the college's estate and the reorganisation, were closely monitored. As noted in the self-assessment report, governors have provided valuable support for managers during these projects. They held open-door clinics for staff during the restructuring, and chaired a series of public meetings on the proposals to sell the Ilkley site.

84 There is a large number of advisory boards which are committees of the corporation. Each advisory board has at least one governor member, usually as chair, as well as members from industry and curriculum managers. The boards provide a valuable insight for governors into the work of academic departments. The

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corporation also has two shared committees with the academic board. These joint advisory committees for equal opportunities, and for student affairs, each have three governor members, in addition to staff and students. Both committees provide detailed information to the corporation on important aspects of college life.

85 The corporation does not receive a sufficiently detailed report on the college's performance covering enrolments, retention and achievements. The principal's report to each corporation meeting keeps governors informed of enrolments and their financial implications, and he provides a separate report on the achievements in some major examination series. These reports do not adequately cover retention. The self-assessment report recognised that there is insufficient debate about academic issues at corporation meetings.

Management

Grade 2

86 Inspectors and auditors generally agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report but they put more emphasis on some strengths and weaknesses.

Key strengths

- successful management of a major reorganisation
- exceptional support for equal opportunities
- good financial management
- clear arrangements for planning and setting targets

Weaknesses

- shortcomings in the management of policy statements
- unreliable centrally held data relating to student performance

87 Senior managers have adopted an open and participative management style. Staff were widely consulted prior to the 1999 reorganisation and before major changes to the accommodation. Under the new structure, staff have easier access to managers and decisions are made more rapidly. The morale of staff is high. They understand their responsibilities, but most job descriptions have yet to be updated. The new structure has already improved the management of some important cross-college functions. The self-assessment report did not give sufficient credit for these achievements. The responsibility for some linked curriculum areas is split between managers, and this sometimes hampers the sharing of good practice and the ability to make overall judgements.

88 The committee and meetings structure leads to effective management and communication throughout the college. Heads of department have weekly individual meetings with each director, as well as regular meetings with the directorate. Heads of departments and of services meet monthly in a common training forum. Departmental boards of study and curriculum team agendas are structured to match the planning and quality assurance cycles. The academic board is an effective forum for discussing issues raised through its various committees, which include the academic planning committee and boards of study. Meetings are open and non-members frequently attend as observers. Staff are well informed about whole-college issues, about matters affecting their role, and about the work of others in the college.

89 The college's review and planning processes involve staff at all levels. Strategic objectives are reviewed annually. Operating statements and action plans are prepared for the college as a whole and for each teaching department. The plans contain clear financial, enrolment, retention and achievement targets. However, not all of the college's central services

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have operating statements. Procedures for individual course teams to set and review targets for students' retention and achievements are not yet fully in operation across the college. Strategic and course level curriculum planning is supported by extensive external market research.

90 Appropriate resources are available to implement the college's policies on equality of opportunity. The joint advisory committee has external members as well as staff, students and governors. The head of the college's multicultural education and research unit and the head of learning support for people with disabilities are responsible for the relevant subcommittees and for co-ordinating the implementation of the policies throughout the college. Part-time appointments in each department are intended to steer equal opportunities projects. Many of the college's other policies need revision, and this was recognised in the self-assessment report. Most do not specify periods for review, or name those responsible for monitoring their implementation. Many predate the reorganisation; at least one predates incorporation.

91 As stated in the self-assessment report, the college collaborates with a wide range of local organisations. There are good relationships with local education and training providers whose students attend the college for off-the-job training and language and numeracy workshops. Eight schools take part in the partnership programme in construction for year 10 and 11 pupils. The enterprise support unit successfully co-ordinates bids for European and central government special initiative funds, and manages projects on behalf of the college and an extensive range of partners.

92 The college has had major difficulties in the recording of data relating to the performance of its students on its central computer system. The self-assessment report did not place sufficient emphasis on the lack of reliable data. ISR

returns covering 1996-97 and 1997-98 had been resubmitted to the FEFC. Inspectors found that much of the data in these returns were unreliable. Instead, they used more accurate data held by curriculum teams. Improvements to the system have meant that the final ISR for 1998-99 is more accurate, although it was submitted late. Increasingly, curriculum managers are able to access centrally held data directly through the college's network.

93 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's financial management is good. The college has achieved an historical cost surplus in each of the last four years, and had income and expenditure reserves and cash balances of £12,237,000 and £4,734,000, respectively, at 31 July 1999. Staffing costs have been steadily reduced without compulsory redundancies, and the estate rationalised and improved. The average level of funding has been reduced from £20.68 for 1996-97 to £18.25 for 1998-99. The college intends to reach the convergence level by 2001-02. The three-year financial forecast for 1999 to 2002 indicates continuing financial strength. Detailed management accounts are produced monthly and reviewed by the directorate. Budgets for income, pay and non-pay expenditure are delegated to heads of department. The financial regulations have recently been updated, but still have a number of omissions. Internal and external audit reports indicate that the college's systems of internal control are largely sound.

Conclusions

94 The college's self-assessment was a comprehensive document. Its format followed the guidelines of Council Circular 97/12, *Validating Self-assessment*. The report clearly identified strengths and weaknesses and included actions to address the weaknesses. It drew on a wide range of evidence, including student surveys, lesson observations and data

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on students' achievements. Lessons observed and graded by the college resulted in a profile of grades considerably better than the grades awarded by inspectors. The college's inability to produce reliable data on student's achievements made it difficult for inspectors to make judgements about retention and achievement rates in some curriculum areas. Inspectors agreed with six of the nine curriculum area grades in the self-assessment report, but awarded lower grades for three areas. They agreed with three of the college's cross-college grades, but awarded lower grades in two cross-college areas.

95 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 (November 1999)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	1
16-18 years	18
19-24 years	24
25+ years	57
Not known	0
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by level of study (November 1999)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Level 1 (foundation)	32
Level 2 (intermediate)	21
Level 3 (advanced)	15
Level 4/5 (higher)	20
Non-schedule 2	12
Total	100

Source: college data

Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (November 1999)

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	476	1,694	11
Agriculture	0	8	0
Construction	181	680	4
Engineering	288	975	6
Business	894	2,173	15
Hotel and catering	251	416	3
Health and community care	879	799	8
Art and design	676	2,038	14
Humanities	1,095	4,530	28
Basic education	166	2,095	11
Total	4,906	15,408	100

Source: college data

Widening participation

Based on a postcode analysis of 1995-96 ISR data, the college recruited 43% of students from disadvantaged areas defined in relation to the Department of the Environment Index of Local Conditions.

Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (November 1999)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	410	132	0	542
Supporting direct learning contact	129	12	3	144
Other support	423	89	0	512
Total	962	233	3	1,198

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

College Statistics

Three-year Trends

Financial data

	1997	1998	1999
Income	£37,523,000	£35,586,000	£35,837,000
Average level of funding (ALF)	£20.68	£19.28	£18.25
Payroll as a proportion of income	73%	73%	71%
Achievement of funding target	109%	98%	100%
Diversity of income	47%	48%	49%
Operating surplus	£135,000	-£283,000	£11,000

Sources: Income – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

ALF – Funding Allocations 1997-98 (1997 and 1998), Funding Allocations 1998-99 (1999)

Payroll – Council Circulars 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1997-98 (1997 and 1998), college (1999)

Diversity of income – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Operating surplus – Council Circular 98/43 (1997), college (1998 and 1999)

Students' achievements data

Level	Retention and pass	Students aged 16 to 18			Students aged 19 or over		
		1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
1	Number of starters	1,063	2,023	1,935	2,590	7,070	6,880
	Retention (%)	70*	78*	74	84*	85*	81
	Achievement (%)	*	*	72	*	*	61
2	Number of starters	1,708	3,413	2,474	2,736	4,318	3,112
	Retention (%)	83*	81*	78	85*	84*	82
	Achievement (%)	*	*	66	*	*	65
3	Number of starters	1,498	2,180	2,234	1,828	2,959	2,772
	Retention (%)	86*	82*	79	87*	87*	83
	Achievement (%)	*	*	66	*	*	72
4 or 5	Number of starters	432	91	76	1,440	1,087	1,012
	Retention (%)	87*	95*	96	92*	91*	89
	Achievement (%)	*	*	77	*	*	76
Short courses	Number of starters	*	1,160	1,983	*	6,354	8,501
	Retention (%)	*	90*	92	*	96*	93
	Achievement (%)	*	*	78	*	*	63
Unknown/unclassified	Number of starters	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Retention (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Achievement (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: ISR

*ISR data may not be reliable

n/a not applicable

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