

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Reinspection of curriculum areas 1995-96

September 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

The Further Education Funding Council 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 every four years. The inspectorate also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum and gives advice to the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of and experience in the work they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member who does not work in education and a member of staff from the college being inspected.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are set out in Council Circular 93/28. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also use a five-point grading scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses. The descriptors for the grades are:

- grade 1 – provision which has many strengths and very few weaknesses*
- grade 2 – provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- grade 3 – provision with a balance of strengths and weaknesses*
- grade 4 – provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- grade 5 – provision which has many weaknesses and very few strengths.*

REINSPECTION OF CURRICULUM AREAS

The Council has agreed that colleges with programme areas judged by the inspectorate to have more weaknesses than strengths (grade 4 or 5) may have their funding agreement with the Council qualified to prevent them increasing the number of new students enrolled in those areas until the Council is satisfied that the weaknesses have been addressed satisfactorily.

Arrangements are made to reinspect curriculum areas graded 4 or 5 in time for the next funding round. This is a report on those curriculum areas which have been reinspected in time for the 1996-97 funding round.

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 122/96

REINSPECTION OF CURRICULUM AREAS, FEBRUARY 1995 TO MAY 1996

Summary

The Council has agreed that colleges with curriculum areas judged by the inspectorate to have more weaknesses than strengths (grade 4 or 5) may have their funding agreement with the Council qualified to prevent them increasing the number of new students enrolled in those areas until the Council is satisfied that the weaknesses have been addressed satisfactorily.

The Council requires that colleges are given the opportunity to have curriculum areas graded 4 or 5 reinspected within a year of their original reinspection. Colleges may request the Council to defer reinspection if they do not believe that sufficient improvements in provision have been achieved.

This is a report on those curriculum areas, reinspected between February 1995 and May 1996. Inspectors visited 22 colleges to reinspect 28 curriculum areas which had been judged by the inspectorate to have more weaknesses than strengths. Significant improvements were found in all areas.

The reinspection grades are shown in the table below, with information about those colleges with curriculum areas graded 4 or 5 which will be included in a future reinspection report.

COLLEGES INSPECTED IN 1993-94

<i>College</i>	<i>Curriculum area</i>	<i>Inspection grade</i>	<i>Reinspection grade</i>
East Yorkshire College of Further Education	art and design	4	3
Hendon College	science and mathematics	4	*
Stockton and Billingham College of Further Education	humanities	4	3

**Reinspection scheduled*

COLLEGES INSPECTED IN 1994-95

<i>College</i>	<i>Curriculum area</i>	<i>Inspection grade</i>	<i>Reinspection grade</i>
Aylesbury College	art and design	4	3
Burnley College	humanities	4	2
Cricklade College	engineering	4	3
	hotel and catering	4	3
East Devon College	leisure and tourism	4	2
Handsworth College	Community College Network	4	3
Herefordshire College of Technology	computing,	4	3
	mathematics and		
	information technology		
	hospitality and catering/leisure and tourism		
humanities	4	3	
Hereward College of Further Education	residential education	4	3
Hugh Baird College	construction	4	2
Keighley College	provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	†
Kidderminster College	art and design (pre-degree)	4	*
	provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	*
Isle of Wight College (The)	construction	4	3
Lewisham College	science and mathematics	4	3
Leyton Sixth Form College	health and community care	4	2
Park Lane College	provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	2
Plumpton College	engineering/machinery	4	2
Prior Pursglove College	other humanities	4	3
Rycotewood College	fine craftsmanship and design	4	3

College	Curriculum area	Inspection grade	Reinspection grade
Sir George Monoux College	business	4	*
	English for speakers of other languages	4	*
South Birmingham College	hairdressing	4	2
Stanmore College	provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	*
Waltham Forest College	English and other humanities	4	3
West Cumbria College	mathematics and computing	4	3
Weston College	science and mathematics	4	3
	hairdressing and beauty therapy	4	2
	social sciences	4	3
	provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	3
Woolwich College	provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	2
	science and mathematics	4	*

* *Reinspection scheduled*

† *Reinspection to be scheduled*

**AYLESBURY COLLEGE
EASTERN REGION**

Reinspection of art and design: January 1996

Background

The art and design provision at Aylesbury College was previously inspected in September 1994. The findings of the inspection were reported in the college inspection report 29/95. The provision in art and design was judged to have weaknesses which clearly outweighed the strengths and was graded 4.

The department's main strength lay in the staff team's concern for the welfare and development of their students. There were appropriate records of assessment and effective procedures for tracking students. The GCE A level and GCSE photography courses were recruiting well and had achieved adequate results. Weaknesses included the limited range of subjects, modes of study and levels within the subject area. Recruitment, retention, students' achievements and rates of progression to higher education from the vocational programmes were poor. There were limited resources, equipment and staff expertise for the various art and design processes required to deliver the GNVQ curriculum and few full-time staff had recent professional experience. None of the team were TDLB accredited assessors/verifiers. Several students on the advanced GNVQ had not completed their intermediate programme. Students were not adequately supported in core subjects. In some classes, it was difficult to work because of the noise generated by some poorly behaved students. Quality assurance processes were weak.

The art and design provision was reinspected by one inspector from 29 to 31 January 1996. Sixteen classes were observed and the grades awarded showed an improvement on the previous inspection. Students' work on display for assessment was examined and examination results were scrutinised. There were meetings with staff, senior managers and students.

Assessment

Managers have redressed some of the weaknesses identified. An action plan has been developed by the programme team and discussed with the art advisory group. The majority of its objectives has been met. A structured programme of staff development has enabled full-time staff to gain industrial experience in communication design, photography and information technology. This group of staff has also qualified in TDLB training. Provision has been extended by introducing GNVQ additional units and some new part-time classes in ceramic sculpture, silversmithing and jewellery. GNVQ students can also take a GCE A level course. Part-time staff have introduced new skills and experience and are contributing to the full-time courses. Tests have been used to identify students who need additional support in core skills. The programme of teaching has been improved by reorganising the timetable. Facilities to enable students to work in metal have been provided but the space available is cramped. Assessment and internal verification are thorough. There is still a need to develop staff awareness of the standards expected and the methods of teaching required for GNVQs. The pace and content of the work is still insufficiently challenging. Despite the improvements made in art and design, implementation of the college's quality assurance policies and procedures has had little effect. There is a need for the art and design team to develop some basic quality standards.

Revised grade: art and design 3.

**BURNLEY COLLEGE
NORTH WEST REGION**

Reinspection of humanities: November 1995

Background

The humanities programme at Burnley College was inspected in the week commencing 30 January 1995 and the findings recorded in college inspection report 89/95. The programme was awarded a grade 4.

The strengths of the programme included examples of lively, interactive teaching; some enthusiastic students; a wide variety of courses, modes of attendance and pathways for progression; well-qualified staff; good teaching rooms; and good information technology facilities. However, weaknesses outweighed the strengths: the teaching was pedestrian; there was too much emphasis on one teaching style; in some classes the work lacked rigour; students' examination results were variable; there were some low completion rates; quality assurance systems were not fully implemented; some students were failing to receive their entitlement to tutorial support; resources to support learning were limited; and information technology was not integrated effectively within the curriculum.

The reinspection took place in the week commencing 27 November 1995. Four inspectors spent 14 days inspecting sociology, psychology, religious studies, English language, English literature, English language and literature, law, teacher education, German, French, Spanish, history, criminology and Urdu. They observed 33 classes and held meetings with staff and students. Central services such as the library and information technology areas were also inspected.

Assessment

The college has made significant progress in addressing weaknesses. The humanities programme continues to meet the needs of the community through its range of courses, progression routes and modes of attendance. The new management and divisional structure has improved staff morale. There is now a clear allocation of roles and better guidance and support for staff. A regular cycle of course and subject meetings and shared workrooms has improved communications between staff and between managers and staff. There is now a clearly-defined tutorial system. Students' progress and attendance are monitored more systematically and there is a regular cycle of assessment. Courses are well structured. There is an agreed format for lesson plans. In most classes, the quality of teaching is sound. In some cases, it is lively and energetic. Some examination results have improved. There have been significant improvements in quality assurance, brought about by a programme of lesson observation and more focused, subject-related staff development. Equipment and accommodation have both significantly improved. There remain some weaknesses. There is still insufficient attention to the way students learn and not enough use of materials designed to enable students to work on their own. Student retention rates and some examination results are poor. Although course and subject reviews are now in place, not enough account is taken of students' views and there is little use of action plans to tackle perceived weaknesses.

Revised grade: humanities 2.

**CRICKLADE COLLEGE
SOUTH EAST REGION**

Reinspection of engineering: November 1995

Background

Cricklade College was previously inspected during September and October 1994 and the inspection findings were published in college inspection report 08/95. Provision in engineering was graded 4.

The standard of theoretical and practical teaching was good and students enjoyed their courses. Course documentation was well planned and presented, and teachers were developing detailed schemes of work. The integration of an apprentice scheme into the main course provision at short notice was of particular note. The main weaknesses identified were: the lack of information about students' success in examinations and retention on courses; poor performance in some examinations; the absence of a planned investment programme; and a lack of appropriate upgrading of staff skills.

Engineering was reinspected by one inspector on 20 and 21 November 1995. Six lessons were inspected. Meetings were held with the vice-principal, the head of the technology division, teachers and students. Students' work was examined, together with documentation prepared for the reinspection, which included the college strategic plan and the technology division's business plan.

Assessment

The college has made significant progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The division now has reliable data on the success of students on all courses for the last two years. It has also identified the number of students who have failed to complete their courses and the reasons for this. Recording of detailed information about students' retention and success has become part of the culture of the college. Students' achievements on courses in the division are generally good. On the NVQ level 2 mechanics, fabrication and welding, and electronics courses passes have exceeded 80 per cent for the last two years. Students' examination performance on motor vehicle courses has been less good. Although students on both the part-time second and third year motor vehicle courses achieved well in 1994, results were poor in 1995. The transition from C&G part 2 to a NVQ level 2 course in 1994 resulted in increased numbers failing to complete the full award. All students on both courses are still at the college and are expected to complete their courses successfully. The division's business plan records educational supplies and capital budgets for each cost centre. It also includes an audit of teachers' skills and competence, but it does not contain a planned investment programme to update equipment. A staff development programme has resulted in teachers attending a range of appropriate activities during the past year. Most teachers have either obtained or have completed their portfolios for TDLB assessor or verifier awards.

Revised grade: engineering 3.

**CRICKLADE COLLEGE
SOUTH EAST REGION**

Reinspection of hotel and catering: November 1995

Background

Cricklade College was previously inspected during September and October 1994 and the inspection findings were published in college inspection report 08/95. Provision in hotel and catering was graded 4.

Students were enthusiastic about their courses. A tracking system was helpful in monitoring students' progress. Well-qualified staff used learning resources and realistic working environments effectively. The main weaknesses identified were the need for reinforcement of hygiene practices; some poor examination results; the failure of students on a NVQ level 1 catering and hospitality programme to achieve the full award; the lack of data on retention and on some examination results; the failure to analyse examination results; the absence of quality assurance documentation; the lack of study skills support to enable students to work effectively on their own; an advisory board which had no industrial or student membership and which had failed to meet; and the absence of opportunities to progress to NVQ level 3.

Hotel and catering was reinspected by one inspector on 20 and 21 November 1995. Five classes were inspected. Students' work was examined, together with documentation prepared for the inspection. Meetings and discussions were held with students and staff, who included the vice-principal, the head of division and programme managers.

Assessment

The college has made significant progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Sound hygiene practices are being followed. Examination results are improving and students are achieving full awards within an appropriate timescale. The most recent results show that just over 70 per cent of students who initially enrolled, and 100 per cent of those who completed the programme, achieved the full award. Data on student retention, results and destinations are thoroughly analysed, and quality assurance documentation is in place. Support for students to work on their own is provided during tutorials and classes. The advisory board has been re-established and includes representation from industry and students. Progression to NVQ level 3 is offered through a scheme involving a partnership between the college and local catering establishments. Matters still requiring attention are the low recruitment and narrow range of provision; lack of detail in schemes of work and lesson plans; and the lack of provision in numeracy, communications and information technology for catering students.

Revised grade: hotel and catering 3.

**EAST DEVON COLLEGE
SOUTH WEST REGION**

Reinspection of leisure and tourism: April 1996

Background

East Devon College was inspected between October 1994 and January 1995. The findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 41/95. The leisure and tourism provision was awarded a grade 4.

Some students' coursework was of a good standard and there was evidence of well-planned and effective teaching. The tutorial system was well managed and included thorough reporting of students' progress. The main weaknesses identified were: some weaker teaching, which was inadequately planned; poor management of the introduction of GNVQ programmes; the lack of effective internal verification; some poor examination results; a travel office which was inadequate for use as a realistic work environment; and low retention on some programmes.

Leisure and tourism was reinspected in April 1996. One inspector spent three days in the college. Meetings were held with the assistant principal (curriculum), the divisional manager, the section leader and a group of students. The inspector observed 13 classes, scrutinised students' work and examined course documentation.

Assessment

Substantial progress has been made since the previous inspection. This has been assisted by a management restructuring which has resulted in more effective organisation and planning. Courses are well planned and thoroughly documented. Most teaching is sound and well managed, and students experience an appropriate range of methods of teaching and learning. Schemes of work and most lesson plans are well produced and have clear aims and objectives. Relationships between students and teachers are purposeful and productive. Students are conscientious in completing their assignments, which are clearly marked and graded. There are some good levels of achievement in the attainment of awards and in external GNVQ tests. The college is planning programmes to give students opportunities to take additional qualifications. Internal and external verification procedures are maintaining appropriate standards. Issues which the college should continue to address include: poor retention on the intermediate GNVQ programme; a minority of teaching sessions in which the work is not challenging enough for students; and the inadequacy of the travel office for teaching purposes.

Revised grade: leisure and tourism 2.

**EAST YORKSHIRE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION
YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION**

Reinspection of art and design: February 1995

Background

Art and design was originally inspected on 14 and 15 April 1994 and the findings recorded in college inspection report 56/94. The grade awarded was a 4.

Several strengths were identified. The curriculum area had a committed teaching team; there was an appropriate level of technician support; assessment records were good and staff were responsive to emerging needs in terms of the proposed provision of additional specialist courses. However, the strengths were outweighed by a number of weaknesses. The rationale underpinning course delivery appeared to conflict with stated course objectives. Some of the tasks devised by teachers failed to exploit the potential or recognise the limitations of students and tasks placed too much emphasis on outcomes at the expense of developing a sound methodology. Resources were poor. The analysis of performance indicators was not rigorous enough and the curriculum area lacked a policy for remedial action to deal with identified problems.

The provision was reinspected on 13 February 1995. Two teaching sessions were observed. Both were graded 3. Discussions were held with the college vice-principal who was the college's nominee on the original inspection team, the senior lecturer for art and design, and a group of students. A working lunch was held with art and design staff.

Assessment

Art and design has been moved from the engineering sector to the construction sector. As a result some of the provision has been relocated to another building offering significantly improved facilities. There are improved levels of communication between senior managers and teachers and this has led to better monitoring of performance and review. The weaknesses identified under teaching and learning have been addressed and the balance of teaching activities has moved away from craft, design and technology towards art and visual studies. An additional specialist teacher has been recruited on a half-time contract and an advanced GNVQ programme is planned at the new centre. Courses continue to recruit relatively small numbers of students and retention rates are low. Resources at the original site, where some courses remain, are still poor. Staff are still familiarising themselves with GNVQ assessment requirements.

Revised grade: art and design 3.

**HANDSWORTH COLLEGE
WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

Reinspection of Handsworth Community College Network: January 1996

Background

Handsworth College was inspected between April and December 1994. The findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 39/95. The provision offered by the Community College Network was graded 4.

The particular strength of the network is the involvement of large numbers of students who do not normally enter further education. The main weaknesses were: failure to implement the regulatory framework governing the operations of franchises within the network; inadequate preparatory development for centres wishing to participate in the network; the lack of appropriate support for unqualified staff in some centres; ineffective application of quality assurance controls and monitoring procedures; the inadequacy of some accommodation and resources; and the lack of guidance and learning support for students.

Handsworth Community College Network was reinspected between 9 and 16 January 1996. Six inspectors spent 18 days inspecting provision in the West Midlands, Coventry, Leicester, Banbury and the North West. Sixteen days were spent inspecting teaching and learning in 59 sessions. Two days were spent looking at aspects of the whole network, including management, quality assurance, deployment of resources, and student recruitment, guidance and support.

Assessment

There was some well-planned and imaginative teaching. Of the lessons observed, 36 per cent had strengths which outweighed weaknesses and 22 per cent had weaknesses which outweighed the strengths. Since the first inspection, there has been an increasing consolidation of provision. Programmes are concentrated in fewer organisations and in a more limited geographical area. Organisations are appropriately vetted. The college has made good progress in addressing procedural and organisational weaknesses. The revised regulatory framework and new quality assurance arrangements are significant improvements. The Network team has been restructured. Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood. Record keeping is generally efficient and visits to franchise organisations are more frequent. Relationships with franchise organisations are greatly improved. There are comprehensive guidance packs supporting the revised framework. Retention rates are generally good. Many tutors are receiving staff development, particularly on teacher training programmes. The college responds positively to requests for additional resources and support from community organisations. All premises are inspected before programme approval. There are still some weaknesses which the college should address, including insufficient monitoring of the spending of franchise funding; some weak teaching, including generally poor teaching of English for speakers of other languages; inconsistent tutorial practice and guidance for students; examination results which are significantly below national averages in many subjects; and poor resources for some classes.

Revised grade: Handsworth Community College Network 3.

**HEREFORDSHIRE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

Reinspection of computing, mathematics and information technology: November 1995

Background

Herefordshire College of Technology was inspected during May and October 1994. The findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 07/95. The computing, mathematics and information technology provision was awarded a grade 4.

Mathematics lessons varied in quality; some, particularly at GCE A level, were good. The staff involved with specialist work, although limited in number, were well qualified. There was a limited range of specialist provision and links with outside agencies were few. The provision was poorly managed and had a low profile. On the GCSE programme: a number of students were inappropriately enrolled; some of the learning support materials were poor; there was a high level of non-completion; and examination results were poor. The computing provision was good. Information technology lacked college-wide management and co-ordination, and the college had no agreed information technology policies. Staff were not given the support they needed to help them to use information technology in their teaching. Resources were inadequate and hardware and software were not always compatible. There were not enough technicians to operate effectively on a college-wide basis.

The provision for computing, mathematics and information technology was reinspected between 13 and 15 November 1995. Teaching and learning were inspected, discussions were held with staff and students, and documentation was reviewed.

Assessment

Many of the weaknesses have been addressed. Mathematics now has a higher profile in the college. There is a cross-college co-ordinator for mathematics whose responsibilities are being developed. Thorough diagnostic assessment of students takes place and timetabling changes have enabled more students to attend mathematics courses. Work is set regularly and marked carefully. GCSE mathematics results for full-time students have risen to reach the national average, although results in GCE A level mathematics are still weak. Aspects of quality have been addressed through annual subject reviews. In some sessions, students are reluctant to contribute to lessons when invited or expected to do so. Withdrawals from GCSE classes remain high. The accommodation used for the teaching of mathematics is poor. The college has introduced appropriate information technology policies, staff are in place, compatible equipment and software have been purchased, and technician responsibilities have been resolved. On GNVQ programmes, the provision of core skills in information technology is well organised. On some other courses, students do not have the opportunity to develop these skills. Information technology is not adequately covered by existing quality assurance procedures. Staff require further training in the use of the Internet and CD-ROM. The network provision should be extended to more areas of the college and the number of workstations increased.

Revised grade: computing, mathematics and information technology 3.

**HEREFORDSHIRE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

Reinspection of hospitality and catering/leisure and tourism: November 1995

Background

The curriculum area of hotel and catering and leisure and tourism, was inspected during May and October 1994 and the findings formed part of college inspection report 07/95. The grade awarded was 4.

A useful range of courses was offered. Students were encouraged to work on their own and some worked well together in teams. Assessments were well executed. Examination results prior to 1994 were generally satisfactory and data on destinations provided a satisfactory picture of students' progress. Tutorial support was comprehensive. However, these strengths were outweighed by weaknesses. Students' three-week induction was excessively long. There was too much reliance on learning packs and too little formal instruction. Teaching schemes relating to the realistic work environments were inappropriate, the teaching was poor and students' core skills were underdeveloped. For students studying travel, there were no realistic work environments and few travel trade materials. Students were poorly motivated and uncertain about what they were expected to achieve. Attendance was low, and course completion rates and some examination results were unsatisfactory. There was a poor record of progression to the second year of the advanced GNVQ in leisure and tourism. Teachers' morale was low. Permanent staff did not possess recent industrial experience. There were not enough qualified teachers to cover the hotel and catering programme. Inappropriate use was made of support staff. There was no employers' advisory group.

The curriculum area was reinspected between 13 and 15 November 1995. Twelve classes were visited, documentation was examined and meetings were held with students, staff, programme area managers and employers.

Assessment

Many of the weaknesses have been addressed. Effective teaching methods are now being used. The realistic work environments are successfully operated, using well-planned schemes of work. There is appropriate coverage of topics and promotion of core skills. Practical classes provide students with the skills required to work in the college restaurant and kitchen. The promotion of these skills has been improved. Students are motivated and attendance has improved. They understand what they need to achieve. Staff morale has risen. There are enough suitably-qualified teachers to cover hotel and catering courses. The roles of support staff are much more appropriate. A travel shop, run in conjunction with a local travel agent, provides students with practical experience and appropriate materials. Completion rates, examination achievements and rates of progression to the second year of programmes have improved. A significant minority of students still fail to complete their courses, gain full certification or progress to the second year. The induction programme, although reduced, is still too long. There is continuing difficulty in establishing an employers' advisory committee. Some staff still lack recent industrial experience and industrial updating is not part of the staff development programme.

Revised grade: hospitality and catering/leisure and tourism 3.

**HEREFORDSHIRE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

Reinspection of humanities: November 1995

Background

Herefordshire College of Technology was previously inspected during May and October 1994 and the findings recorded in college inspection report 07/95. Provision in humanities was graded 4.

The strengths of the provision were the range and flexibility of courses and the quality of some teaching. The main weaknesses were the fragmented management arrangements and the lack of clear policies for tutorial support, learning needs and study skills. There was a failure to monitor retention, and attendance at many classes was poor. There were significant weaknesses in examination results at GCSE and GCE A level, yet the college was conducting no analysis of the value added to students' achievements by comparing their examination results with their levels of achievement on entry. Liaison between curriculum areas and the library was inadequate. Much of the teaching accommodation was drab.

The area was reinspected by two inspectors in November 1995. They observed 27 classes and examined students' written work. Discussions were held with managers, teachers, library staff and students.

Assessment

The college has made progress in addressing the weaknesses which were identified in the earlier inspection. The management of the area has been reorganised and arrangements for quality assurance and students' support are now more effective. The quality of induction has improved and the tutorial support has been strengthened by the adoption of a well-defined programme covering study skills and advice and guidance for higher education and careers. The quality of teaching has improved, particularly at GCE A level and on access courses. However, GCSE teaching remains unimaginative. The quality of students' written work is satisfactory. The college has introduced a system to analyse the value it adds to students' achievements. There has been much better liaison between staff from curriculum areas and library staff. A major redecoration programme has made teaching accommodation much more attractive. Examination results have improved and there have been substantial achievements on the access to higher education course. Despite new targets, levels of attendance in the classes inspected remained low. Better monitoring of retention rates has not yet yielded results. On some courses in 1994-95, about 30 per cent of the students recruited withdrew before completing the course.

Revised grade: humanities 3.

**HEREWARD COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION
WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

Reinspection of residential education: March 1996

Background

Hereward College was inspected between December 1994 and June 1995 and the findings recorded in college inspection report 128/95. Provision in the residential education programme was given a grade 4.

The individual programmes developed for students' nursing care were detailed, clearly recorded and well monitored. The main weaknesses were: inconsistencies in the quality of care provision for students; the lack of an extended curriculum in which students' academic/vocational courses are placed within a programme of personal and social education, life skills and personal care; the limited opportunity for students to pursue recreational and social activities; and the lack of facilities within the residential accommodation to enable students to learn home skills.

Residential education was reinspected between 25 and 28 March 1996 as part of a wider reinspection which also covered governance and management, previously graded 5, and student recruitment, guidance and support, quality assurance, and accommodation, each of which had previously been graded 4. Students' induction was reinspected over three days in September 1995. Inspectors held over 40 meetings with staff, governors, the medical officer and students. They also observed teaching and scrutinised a range of documentation. The inspectors noted that the governance and management of the college are now effective; changes have improved morale, collaboration and planning. Policies and procedures are in place and are being monitored.

Assessment

There is evidence of an improvement in the quality of personal care for students. Recently-established procedures have been strengthened by staff appointments which bring together care and nursing. Individual care/'enabling' plans provide a basis for care for all residential students. Thirty care staff have undertaken training, some of it leading to NVQ accreditation. A '24 hour' curriculum ensures that skills for living are included in the residential experience. The main strengths of the provision include the care arrangements which allow students to negotiate and direct their own care, the rigorous care and nursing elements of the care/'enabling' plans and the professionalism of the care teams in the delivery of the plans. A further strength is the account taken of students' needs and goals in making the '24 hour' curriculum relevant. Issues still to be addressed include the unavailability of appropriate care for some students when staff are absent, inconsistent recording of incidents across the college, and the lack of clear learning objectives in some care plans. Staff training in delivering the residential curriculum has had little impact. Recreational and social activities for students remain at an early stage of development.

Reinspection grade: residential education 3.

**HUGH BAIRD COLLEGE
NORTH WEST REGION**

Reinspection of construction: November 1995

Background

Hugh Baird College was previously inspected between March and May 1995 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 109/95. Provision in construction was graded 4.

The provision had a number of strengths: good standards of assessment on most courses; some high-quality practical work in brickwork, carpentry and joinery; some good written work and portfolios; effective tutorials; a good range of equipment of industry standard in most areas; effective integration of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of people who are unemployed; and managers clearly committed to improving performance. However, the strengths were outweighed by weaknesses: dull teaching which failed to motivate students or take adequate account of their abilities; the lack of flexibility in delivering GNVQ and NVQ courses; the low level of commitment to GNVQ courses; poor attendance at, and punctuality for, lessons; the high drop-out rate on many courses; a shortage of materials to extend students' studies; restricted access to computers, particularly for GNVQ students developing assignments; and failure to disseminate the best teaching and assessment practice across the programme area.

Provision in construction was reinspected by two full-time inspectors on 23 and 24 November 1995. They observed 16 classes, examined students' work, scrutinised examination results, held discussions with students and staff, and analysed the college's plan to address issues raised in the earlier inspection.

Assessment

The college has been rigorous in tackling the weaknesses identified in the earlier inspection. Of the lessons observed, 69 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed the weaknesses. There is a strong commitment to the development of courses leading to GNVQs, and substantial improvement in the organisation and delivery of work to meet the differing needs of students. Resources to support students on craft courses have been developed rapidly. Teachers are working together in teams and there is more sharing of good practice. Students' attendance and punctuality have improved, but these are still poor in some areas. Teachers should continue to strengthen their presentational skills and make certain that they regularly check students' understanding of key points in lessons. Further support for part-time staff is required, particularly in delivering courses leading to GNVQs. Although students use computers in timetabled periods, access at other times is still restricted. Employers are not sufficiently involved in curriculum development and assessment.

Revised grade: construction 2.

**ISLE OF WIGHT COLLEGE (THE)
SOUTH EAST REGION**

Reinspection of construction: February 1996

Background

The Isle of Wight College was previously inspected between January and May 1995 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 105/95. Provision in construction was graded 4.

The provision had a number of strengths: coherent schemes of work for NVQ programmes; the quality of practical work; the effective participation of mature students; a good rapport between staff and students; an adequate range of equipment; and shared course review. However, the strengths were outweighed by weaknesses: theory lessons lacked rigour and pace; co-ordination between teaching staff was rare; there was poor attendance at, and punctuality for, lessons; understanding of GNVQ policy was low; there was no formal tutorial provision; students were given few opportunities to work on their own; assignment briefs were not consistent; there was limited use of information technology in the curriculum; there were few opportunities for work experience; student achievements had declined over the last three years; and teachers operated in isolation because of the high proportion of part-time staff.

Provision in construction was reinspected over two days in February 1996. The inspector visited five lessons, examined students' work and saw all the recently-appointed staff. Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the governor with special responsibility for construction, the principal, the college nominee, the head of division, teaching staff, support staff and students. Numerous college documents were made available.

Assessment

Of the lessons inspected, one was graded 2 and four were graded 3. Average attendance was 82 per cent, a distinct improvement on the level of attendance recorded during the original inspection. The college has accepted the messages of the earlier inspection findings and has adopted an action plan which includes target dates. New staff are energetic and demonstrate a will to improve students' experiences. A staff development week for the teaching team was held in January 1996 and staff were able to identify some of the positive outcomes of this. Teachers are preparing lessons plans together and using them to provide structure and greater consistency of the work students undertake. Most craft students are engaged on realistic tasks. A learning resource room, equipped with appropriate supplies and facilities, is developing quickly. Information technology is being integrated effectively with other aspects of the curriculum and staff are increasing their own information technology skills through workshops. Students are wordprocessing their work and staff are using wordprocessing consistently to prepare handouts and overhead projector materials. Full-time programmes still lack formal tutorial provision and staff do not share a clear understanding of the role of the course tutor.

Revised grade: construction 3.

**LEWISHAM COLLEGE
GREATER LONDON REGION**

Reinspection of science and mathematics: January 1996

Background

Lewisham College was inspected between November 1994 and February 1995 and the findings were recorded in college inspection report 73/95. Provision in science and mathematics was awarded a grade 4.

The main strengths were: the good relationships between teachers and students; effective teaching in some lessons; the high standard of some students' work; and appropriately qualified, knowledgeable teachers. The weaknesses included: a significant amount of ineffective teaching; poor examination results; low levels of retention; an inappropriate balance between theoretical and practical work in science; poor attendance at lessons; and employers' lack of involvement in the curriculum. In addition, the range of provision was limited, the GCSE mathematics teaching team was inadequately managed and co-ordinated, and the resources in the learning centre for science and mathematics students were not sufficient.

The science and mathematics provision was reinspected over three days in January 1996. The inspector visited 11 lessons and inspected students' written work. Meetings were held with curriculum managers, teachers and students and the inspector was given access to extensive documentation relating to the provision.

Assessment

The weaknesses identified in the earlier inspection have been addressed, although the impact of some of the staffing and structural changes will take time to be fully effective. All science and mathematics provision is now provided by a newly-created academic centre. The head of centre has been in post since 1 September 1995 and two team leaders, for mathematics and science, have been appointed. This management structure is designed to revitalise the organisation of science and mathematics courses within a co-ordinated GCE and GCSE programme. The planning of most courses has improved and all the lessons observed were graded 3 or better. Most examination results have improved over the past year but some remain below the national average for similar institutions. Retention rates remain low but new systems for reporting absences and better academic and pastoral support for students are helping to address this problem. The provision in science and mathematics remains limited. However, a GNVQ foundation programme has been introduced and discussions are taking place with higher education institutions about introducing access and degree foundation courses. The academic centre is aiming to extend its links with employers and community groups. Plans for staff development have been agreed; priorities include the achievement of assessor qualifications, improvement of teachers' information technology skills, and better planning of GNVQ programmes. Funds have been earmarked to allow teachers to update their industrial experience. Additional mathematics teachers have been appointed and this has strengthened the team responsible for GCSE mathematics. The GCSE programme has benefited from the creation of a mathematics workshop. New textbooks, computers and other equipment have been purchased to strengthen the provision in science and mathematics.

Revised grade: science and mathematics 3.

**LEYTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
GREATER LONDON REGION**

Reinspection of health and community care: January 1996

Background

Leyton Sixth Form College was inspected during January and February 1995 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 65/95. Provision in health and community care was graded 4.

The provision was judged to have significant strengths, particularly the NNEB courses, but these were outweighed by serious weaknesses in the GNVQ programme which constitutes more than 50 per cent of the programme area. The strengths included: a recently-appointed acting head of department, working hard to address issues, who had produced a significant improvement in NNEB standards since the first moderator reports; some well-planned and well-presented lessons; excellent support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; the high standard of NNEB students' written and practical work; good progression to year two of the NNEB course; and the effective work-placement programme. The weaknesses included: inadequate planning and preparation for GNVQ foundation and intermediate programmes; students' and teachers' uncertainty about the requirements of GNVQ; the poor work produced by students at both foundation and intermediate levels of GNVQ; unsatisfactory GNVQ work which was passed as adequate by teachers; and the failure to clarify selection criteria for GNVQ students.

Health and community care at Leyton Sixth Form College was reinspected by one inspector in January 1996. Eight teaching sessions were observed and there was a visit to one work placement. Meetings were held with managers, teachers and students. Course files, minutes of team meetings, and students' marked work were scrutinised.

Assessment

All the main weaknesses identified in the earlier inspection have been addressed. Lessons were well planned. Six out of eight lessons had strengths which outweighed weaknesses and no lesson was awarded less than grade 3. Staff have undertaken training for GNVQ work and this has led to the development of a strong course team. Team meetings are regular and well documented. College documentation for GNVQ programmes has been improved; it is now clear. There are schemes of work for all units. Students and teachers were able to describe the key features of GNVQ programmes and understood the methods of assessment. The work inspected was of the right level for the course and had been marked to an appropriate standard. Retention and success rates on courses leading to external qualifications are now comparable with those nationally. The GNVQ team has identified appropriate selection criteria for entry to foundation and intermediate programmes. In cases where the initial placement was not at the right level, the team has enabled students to transfer during the induction period. Further staff development is required to sustain existing developments and to support new advanced qualifications. In some schemes of work, activities, learning outcomes and assessment methods are not identified clearly enough. Teachers' written comments on students' assignments are sometimes too brief or not sufficiently constructive. Library resources should be increased and staff should continue to develop information technology skills as integral elements of the curriculum.

Revised grade: health and community care 2.

**PARK LANE COLLEGE
YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION**

**Reinspection of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:
May 1996**

Background

Park Lane College was previously inspected between December 1994 and February 1995 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 58/95. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was awarded a grade 4.

The college welcomed students with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Links with external agencies, particularly those in Europe, were strengthening some students' learning. Staff were committed to their work with the students and the support available within the college for those with visual and hearing impairments was good. However, there was no clear management strategy for responding to the large increase in the number of students enrolled in September 1994. Students and staff within the learning difficulties section were segregated from the main college provision and some of the accommodation allocated to them was of a poor standard. Few staff understood the educational implications of the complex learning difficulties of some students. Too little attention was given to the purpose of students' individual programmes and the skills and competences students needed to achieve their overall goals. In class, too much time was spent on teaching basic skills and too little on practical and vocational activities. Procedures for identifying and supporting students on 'mainstream' programmes who might experience difficulties with aspects of their work were unstructured and unco-ordinated.

The provision was reinspected on 16 and 17 May 1996. Thirteen classes were observed. There were meetings with managers, staff and students. Inspectors examined students' work and a range of college documentation.

Assessment

All the weaknesses identified in the earlier inspection have been addressed. The provision has been restructured, under the guidance of the principal, to facilitate a 'whole college' approach to the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Formal policies and procedures to underpin this approach have been developed. Pre-foundation and foundation level vocational programmes leading to nationally-recognised qualifications have been introduced. Students' individual programmes specify an overall goal and there is access to support and guidance of high quality. Teachers have high expectations of their students and the students are making sound progress. 'Real work' environments have been created where students can learn practical skills. College-wide training is beginning to raise the awareness of the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Additional training is required to further teachers' understanding of the educational implications of students' learning difficulties. Care should be taken to ensure that students' learning opportunities are exploited fully and that their progress is recorded in relation to the objectives within their individual programmes.

Revised grade: provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities 2.

**PLUMPTON COLLEGE
SOUTH EAST REGION**

Reinspection of engineering/machinery: November 1995

Background

Plumpton College was inspected in October 1994. The findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 04/95. Provision in engineering, comprising agricultural machinery courses, was awarded a grade 4.

The strengths of the provision were: the good staff/student relations; courses which were enjoyed by students; good practical instruction; regular testing of students; good access to information technology; consistent attention to health and safety; and opportunities for students to gain additional qualifications. However, strengths were outweighed by weaknesses. There was: an inappropriate range of courses to meet the needs of students and industry; poor curriculum planning; poor teaching of theory to students on machinery courses; teaching of inappropriate science and mathematics topics; and poor examination results.

Agricultural machinery courses were reinspected on 14 and 16 November 1995. Eight teaching sessions were observed. Meetings were held with the principal, the head of the machinery department, and all teachers and students in the department. Students' work was examined together with papers and documents prepared for the inspection. The library and all workshops were inspected.

Assessment

The machinery department has addressed the weaknesses identified in the earlier inspection and taken great strides forward. Action taken immediately after the earlier inspection has led to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching. Staff appraisal now includes lesson observation. Course planning has been transformed. All courses offered by the department during the college inspection have been replaced. Consultative meetings have been held with representatives of industry and a more appropriate range of courses has been developed to meet the needs of students and employers. Schemes of work, and lesson and assessment plans have been prepared for all courses. They are models of good practice. Suitable science and mathematics topics have been introduced as integral elements of course theory. Courses have been organised so that many topics are taught in appropriately furnished workshops. Equipment necessary to support learning is readily available in these workshops and is well used. Course team meetings take place regularly to a published schedule. Agenda items include course updates, planning and analysis of students' achievements. Examination pass rates have improved from 27 per cent in 1993 to 88 per cent last year. The department should continue to improve the teaching of theory and the planning of some assignments.

Revised grade: engineering/machinery 2.

PRIOR PURSGLOVE COLLEGE
NORTHERN REGION

Reinspection of other humanities: May 1996

Background

Prior Pursglove College was previously inspected between March and October 1994 and the findings recorded in college inspection report 12/95. English, history and modern languages were awarded a grade 3. Provision in other humanities comprising geography, religious studies and sociology, was awarded a grade 4.

The main strengths of the provision included: well-presented lessons which engaged and held the students' interest; a variety of appropriate tasks for the students; and good resources. The weaknesses which the college was required to address were: the failure to ensure that students fully understood the structure of their courses and how their work was assessed; the poor quality of some of the feedback which students received about the quality of their work; the failure to ensure that the teaching and learning of the same subject to different classes was consistently effective; the low level of some students' achievements; and GCE A level results which were below the national averages for sixth form colleges.

The reinspection of geography, religious studies and sociology took place between 7 and 9 May 1996. Nine lessons were inspected. Meetings were held with students, subject teachers and senior staff. Inspectors examined students' work, statistical data and a range of documents.

Assessment

The college has made progress towards meeting its targets for improvement. All students now receive a copy of the syllabus for the subjects they are taking. They have also been given a 'year plan' showing how their syllabus is to be implemented. They are provided with detailed information on assessment methods. Students confirmed that they fully understand how their work is assessed and that they use the 'year plan' in organising their work and recording their progress. The curriculum area is now subject to new leadership and is better managed. Teaching and assessment practices are more consistently effective. Regular curriculum and subject reviews have led to staff working more closely together. Teachers have designed assessment forms upon which they provide students with detailed information on the quality of their work. Staff meet regularly to discuss and set targets for standards and quality which are in line with those contained in the college's strategic plan. The college needs to address the following issues: students' achievements in these subjects at GCE A level and in the GCSE are below the national averages for sixth form colleges; the proportion of students who attain grades A to C at GCE A level is comparatively low; and the decline in GCSE grades obtained by students over the past three years.

Revised grade: other humanities 3.

**RYCOTEWOOD COLLEGE
SOUTH EAST REGION**

Reinspection of fine craftsmanship and design: February 1996

Background

Rycotewood College was inspected between October and November 1994 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 22/95. Provision in fine craftsmanship and design was awarded a grade 4.

The weaknesses clearly outweighed the strengths. The staff were committed and caring and enjoyed a good rapport with their students. Students' achievements were good. However, the quality of teaching was poor. In some cases; there was insufficient attention to basic design principles and skills in students' learning, and to health and safety issues; assessment was inconsistent and there was not enough use of information technology.

Two inspectors visited the college on 15 and 16 February 1996 to reinspect fine craftsmanship and design. They observed 18 classes, spoke with staff and students and examined students' work: folios, files, examples of practical work in progress and finished products.

Assessment

The college has made progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Staff development sessions on teaching and learning strategies have begun to show their effectiveness in the improved quality of teaching. Observational and life drawing skills have developed strongly in some courses. In other courses, a sound design basis now supports the development of refined practical work. Many students develop effective practical, craft and restoration skills and produce good finished artefacts. The curriculum is now supported by improved information technology facilities. Thorough attention is given to health and safety issues as part of the learning experience. The lighting and cleanliness of much of the accommodation has improved: the quality of the learning environment is better. There are now college-wide assessment procedures which provide opportunities for students and staff to contribute. Both full-time and part-time staff show a continuing high level of commitment to course development and to the welfare and progress of students. Students continue to achieve high standards in external examinations. However, there are still some programmes which fail to provide sufficient intellectual challenge for students. Some staff show a lack of appreciation of fundamental art and design principles, media handling and visual skills and of their place in the process of the production of high-quality finished articles. Assessment forms are incomplete in a substantial number of cases, so that students are poorly informed about their progress. There are still some overcrowded, dirty, poorly-furnished and poorly-decorated teaching rooms which adversely affect the quality of the work that can be done.

Revised grade: fine craftsmanship and design 3.

**SOUTH BIRMINGHAM COLLEGE
WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

Reinspection of hairdressing: January 1996

Background

The college was previously inspected between March and November 1994 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 14/95. Provision in hairdressing was awarded a grade 4.

The main strengths of the provision were: the strong team of staff; the development of modular programmes to create flexibility in methods of learning and patterns of study; the increasing use of learning packs; effective deployment of resources; good guidance and support for students; students' understanding of their subjects and competence in practical work; and regular and systematic assessments. However, there were substantial weaknesses. A lack of professional standards, practices and discipline was exacerbated by the failure to attract enough clients to the salons to make them realistic working environments. Students were not always pressed to achieve the learning outcomes of which they were capable. Core skills were underdeveloped; second-year students had no experience of using information technology. Work experience was not an integral part of the students' college programme and not enough opportunities were created for students to work in the laundry, dispensary and reception areas. In some classes, attendance was low and on some courses there had been a high proportion of withdrawals. NVQ outcomes were not being achieved at an appropriate pace and the procedures for recording and monitoring students' achievements were not always effective. There were not enough practical rooms and the classrooms used for teaching theory were often of poor quality.

Hairdressing provision at South Birmingham College was reinspected on 17, 18 and 19 January 1996. Twelve classes were inspected, meetings were held with staff and students. Departmental documentation and students' work were scrutinised.

Assessment

Most of the weaknesses identified in the original inspection of the college have been addressed. A well-equipped curriculum resource centre supports students in developing their core skills. Teaching standards have improved, and practical sessions are run to a professional standard. Students have opportunities to play a key role in the day-to-day running of salons and the dispensary. Levels of attendance and retention rates have improved, although problems remain on some courses. The number of clients has increased. Staff have developed a new system for tracking students' progress which enables them to update their records on a continuous basis. The layout and appearance of the salons and the new reception area give a strong corporate and professional image. Issues for attention include: the lack of information technology in the early stages of the course; a drop in the levels of achievements of second-year students; the need for improved evaluation and analysis, including the use of quantifiable performance indicators in the management of the section; management training for key staff; and the need for increased dialogue with employers.

Revised grade: hairdressing 2.

**STOCKTON AND BILLINGHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION
NORTHERN REGION**

Reinspection of humanities: November 1995

Background

The humanities curriculum area was inspected in January 1994 as part of the college's quadrennial inspection and the findings recorded in inspection report 77/94. The provision was judged to have weaknesses which clearly outweighed strengths and was graded 4.

The strengths were: the generally competent teaching; conscientious and committed staff; good staff-student relationships; and an appropriate portfolio of courses. The weaknesses were: students' lack of motivation; the, at best, moderate levels of student achievement; inadequate accommodation and resources; poor staff morale; deficiencies in the deployment of staff; poor initial guidance and variable standards of tutorial support; poor retention rates; and inadequate quality assurance systems.

The reinspection in November 1995 covered the same subjects (English, sociology, psychology and history) as in the original inspection but the scope of the reinspection was widened to include law and teacher education and the access courses were inspected in more detail. Inspectors spent three days in the college. They visited 10 lessons, examined students' coursework, and looked at college documentation including data relating to retention, attendance and examination performance.

Assessment

The college has made considerable progress in meeting the targets for improvement set after the original inspection. In particular, improvements in accommodation and resources have had a beneficial effect on student and staff morale and on the quality of the learning environment. Students are more attentive in class and are performing better in some of the public examinations taken. They are receiving better initial guidance as well as better on-course support. Staff-development activities have further improved the quality of teaching. There has been a notable improvement in the operation of quality systems, including the introduction of an effective procedure for curriculum review documents. The college has addressed all the areas drawn to its attention in the 1994 inspection, but there is scope for: further improvement of retention rates on GCSE and GCE A level courses and in examination performance; better monitoring and recording of data relating to students' achievement and retention rates; and analysis of the value added to students' achievements by comparing their actual performance with predicted performance based on their level of achievement on entry to the college.

Revised grade: humanities 3.

**WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE
GREATER LONDON REGION**

Reinspection of English and other humanities: January 1996

Background

Waltham Forest College was inspected between September 1994 and March 1995 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 86/95. Provision in English and other humanities was judged to have weaknesses which clearly outweighed strengths and was awarded a grade 4.

Some work was well designed and delivered and there were good initiatives to improve students' achievements through additional support in English and core skills. In many classes, however, teachers failed to motivate students and there were ineffective strategies to cater for GCSE students with differing levels of ability. There was no overall co-ordination of English and thus no planned development of learning methods, resources or subject-specific quality assurance. Examination results were well below national averages for GCSE and GCE A level English. Attendance at many classes was poor.

The English and other humanities provision at Waltham Forest College was reinspected over three days in January 1996. Particular attention was given to English. Ten classes were observed, involving all the teachers in the curriculum area. Students' written work was examined and discussions were held with students, teachers and staff.

Assessment

The college has made substantial progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the earlier inspection. Many of the teachers are new. A new post of associate school manager has been created with a remit to improve the quality of the English provision. Significant improvements to the co-ordination and management of the curriculum area have already occurred. The GCE A level syllabus for full-time students has been changed to one deemed better suited to their needs and interests. Some of the teaching seen during the reinspection was good. Lessons were well prepared and well structured. Good handouts were used where appropriate. Students were responsive and enthusiastic. Two of the lessons were graded 1; eight were graded 2. Attendance has improved but there remain unsatisfactory levels of retention which the college should continue to address. Examination results at GCE A level have improved. Those for GCSE are still below average for the sector. Tighter entry criteria are to be introduced. The college should consider developing a subject policy statement for English covering subject-specific aims and objectives, general skills, the use of learning resources and the sharing of good practice in teaching and the promotion of learning, including the production of course materials.

Revised grade: English and other humanities 3.

**WEST CUMBRIA COLLEGE
NORTH WEST REGION**

Reinspection of mathematics and computing: December 1995

Background

West Cumbria College was previously inspected during September and November 1994 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 30/95. Provision in mathematics and computing was graded 4.

The main strengths were: the 50 per cent of teaching sessions in which strengths clearly outweighed weaknesses; appropriately-qualified staff; a wide range of provision in computing; computing students' easy access to a range of hardware and software. The main weaknesses were: inadequate information about enrolments, retention rates and pass rates on many courses; poor examination pass rates for several courses; ineffective marketing and the lack of a strategy to achieve the growth predicted in the development plan; a restricted range of courses in mathematics; a lack of effective leadership and course management particularly in mathematics; and inadequate arrangements for monitoring and reviewing courses in mathematics.

Mathematics and computing provision at West Cumbria College was reinspected by two inspectors on 12, 13 and 14 December 1995. They visited 15 classes, held meetings with staff and students, examined students' work and scrutinised documentation including the college's plan to address issues identified in the earlier inspection.

Assessment

The college has made significant progress towards meeting its targets for improvement. Provision is better managed. Course files contain data relating to enrolments, retention rates, success rates and destinations of students. There is now a senior lecturer who has responsibility for managing mathematics. Teachers of mathematics are beginning to work effectively as a team with a common purpose. The introduction of mathematics learning centres and the wider range of mathematics courses together provide a flexibility which better meets the varying needs of students. Procedures for reviewing GCE A level and GCSE mathematics courses are in place but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. Computing students have easy access to a good range of up-to-date hardware and industry-standard software but there are no computers with appropriate mathematical software in the mathematics learning centres. In both subjects, the range of methods of teaching and learning is too narrow. Records of students' progress lack detail: there is not enough information about completed tasks and there are few targets to aim for, particularly for students who use the mathematics learning centres. Examination results and retention rates are variable partly because of the small numbers completing some courses. The college should speed up the implementation of its plans to improve recruitment.

Revised grade: mathematics and computing 3.

WESTON COLLEGE
SOUTH WEST REGION

Reinspection of science and mathematics: November 1995

Background

Weston College was previously inspected between May and October 1994 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 81/94. The provision in science and mathematics was awarded a grade 4.

The strengths included: the generally good relations between staff and students; some good examination results in GCE A level mathematics and life sciences; good levels of technician support; and, in some instances, accommodation which had been refurbished to a high standard. Weaknesses included the wide variations in the effectiveness of teaching and learning and inconsistencies in the marking of students' work. There were not enough full-time teachers of chemistry and mathematics. Students had poor examination results in GCE A level physics, chemistry and most GCSE subjects and retention rates were low in several subjects. The timetable limited the effectiveness of tutorial support. Much of the accommodation was basic and there was limited use of display. There was a lack of consistent good practice in health and safety matters.

The provision was reinspected over four days in November 1995. Fourteen teaching sessions and three individual tutorials were observed. Students' marked work and files were scrutinised. Meetings were held with managers, staff, students and parents.

Assessment

The college has made significant progress in addressing the weaknesses identified during the earlier inspection. This has taken place in the context of substantial improvements to the quality of governance and management, which at the time of the reinspection was judged to have strengths clearly outweighing the weaknesses. There are now well-planned tutorial arrangements for all full-time students and some part-time students. The quality of teaching and learning has improved; the majority of the sessions observed had strengths which outweighed weaknesses. Effective teaching methods have been adopted and teachers use a wide range of teaching aids. Students receive regular assignments to complete in class and for homework. These are marked and returned promptly, often with helpful written comments. Students' work is carefully reviewed in class. Teachers and students carry out practical exercises competently and with due regard to safety. Examination results remain good in GCE A level biology and mathematics and for the BTEC national certificate in environmental health. Pass rates have improved in other GCE A level subjects and the proportion of students achieving grades A to C has improved in all GCSE subjects. Retention rates remain low in many subjects. Most of the teaching is now carried out by full-time teachers. Visiting lecturers make a valuable contribution to vocational courses. The college is making substantial improvements to the accommodation. The recently-refurbished learning workshops provide high-quality facilities for students.

Revised grade: science and mathematics 3.

WESTON COLLEGE
SOUTH WEST REGION

Reinspection of hairdressing and beauty therapy: December 1995

Background

Weston College was originally inspected between May and October 1994 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in inspection report 81/94. The provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy was awarded a grade 4.

The strengths included a well-managed and appropriately-qualified team of staff providing strong support and guidance for students. Some strengths were identified in the teaching of theory although teachers used a narrow range of teaching methods. Monitoring of students' progress was inadequate in many cases, and formal reviews and evaluations of the programmes were limited in scope. There were not enough clients to provide students with realistic opportunities in their practical work and the salons were not designed to industry standards. Few students were progressing to employment in hairdressing.

The provision was reinspected in December 1995. One inspector spent three days in the college and observed 13 classes including practical sessions. Meetings were held with college managers, staff and students.

Assessment

Substantial and largely successful efforts have been made to address the weaknesses identified during the earlier inspection. These have taken place in the context of substantial improvements to the quality of governance and management, which at the time of the reinspection was judged to have strengths clearly outweighing the weaknesses. The college has marketed its hairdressing and beauty therapy facilities well. The number and range of clients using the hair and beauty services has increased significantly to an acceptable level. Students now work at a pace appropriate for commercial practice, and benefit from a wider range of opportunities to use their skills. There are now regular meetings of course teams to monitor students' progress and achievement. Most students have action plans for learning and meet periodically with their tutor to review these plans. An analysis of students' destinations shows that a satisfactory number are entering employment in hairdressing or beauty therapy. There are significant improvements in the physical resources available for this work. The beauty salon has been enlarged, the reception area improved and the hairdressing salon has been redesigned and re-equipped to a good standard. The new reception area facilitates the organisation of all services in a commercial and realistic manner. The college should continue to develop opportunities for students to acquire core skills, to use information technology and to make more use of the facilities available to them in the learning resources centre. Part-time staff require training to obtain their TDLB qualifications.

Revised grade: hairdressing and beauty therapy 2.

WESTON COLLEGE
SOUTH WEST REGION

Reinspection of social sciences: December 1995

Background

Weston College was previously inspected between May and October 1994 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 81/94. The social sciences provision was awarded a grade 4.

The strengths included a good range of opportunities for adult students, particularly on the mature adult programme. Teachers were capable and committed to their work and there were good relationships between students and teachers. Teaching was generally satisfactory and students performed well in class. Weaknesses included the poor levels of retention and generally poor examination results. Limited resources at the annexe restricted the range of teaching strategies used. The combination of students of different ages, abilities and modes of attendance in the same groups created difficulties which teachers found hard to manage effectively. Induction was not co-ordinated and tutorial support was not properly managed.

The provision was reinspected in December 1995. One inspector spent three days in the college. Nine sessions were observed and students' work was scrutinised. Meetings were held with managers, tutors, teaching and support staff and students. The documentation examined included the minutes of various meetings.

Assessment

There have been some improvements in the social sciences provision at the college. Many of the weaknesses identified during the earlier inspection are being addressed. This has taken place in the context of substantial improvements to the quality of governance and management, which at the time of the reinspection was judged to have strengths clearly outweighing the weaknesses. Social science teaching has been moved from an annexe to the main site. All full-time students have a personal tutor and follow an agreed tutorial programme to which counsellors, careers advisors and learning support tutors contribute. The quality of teaching and learning has improved; some very effective sessions were observed. Retention rates are more carefully monitored and in the case of some courses they have significantly improved. On some courses, retention rates remain low. A more systematic tutorial provision has been introduced. Students' attendance is now carefully monitored and absences are investigated systematically. Despite this, attendance during the reinspection was still rather low. Teaching and learning aids are available and are used, and classroom display has improved. Pass rates in public examinations are variable, but are generally at or slightly above the average for general further education colleges.

Revised grade: social sciences 3.

WESTON COLLEGE
SOUTH WEST REGION

Reinspection of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:
December 1995

Background

Weston College was previously inspected between May and October 1994 and the findings of the inspection were recorded in college inspection report 81/94. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was awarded a grade 4.

The strengths of the provision included the hard work and commitment of staff and a tutorial system which provided good support for individual students. Levels of staffing were satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, the college acknowledged some of the weaknesses of provision and had plans to redesign some courses and restructure management arrangements. Inspectors commented, in particular, on the poor course documentation, underdeveloped schemes of work and the lack of readily available evidence of students' progress. There was a limited range of teaching methods and students were undertaking some inappropriate written work. Classroom support workers were not well used and many teaching rooms provided a barren environment. The adult provision was not coherently planned.

The provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was reinspected over three days in December 1995. Thirteen sessions were observed. Discussions were held with the management team, staff and students. Students' work and documentation provided by the college was also examined.

Assessment

There has been significant progress towards addressing the weaknesses previously identified. This has taken place in the context of substantial improvements to the quality of governance and management, which at the time of the reinspection was judged to have strengths clearly outweighing the weaknesses. Provision has been reorganised and responsibility for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities now rests with the newly-created department of integrated studies, whose head attends college management team meetings. There are regular team meetings. Eleven quality standards have been set and are being used to monitor and evaluate developments. Teaching programmes have been improved by the introduction of a new curriculum model to reflect local employment opportunities and by the inclusion of well-structured work experience. Foundation level GNVQ and NVQ options give students on specially-designed courses better opportunities for progression. Students produce an action plan which identifies their individual learning goals. Progress is recorded and reviewed during regular tutorials. Classroom support staff now attend staff meetings and are provided with action plans by teachers to enable them to give more effective support to students. Classrooms and general facilities have been significantly improved. A staff development programme is required to enable mainstream teachers to develop the skills necessary for teaching these students. The college should proceed with its plans to achieve accreditation for its provision for adults with learning difficulties. The use of records of achievement should be clarified and liaison with external agencies over students' progression should be improved.

Revised grade: provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities 3.

**WOOLWICH COLLEGE
GREATER LONDON REGION**

**Reinspection of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:
February 1996**

Background

Woolwich College was previously inspected between August 1994 and January 1995 and the findings set out in college report 44/95. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was graded 4.

The main strengths of the provision included the commitment of staff, good relationships with schools and other agencies, good relationships between staff and students, and some effective lessons. A new co-ordinator and manager for the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had been appointed but was not in post. Registration for external accreditation was under way. The major weaknesses were that staff were not managed effectively, that much of the teaching and learning was unsatisfactory, and that the planning and evaluation of courses was poor. Guidelines for policy and its implementation were out of date. Courses did not have clear aims; there were no schemes of work to link elements of programmes and activities were consequently unrelated. Individual learning programmes were underdeveloped. There were limited procedures for the systematic assessment and recording of students' progress and achievement.

The provision was reinspected on 8 and 9 February 1996. Thirteen teaching sessions were observed, meetings were held with appropriate managers, staff and students, and documentation provided by the college was scrutinised.

Assessment

Considerable improvements have resulted from the work of the co-ordinator and her new team, supported by the senior management. Provision has been redesigned, and is now effectively managed. There is an appropriate curriculum framework which ensures that students' programmes are coherent. The quality of teaching has improved and students' level of achievement has risen. The number of students progressing from the Pathways course to other courses, such as NVQ level 1 motor vehicle engineering or business studies, has increased. Vocational options within the Pathways course which are based on the requirements of GNVQ foundation and NVQ level 1 programmes, and which are taught by teachers who are vocational specialists, have helped to strengthen provision. The productive use of members of the learning support team, which means that there are two teachers in some sessions, has helped in the development of basic skills. Learning support staff also help students who have moved from the Pathways course to other courses. In the sessions observed, the content of the work was relevant; students worked individually or in pairs on different tasks, each following their own goals. Students' involvement in course team meetings is unusual and effective. It helps them to develop their social skills. Individual learning programmes for students are still at an early stage of development. In some lessons, teachers attempt to teach through reading and writing when students cannot read and write effectively. There is too little use of information technology. Some teachers have low expectations of students' behaviour.

Revised grade: provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities 2.

GLOSSARY

BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
C&G	City and Guilds of London Institute
CD-ROM	compact disk read-only memory database
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCE A level	General Certificate of Education advanced level
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
NNEB	National Nursery Examinations Board
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
TDLB	Training and Development Lead Body

Published by the
Further Education Funding Council
September 1996