

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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**The  
Bournemouth  
and Poole  
College of  
Further  
Education**

**August 1994**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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## **THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL**

*The Further Education Funding Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are satisfactory arrangements to assess the quality of provision in the further education sector in England. It discharges the duty in part through its inspectorate, which inspects and reports on each college in the sector every four years. The Council's inspectorate also assesses and reports on a national basis on specific curriculum areas and advises the Council's quality assessment committee.*

*College inspections involve both full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have specialist knowledge and experience in the areas they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member from outside the world of education and a nominated member of staff from the college being inspected.*

### **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

*The procedures for assessing quality are described in the Council Circular 93/28. In the course of inspecting colleges, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also summarise their judgements on the balance between strengths and weaknesses using a five-point scale. 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.*

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 66/94

## THE BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION SOUTH WEST REGION

Inspected September 1993 - April 1994

### Summary

The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education is a well-governed and well-managed institution. The organisational structure and the style of decision-making involves considerable delegation to departments, enabling them to respond effectively to the educational and training needs of the college's local, regional and international markets. The college is responsive to its community and offers a diverse range of provision including its services to business. The learning resource centres are of outstanding quality. The recently implemented quality assurance process has considerable potential for systematic quality improvement. There is a productive relationship with the Dorset Training and Enterprise Council. The college has a strong commitment to equal opportunities including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of teaching is generally good. Other strengths include the management of the sites, plant and equipment. Areas to be reviewed include the level of student counselling and the links between learner support services and the teaching departments. Attention should also be given to increasing the number of study spaces at Constitution Hill, better wheelchair access to some centres, and the need to refurbish and replace equipment in a few areas. Other areas for improvement include the examination results and attendance figures in some subjects.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision		Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision		1
Governance and management		1
Students' recruitment, guidance and support		2
Quality assurance		2
Resources:	staffing	2
	equipment/learning resources	1
	accommodation	2

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Computing and information technology	2	Hairdressing, floristry and beauty therapy	2
Science and mathematics	3	Social, health and child care	2
Construction	2	Creative and performing arts	2
Engineering	2	Humanities and languages	2
		Social sciences	2
Business administration	2	Adult and community education	2
Business and management	3	Foundation courses	2
Catering, tourism and hotel operations	2	Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Twenty inspectors visited The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education for 120 inspector days between 7 September 1993 and 29 April 1994. They inspected aspects of cross-college provision and all 15 of the college's curriculum areas. Inspectors observed 358 learning sessions and examined samples of students' written and practical work. Discussions were held with staff, students, parents, college governors and representatives from schools, industry, the local community and the Dorset Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

2 The inspection was carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines set out in the Council Circular 93/28. The framework describes a four-year inspection cycle. When this cycle becomes fully established, colleges will have the opportunity to respond to the findings of earlier inspection visits before their quadrennial inspection and subsequent published report. As this inspection occurred early in the cycle, the opportunity for such a response was not available.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

3 The college originated in the second half of the nineteenth century in a wide range of publicly and privately organised day and evening classes. In 1974, when local government was reorganised, Bournemouth College of Technology and Poole Technical College were brought together by Dorset County Council to form the unified college of further education.

4 The college is located on seven sites in Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch, including the administrative centre at North Road, Poole, and a second main site at the Landsdowne, Bournemouth.

5 There are 955 staff employed by the college, 407 of whom are part-time, giving a total of 732 full-time equivalents. There are 385 full-time equivalent teaching staff including senior managers. Staff expressed as full-time equivalents are shown in figure 1.

6 At the time of the inspection, enrolments totalled 5,442 full-time equivalents. Percentage enrolments by age are shown in figure 2. Overseas students make up approximately 1 per cent of the student population. Full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3 and percentage enrolments by level of study in figure 4. The college is one of the 20 largest in the further education sector.

7 The college offers a diverse range of further education courses, some higher education franchise work with Bournemouth University, and school link courses.

8 The catchment area contains a wide variety of schools including grammar, secondary modern and independent schools, many of which have sixth forms. In addition, there are nine special schools and several other private providers.

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9 The nearest further education providers are Brockenhurst College, 15 miles to the east, Salisbury College, 23 miles to the north, Weymouth College, 29 miles to the west and Kingston Maurward College, at Dorchester, 27 miles away.

10 Dorset has a population of approximately 660,000, and almost two-thirds live in the urban area centred upon Bournemouth and Poole. By contrast, large parts of north and west Dorset are rural, with scattered populations. The county has traditionally been prosperous, and unemployment during the 1980s was consistently below the national average. However, Dorset suffered badly in the latest recession and in 1993, unemployment reached 11 per cent and exceeded the national average figure. The area is well known for its tourism, hospitality and recreation provision. There is also considerable manufacturing activity and a number of banks, building societies and other providers of financial services have major bases in the Bournemouth area.

11 The overall college mission is set out in its strategic plan: 'to provide further education and training across the widest possible range, to meet the needs of the community in south-east Dorset ... and through high quality and efficient service, it aims to contribute to the well being, prosperity and quality of life of the maximum number of people in the Dorset area'.

#### **RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION**

12 The college provides a wide range of academic, vocational and foundation programmes including some for young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college offers 43 General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses, two advanced supplementary (A/S) courses and 18 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses. Six General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses have been offered since September 1993. Other programmes include: the college's Dorset Skills Training Unit, set up to manage the delivery of government sponsored training programmes; the international operations unit set up in April 1992 to exploit world market opportunities in training and related services; the college's centre for management development which offers management training to the community; and the services to business unit which provides a wide range of courses and services for businesses. Considerable investment has been made to develop income generating work and it has increased significantly in the last four years.

13 There are many opportunities for students to attend the college at times most convenient to themselves. For example, at the business skills centre at the Lansdowne students can book blocks of time on demand. There is also a policy which enables a student's prior experience or learning to be accredited. This policy is being implemented in business studies, construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy.

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14 With support from Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) funds the college has achieved considerable success in defining and implementing the areas of learning to which all students are entitled. These include European studies, information technology and the recording of achievement. In addition, there are opportunities for students to re-take GCSE English and mathematics. The south-west Training Enterprise and Education Division of the Department of Employment has asked the college to publish an account of this work as a model of good practice.

15 The college has built on long-established links with Europe to provide opportunities to students from all departments for exchange visits and work experience. For example, 51 catering students will be working in four European countries this year, and engineering students have work experience arranged in France.

16 Although the college has few facilities for students to take part in leisure and recreational activities, the towns of Bournemouth and Poole have many and the students' union encourages participation. The college's Jellicoe Theatre and St Andrews Hall provide opportunities for students to perform and enjoy theatrical and musical events.

17 The college has a commitment to provide courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, The Pathway Centre, created in 1988 currently offers four programmes for 65 full-time students, including provision for adults, and a further programme for 100 part-time adult students with severe learning difficulties. The Dorset Skills Training Unit supports approximately 120 trainees with learning difficulties. College staff also work within the community to provide programmes for students with mental health problems and for students with severe physical difficulties. Effective collaboration with the local education authority, social services and the TEC enables much of this provision to be in place.

18 The college is keen to extend its collaborative work with the 26 local schools. In 1992-93, the percentage of 16 year old school leavers continuing in full-time education was approximately 77 per cent. Approximately 45 per cent of these are enrolled at the college. The effectiveness of school links is influenced markedly by the competitive market for post-16 students in Dorset. The college has franchise arrangements with two local schools for GNVQ Intermediate courses in leisure and tourism. Further work is taking place with another school on the accreditation of core skills achieved at Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum, for example in numeracy, literacy and information technology. Approximately 350 seventeen year old students (year 12) from local schools attend college one day per week to achieve parts of the vocational GNVQ and Diploma of Vocational Education qualifications. The range of schools liaison activities includes talks to 15 and 16 year old pupils (years 10 and 11) in 16 out of the 26 schools and information evenings held at the college for all potential students. Other activities, for example shadowing of students during half-term, vocational sampling for 14 year old pupils and

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visits to local youth clubs, are also dependent upon the college being accepted into schools.

19 Many adult learners attend the college. Courses designed for adults include access courses to enable them to enter higher education, teaching certificates and short courses in technology and secretarial skills, counselling and guidance and a women back to business course. Adults also join many of the vocational courses and there are large numbers in business studies, hairdressing and floristry and beauty therapy. The centre for management development offers an impressive range of courses with a variety of different ways of attending.

20 The college franchises a number of courses as an associate centre of Bournemouth University. Five teaching departments are involved in teaching the first year of six degree courses, one Higher National Diploma (HND) and three Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses. Relations with the University are good and it is satisfied with the quality of the service provided by the college.

21 The leisure, recreation and basic education provision for adults in the area is provided by the Dorset Adult Education Service which also provides a significant number of examination courses. Currently there is no formal mechanism for joint planning or marketing to promote opportunities for students to progress to courses in the college. In the light of these local arrangements the college should review its own strategy for adult learners.

22 The college has developed a productive relationship with the local TEC. The TEC has contracted with the college for the delivery of government-sponsored training programmes for young people and adults. Other contracts include the Gateway assessment and guidance project. Both of these projects are managed by the Dorset Skills Training Unit and approximately 500 employers are now working with the college, making it the second largest training provider in Dorset.

23 The college has a positive image in the local community. Employers, governors and parents commented favourably, though some indicated that they would like to see the college have a higher profile in the media. Relations with local employers are good. The college is well-regarded as a training provider and local companies are willing to employ students who have been trained there. However, some employers are not aware of the full range of the college's work and there is no formal monitoring of employers' perceptions.

24 In a comprehensive survey the college has identified local economic trends and labour market needs. This has already been translated into new courses and a broad range of marketing strategies. Departments market their own courses and two of the seven departments have recruited marketing managers to reflect this priority.

25 The international operations unit has proved very successful in its two years of operation, achieving a three-fold increase in overseas students and the establishment of new and potential contracts in many parts of the

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world. Business has been established with 20 countries; work includes vocational and academic courses, consultancy projects for overseas governments and companies, and the approval of overseas centres for examination awards.

26 The college has an impressive record of developing and promoting equal opportunities. Support and guidance is provided for staff and students through the harassment code of practice, and the guide to curriculum resources. The equal opportunities unit offers a contact point for staff and students as well as a valuable resource base. The college's publicity materials reflect the commitment to equal opportunities and work is currently being undertaken to analyse data in relation to enrolments and achievements.

27 Staff are well-informed about trends and issues in the further education sector and the government's aims and policies, including the national targets for education and training. This level of awareness is reflected in the response by staff to curriculum developments and in their participation as college representatives on national committees.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

28 The corporation has 16 members, of whom nine represent local business, including a nominated representative of the TEC, and two represent the wider community. In addition, there is a nominated member from the Poole Trades Council, two staff members, a student representative and the principal. While this membership represents many local interests, there is no representation from the large school population in the community or from the substantial higher education presence in the area.

29 Board members regard their role as establishing and monitoring policy. They have properly delegated management powers to the principal, with whom there is a close and supportive relationship. Members are kept well informed about the college's work through concise reports. Board agendas and discussions focus on resource issues and an annual report regarding student performance is discussed. Training events introduce members to various aspects of college life.

30 There is an appropriate range of board subcommittees including finance and general purposes, estate, audit, and remuneration, which make good use of members' professional knowledge and skills. The board and its committees benefit from thorough administrative support. Meetings are well recorded and documentation is complete.

31 The college is well managed. The principal, three vice-principals and the director of personnel and administration make up the college executive. They are a strong team with a clear vision and they provide effective leadership. The overlap in their roles and responsibilities enables them to adopt a corporate approach in deciding the strategies and direction to be pursued. The college executive together with the seven heads of teaching departments and the four heads of cross-college service

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departments form the college management team. The college management team discusses the implications of proposed strategies for each department. A well-structured planning cycle enables these strategies to be translated into working documents. There is evidence throughout the college of a strong ethos of team working and possible tensions between service and teaching departments are resolved in an effective manner.

32 The strategic plan is supported by detailed operational plans for all departments. These contain detailed targets including unit costs. Progress towards these targets is reported by each department through their educational audit report. Audit reports, however, do not always stipulate the action to be taken when targets are not met.

33 Budgets for teaching and service departments are based on departments' operational plans and are delegated to cost centres. Cost centre managers are regularly provided with budgetary information. This high degree of delegation provides a level of flexibility which encourages initiative and imagination at departmental level.

34 One of the strengths of the college management process is the link with quality assurance through the setting and monitoring of targets for an increasingly large number of college functions.

35 The systems for financial and management planning receive good support from the central management information systems. Reports are provided regularly for heads of department, some of whom use the computer network on a daily basis. The student record system is limited in scope but reasonably effective. At present the management information system is not used to process applications, develop timetables or provide support for examination procedures. The quality of data in the system relies on notification by staff of student progress, and this can vary in amount and quality. The response to individual requests for information from support staff operating the system is good.

36 The college management team has set the improvement of retention and qualification achievement rates as priority targets during 1994-95. Data on student destinations are collected partly by questionnaires and partly by telephone and postal enquiries. The college has had limited success in collecting responses from students.

#### **STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

37 The college's central student services department has a significant role in guidance and support. It is advised by the student services sub-committee of the academic board. It is well-managed, and its documentation and record keeping are of a high standard.

38 Teaching departments are responsible for the management of student selection, but preliminary guidance interviews are provided for both adult students and school leavers through student services. This service is appreciated by students. Two information evenings are organised for

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adults in the summer term. Course applications are received centrally, entered on computer and then sent to departments for the interview/selection process. While this provides direct contact between courses and students at an early stage, it makes monitoring of course offers and students' acceptances difficult. The college plans to move to a more centralised system, in which departmental staff will be seconded to a central admissions team.

39 Publicity material is generally easy to understand, and the prospectus for full-time students is appreciated by students, parents and schools. Course leaflets are variable in format and style. While there is general satisfaction with the information received before entry, students would like more information about course organisation and timetabling, workload and teaching methods.

40 Enrolment arrangements are generally working well and there is evidence of improvement over previous years. Induction is the responsibility of departments and is well supported by student services staff. The learning resources centres provide induction exercises for different ability levels. There has been a recent decision to move to a common pattern of induction across the college for GNVQ courses.

41 All full-time students have a personal tutor, and one hour is allocated for tutorial time each week. A handbook of guidance has been produced by student services staff, who also provide support to the tutorial system. Apart from these common elements, the rest of the tutorial time is generally determined by course needs. As the year progresses, group tutorials often give way to individual tutorials, or the time is used for course teaching. Students spoke appreciatively of the care and support given by tutors and teaching staff. However, the way tutors monitor students' attendance and use tutorials should be reviewed. Tutorial support for part-time students is variable in quality. Adult students receive effective tutorial support on courses planned specifically for them.

42 The college policy for records of achievement, which students bring from their school, is that they should be used at interview and added to during the college course. This is not always achieved, but it is being monitored and reviewed.

43 The college has recently established a team to develop a cross-college system of support for learners. There are opportunities for students to identify support needs at entry and all full-time students up to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) intermediate level undertake screening exercises. The college should ensure that the departments and the learner support unit are working together to provide a coherent system for identifying and supporting students' learning needs.

44 Careers advisers from the Dorset Careers Service are well regarded by students. The level of support is good and the college values this service. The appointment of a college careers adviser will assist co-ordination.

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45 Counselling is provided by a full-time counsellor with part-time support. The counsellor also deals with welfare and financial advice, and manages a fund to support students with financial difficulties. The level of staffing is unsatisfactory. Urgent requests are dealt with immediately, but for appointments there is a waiting time of up to five or six weeks at peak times of the year. Two nurses provide an extensive range of services including health education, health advice and a first aid service, using a rota of trained support staff. A full-time international student co-ordinator provides pastoral care and welfare for students from overseas.

46 A student liaison officer has been in post since September 1993 with the brief to offer advice and guidance to the students' union and students' council and to increase the range of student union activities. He also works with individual students and liaises with staff, where appropriate, on their behalf.

47 Facilities for students are generally of a good standard with the exception of sports and recreation. Opening hours for the learning resources centres are satisfactory and the extension of Saturday opening from September 1994, will be an improvement.

48 Students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities through the student handbook and at induction. All full-time and some part-time students are required to enter into a student agreement with the college, designed to help them to understand their entitlement and obligations. Student satisfaction surveys provide them with the opportunity to comment on the college and the courses. The 1993-94 survey, for instance, showed that students were, in general, satisfied by the service provided by the college. Two recently-formed students' councils, one at Bournemouth and one at Poole, consisting of students as well as staff, enable cross-college issues to be raised and discussed.

#### **TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING**

49 The strengths of the work inspected outweighed the weaknesses in the majority of classes. In less than 10 per cent of the classes observed the weaknesses outweighed the strengths.

The following table shows the grades awarded:

##### **Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study**

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
GCE A/AS		16	31	25	12	0	84
GCSE		1	18	15	2	1	37
GNVQ		2	9	5	3	0	19
NVQ		3	19	16	3	0	41
Other vocational		32	71	61	10	3	177
<b>Total</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>358</b>

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50 Overall, teaching programmes at the college are coherent and well planned. In the best practice, these are translated into thorough, well-produced course handbooks, which include syllabuses and assessment criteria which are shared with students. In general, at the individual class level, aims and objectives are identified in detail and shared with students though this is not the case in some subjects, for example, in some areas of languages and business studies. In GCE A level classes there were relevant and purposeful approaches to the teaching of the syllabus content, which emphasised the use of topical materials and a range of sources.

51 Across the departments teachers employed a wide range of teaching and learning strategies. There was some challenging and enthusiastic teaching which used high-quality learning materials, and provided ample support for weaker students. In the best practice, staff demonstrated the importance of using a wide range of sources and encouraged students to research widely. Highly-graded sessions demonstrated many of the following characteristics: clear tasks and good time management within classes; regular checking of students' understanding; consolidation of key points at the end of sessions; effective question and answer techniques; good relationships between staff and students; effective use made of students' knowledge and experience; and rigorous assignment work.

52 There was a high standard of practical work in a number of areas, for example, catering, where information technology was effectively integrated into a range of practical teaching contexts. In engineering, practical activities in mechanical craft, fabrication and welding, and motor vehicle sections were of a good standard. A particular strength of the construction department was the provision of resources which enabled students to work at their own pace. Creative and performing arts offered students a good range of performance opportunities. There was an appropriate balance between theory and professional practice on adult social care courses and in some classes, particularly in the evenings, work in pairs and group work was most effective and much enjoyed. In the centre for management development there was well-prepared teaching and imaginative use of audio-visual aids.

53 The college has a well developed policy for incorporating core skills within programmes of study. For example, NVQ work in engineering is structured in such a way that core skills and technical content are integrated. Elsewhere, for example in construction, art and design and business studies, the teaching of core skills, particularly in information technology, was not managed so well. The Quadrant Centre at the North Road site at Poole provides a very good information technology facility, which is well-used and appreciated by students. In addition, full-time 16-19 students receive good training in study skills, including note-taking, time management and the use of the library. Part-time students would also benefit from this training.

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54 In some base rooms there was a good range of display and evidence of students being actively encouraged to bring in relevant material. Work experience programmes were particularly valued by students and there was a thorough system for organising and monitoring placements, and for students to keep log books and diaries.

55 There was sensitive and effective teaching of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at foundation level. Some excellent learning materials have been produced, including handouts, information booklets and marking forms. There was particularly good work with students with severe learning difficulties in hairdressing and catering.

56 In general, course managers were conscientious in their record-keeping and analysis of students' progress. A good range of tasks and assignments at appropriate levels is set regularly. There were well-structured assignments in nursery nursing courses, in which self-evaluation by students was a notable feature. Assignments were generally effectively marked, although the quantity and quality of teachers' comments on students' work varied. In some practical classes there was little assessment of students' work. There was a lack of moderation and standardisation between staff in marking and assessing students' work in some vocational areas. In some areas, not enough attention was given to marking English grammar, punctuation, spelling and presentation and work is not always returned to students punctually.

57 The degree to which students have a knowledge of assessment criteria varies, particularly on courses in humanities and technician courses in construction. There was a clear understanding across departments of NVQ requirements including the development of portfolios of students' work.

58 In some departments, for example construction, students' timetables are not well planned and often there are lengthy gaps between classes. In others, for example catering and social care, the teaching of theory in three-hour blocks should be reviewed.

### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

59 Students achieve satisfactory standards in written work and are able to use word processing skills to good effect. In engineering, students' workshop log books and class notes were of a good standard.

60 In course work, assignments and projects, students displayed high levels of achievement and presentation. Students generally displayed satisfactory to good levels of ability in using core skills in literacy, including note-taking, numeracy and information technology. Some students' files in both social care and social sciences had very well organised work. High standards of presentation and content were achieved by part-time and many full-time NVQ level 3 business administration students. Attainment in furniture studies was very good. In hotel and catering, a high standard of work was produced in all practical areas and in some theory classes.

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Good levels of performance skills were demonstrated in performing arts. In hairdressing, however, achievements were limited because there were insufficient clients to create a realistic working environment, and salons lacked the pressure and pace of a typical salon. In vocational areas, practical work was generally a strength and students produced work to good professional standards.

61 The college has well developed systems for analysing examination results. These show that pass rates and completion rates vary considerably both across and within college departments. For example, examination results were generally above the national average in construction but below the national averages in GCSE and GCE A level social sciences. In GCE A level theatre studies there was a pass rate, grade A-E, of 80 per cent but few A-C grades were achieved. In science, GCE A level results varied from a 92 per cent pass rate for biology at the Poole centre, to an 18 per cent pass rate for chemistry at Lansdowne. GCSE results in science were weak for full-time students at both centres. None of the 21 full-time students taking GCSE physics at Poole achieved A-C grade passes. For GCE A level English language and literature the pass rate, grades A-E was 82 per cent with 42 per cent achieving grades A-C. In GCE A level English literature there was a 100 per cent A-E grade pass rate and 64 per cent of students achieved A-C grades. In business studies, the examination results of the Association of Accounting Technicians at intermediate level were poor with pass rates for the two groups of 23 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. At other levels pass rates were higher. In single subject secretarial examinations, results in typewriting and word processing were generally good. In hairdressing, beauty therapy and floristry, examination results were also good, and one floristry student was awarded a medal for achieving the highest marks in the country.

62 There are well-established progression routes from vocational courses into higher education and employment, for example in social care, nursery nursing, secretarial, and hotel and catering. Eighty-six per cent of secretarial NVQ advanced level students proceed into employment and 57 per cent of NVQ intermediate students. In hotel and catering, students gain employment in a wide range of high-quality establishments.

63 The college is giving increasing attention to retention rates. On engineering courses they were generally good, but weak on full-time GCSE courses. This was particularly evident in the GCSE English and history courses for 16-19 students and adult learners. Retention rates for adults on part-time GCSE courses was 53 per cent compared with 73 per cent for full-time GCSE students generally. In some computing courses retention rates were as low as 50 per cent.

64 Attendance at classes was uneven across the college, and absence and lateness especially in some GCSE groups is a matter for concern. Action to improve attendance in some areas of the college is lacking.

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## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

65 The college's commitment to quality assurance is demonstrated by some well established procedures. In addition, a system of continuous quality improvement was established last September. It was preceded by careful planning and appropriate staff development. Quality teams have been established and they are engaged in setting standards derived from a college list of quality characteristics, which are in turn based upon the student entitlement curriculum.

66 The continuous quality improvement system is summarised in an informative policy document which is readily available to all staff. Priorities are agreed annually by the college management team. Commitment to the policy is especially strong amongst support staff but attitudes amongst teaching staff vary. Support is growing as the system gathers momentum. Inter-departmental quality consultants advise on and monitor implementation.

67 Quality teams are developing a very wide range of standards which, at this stage of development, vary in their usefulness. Accountability for the monitoring of standards is clearly defined, although the system is at too early a stage of development for evidence of effective monitoring.

68 The continuous quality improvement system is being developed to encompass existing quality assurance procedures. It builds on well established work on the entitlement curriculum and on British Standard (BS) 5750, a national quality control kitemark. Work on BS5750 is progressing well in the services to business unit and the Dorset Skills Training Unit. The college is also working towards the Investors in People award, with a target date within the 1994-95 academic year.

69 Target setting and monitoring is well advanced. Targets are defined through departmental plans and reviewed, to varying levels of detail and rigour, in heads of departments' annual educational audit reports. Individual subject targets are being set for numbers of students completing and succeeding on courses. Final budget positions for departments depend upon the achievement of targets. The college's curriculum development unit reaches funding agreements on priorities, based on the entitlement curriculum policy, with each department. These are monitored and reviewed annually. This process is effective in generating improvements, for example in the quality and level of tutorial provision.

70 A well established and thorough procedure for checking new course proposals is carried out by an academic board subcommittee. A sample of existing courses is also put through this procedure annually.

71 There are varying procedures for review at the programme level. There is no systematic requirement for annual course review reports and no consistent information requirement at this level on how well students have performed. Questionnaires which sample students' perceptions of the college generate valuable information which is effectively analysed and reported. However, since there is currently no requirement for course

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reviews to include students' views, it is possible for students to complete their studies without their views being sought. Similarly, employers are not systematically asked for their views, although good employer liaison allows informal opportunities for opinion sampling. The quality of course review last academic year was uneven.

72 Appraisal for all staff, including observation of teaching or other tasks, is being progressively introduced on a two year cycle. It is supported by staff training and detailed documentation. Training needs are identified in appraisal and carried forward into the planning process for staff training. The links between the staff training programme and the strategic needs of the college are not fully defined. For example, the staff development plan is not cross-referenced to the college strategic plan, and there is no requirement for applications for staff training events to be related to strategic priorities.

73 Staff induction, available to new part-time as well as full-time staff, is supported by an effective open learning pack. Induction, which includes observation and support from an experienced colleague, is thorough and effective. An extensive programme of in-house training events aimed at common training needs is widely publicised. There is evaluation of a sample of staff training events but there is not yet a published evaluation of the programme as a whole.

74 The college is moving from a situation in which there are several quality assurance procedures, some of which are inconsistent, towards a strategy for continuous quality improvement. Providing existing inconsistencies are not carried forward into the developing system, the college is in the early stages of a process which has considerable potential.

75 The college has produced a draft student charter for consultation. Senior staff commitment to the charter is strong. Middle managers are well informed, but, at present, awareness amongst other staff varies.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

76 Teaching staff are generally well deployed though there are some shortages in a few specialist areas. In the areas of engineering, construction, catering, tourism and hotel operation and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, increasing use is made of instructor/demonstrator grade posts to support the teaching and learning process. In general, both full and part-time teaching staff hold appropriate academic and/or professional qualifications and there is an effective mix of academic and vocational experience within teaching teams. However, staff turnover in some departments is low and relevant industrial experience in such cases is dated.

77 The overall level of clerical and secretarial support available to departmental staff is good. However, there are some imbalances between teaching departments. Four departments have departmental

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administrative officers who oversee clerical and secretarial staff and take responsibility for statistical and budgetary functions. In the three remaining departments, a significant amount of clerical and administrative work is undertaken by departmental managers and teaching staff. With the exception of counselling, central services are well staffed.

78 Technician staff are attached to departments and managed by heads of department. Technicians have recently been the subject of a major college-wide review. In general, the numbers of technicians and the quality of the service provided are adequate. There is, however, a need for greater flexibility in the organisation and deployment of technicians in some practical/vocational areas such as engineering, and hotel and catering. There is limited technical and clerical support in modern languages.

79 The college's personnel department is staffed by a team of eight, two of whom hold the Institute of Personnel Management qualification. Considerable progress has been made towards the development and implementation of college-wide systematic procedures for the identification of new posts, for recruitment and selection and for general employment matters.

#### **Equipment/learning resources**

80 The learning resource centres provided at the four main college sites are outstanding. They combine traditional library study support with a range of media and information technology services of a very high standard. They are well resourced in terms of books, journals, CD-ROM and other media and have appropriate staffing. The learning resource centre staff co-operate with academic staff to provide additional resource materials for projects and assignments and they have created a wide range of high quality study packs which are extensively used by students.

81 The non-book stock of audio visual, media and information technology is the responsibility of the media and information technology section which provides a high quality wide-ranging service. At each centre there is good access to computer work stations which have a standard range of software, and relevant user guides and manuals. The annual education audit of the learning resources services is supported by a comprehensive statistical analysis of all aspects of its work. Imaginative use of accommodation at the Lansdowne centre has increased study spaces. However, study spaces at the Constitution Hill centre are insufficient for the student numbers.

82 Overall, the level of specialist equipment available to support teaching and learning is good. Areas of particular note include performing arts, computer-aided design and computer numerically controlled equipment in engineering, construction craft workshops, and hairdressing and beauty therapy facilities. However, some equipment in physics, motor vehicle and technician-level construction courses needs further investment and the organisation of facilities to support courses in NVQ business administration is in need of review. There are good examples of support

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materials in mathematics, foundation courses and information technology. Reprographic facilities, on which departments spend significant amounts of their non-staffing budgets, are provided both centrally at North Road and at each centre. The quality and flexibility of the central service is generally good. Facilities to produce high quality handouts have recently been provided at North Road and Lansdowne through the curriculum materials unit.

83 The college has a strong corporate culture for the provision of information technology. The formulation of policies and strategies for the purchase and organisation of computer equipment is the responsibility of the computer facilities committee. This has resulted in a well-integrated strategy for the purchase of both hardware and software. Computer rooms are furnished and equipped to a very high standard and provide largely open access for users. The recently-commissioned Quadrant Centre at the North Road site is an exemplar of this development.

### **Accommodation**

84 The use of teaching accommodation at the college is effectively managed by departments, which are responsible for timetabling. In many instances, departments occupy suites of adjacent rooms. Utilisation is monitored centrally through timetabling analysis, and adjustments are made to each department's rooming allocations as needs emerge. Negotiation on accommodation issues is undertaken through two campus consultative committees. Overall, temporary accommodation accounts for less than 10 per cent of the overall total; most of it is in satisfactory condition. There are clear systems for the management of site security and for dealing with breakdowns and emergency maintenance. There has been significant up-grading and refurbishment of college accommodation in recent years. Much of the teaching accommodation, particularly the laboratories, are suitably decorated and furnished.

85 The college's central library and learning resources facilities at North Road and Lansdowne are excellent. Specialist accommodation, for example in craft engineering, art and design, and hairdressing and beauty therapy is good. Some of the accommodation used for physics, chemistry, business studies, photography, and hotel and catering is in need of refurbishment. Despite departmental control of teaching accommodation, the educational use of relevant display varies. There are examples of good practice in health, education studies, social care and social sciences, but it is poor, for example in humanities, engineering, business studies, business administration and hairdressing.

86 With the exception of the Lansdowne Enterprise Centre, there are refectory facilities at all centres. There are common room facilities for students at the Lansdowne, North Road, Knyveton Road and Constitution Hill centres. Public areas are generally clean and contract cleaning is supplemented by college staff in some cases. There is a generous amount

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of car parking space at North Road. Student parking at Knyveton Road and Lansdowne is, however, limited.

87 Developments towards improving facilities for students with limited mobility have been concentrated at the college's two main centres, but not all parts of both sites are fully accessible. Lifts provide access to much of the North Road site and to the Lansdowne Centre, with the major exception of hairdressing and beauty therapy. The main entrances and exits at both buildings have ramps, and there have been several adaptations to doors, canteens and toilet facilities. Currently there are no crèche or nursery facilities although plans are under way to provide a facility close to the North Road site.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

88 The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education is making good progress towards achieving the aims and objectives contained in its mission statement and strategic plan. The strengths of the college are:

- generally good standards of teaching and learning
- learning resources centres of outstanding quality
- the development and implementation of a curriculum entitlement policy
- a positive approach to equal opportunities, including a commitment to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- strong corporate senior management team
- effective governance arrangements
- a diverse range of provision including international operations, work with Dorset TEC and services to business
- the college's commitment to quality assurance and evidence of a strategy of continuous quality improvement including systems for target setting and monitoring
- the effective management of sites, plant and equipment.

89 The quality of provision would be improved further if the following issues were addressed:

- weaknesses in some curriculum areas and the need to disseminate good practice across the institution
- some poor examination results
- some poor attendance rates
- the links between learner support services and departments
- the level of counselling provision
- study space shortages at Constitution Hill
- the lack of refurbishment and replacement of equipment in a few subject areas

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- wheelchair access to some centres
  - the lack of creche or nursery facilities.

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## FIGURES

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1 Staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)

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2 Percentage enrolments by age (at May 1994)

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3 Full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (at May 1994)

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4 Percentage enrolments by level of study (at May 1994)

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5 Recurrent income (1993-94)

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6 Estimated expenditure (1993-94)

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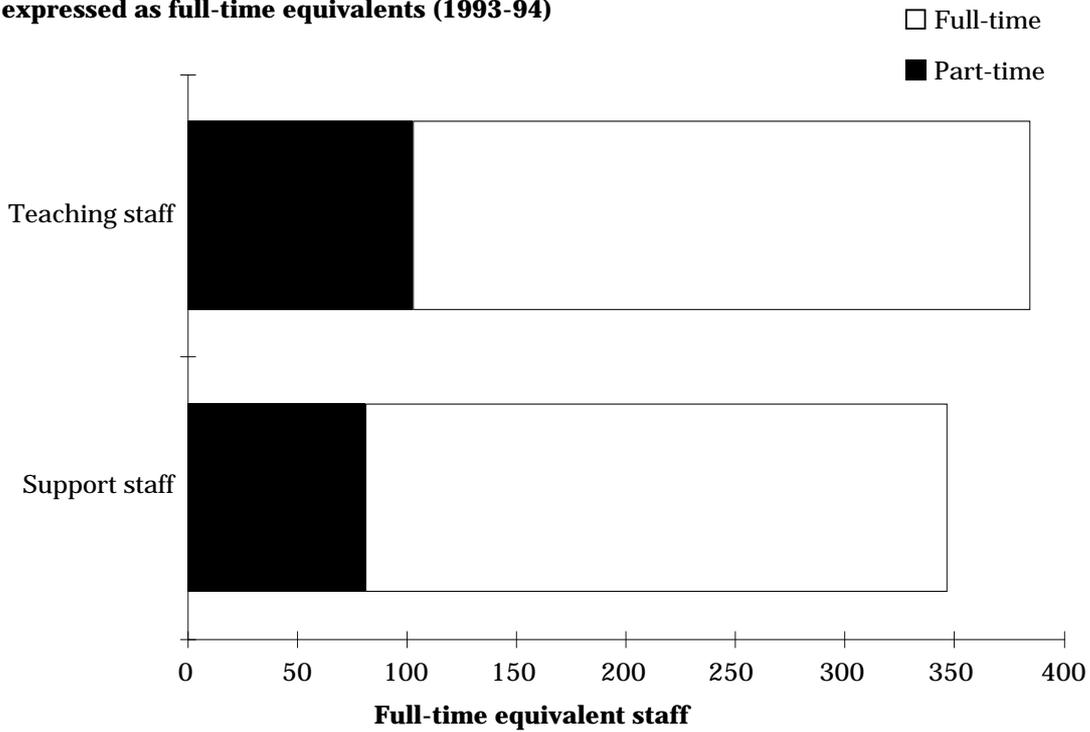
**Note:** the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

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**Figure 1**

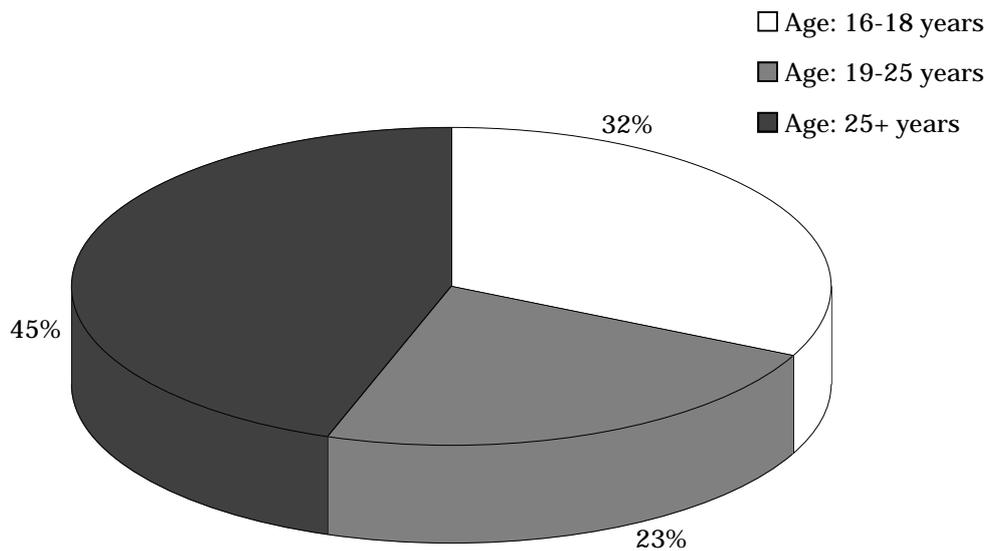
**The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)**



Full-time equivalent staff: 732

**Figure 2**

**The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by age (at May 1994)**

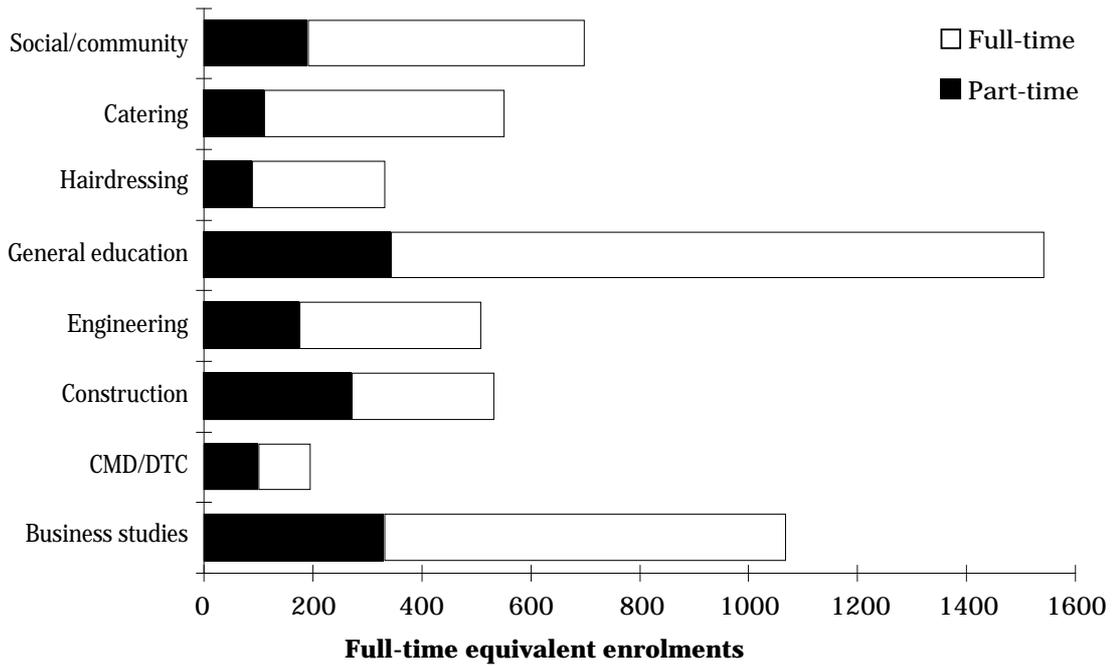


Enrolments: 14,179

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**Figure 3**

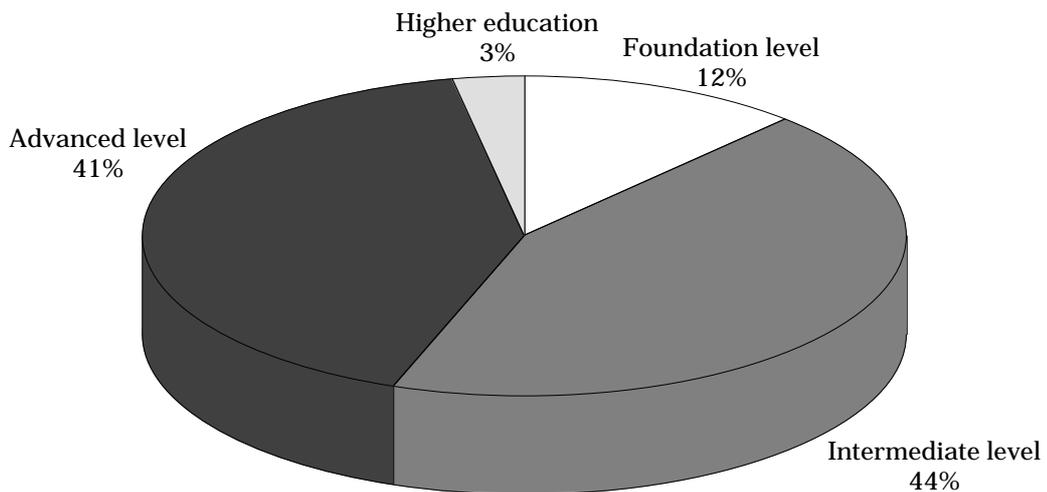
**The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education: enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of attendance and curriculum area (at May 1994)**



Full-time equivalent enrolments: 5,442

**Figure 4**

**The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by level of study (at May 1994)**

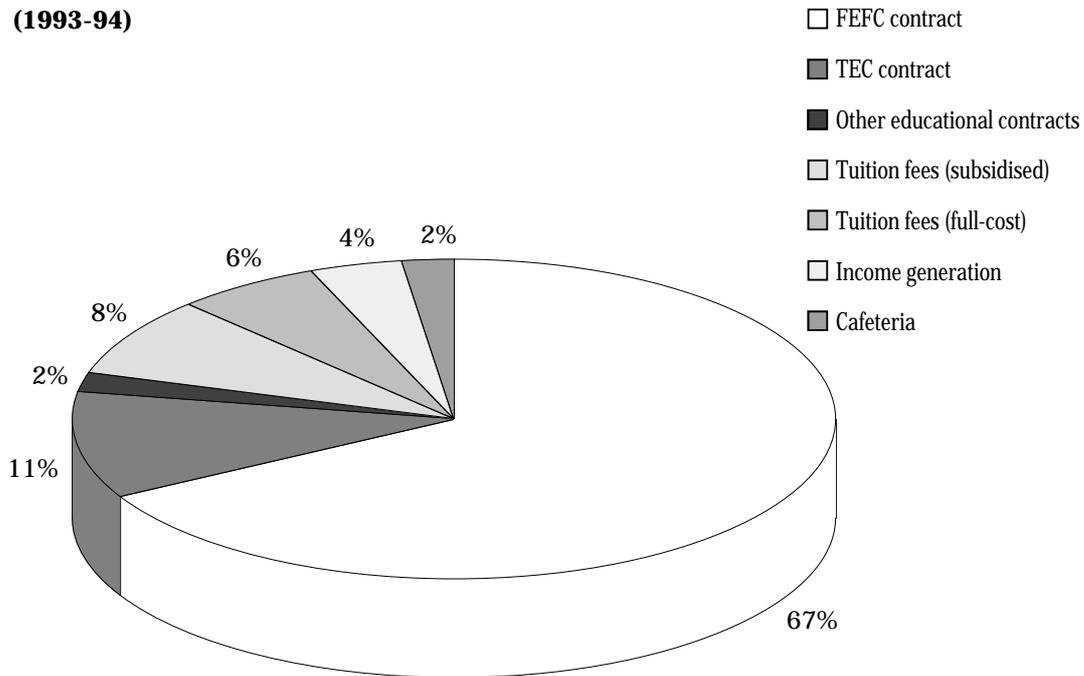


Enrolments: 14,179

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**Figure 5**

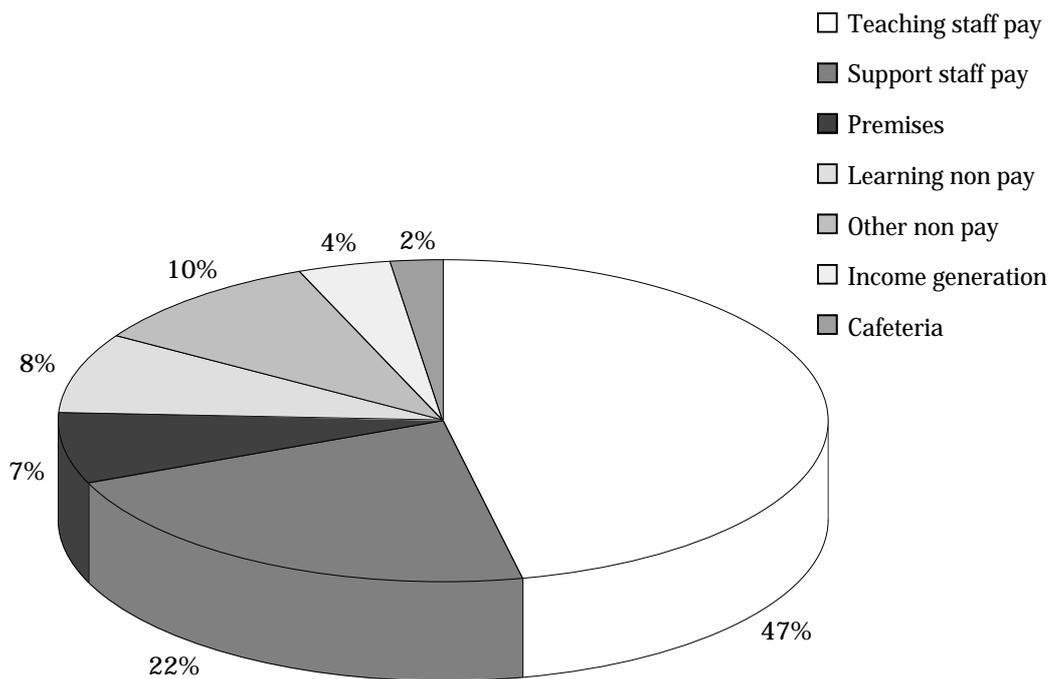
**The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education: estimated income (1993-94)**



Estimated income: £18,089,000

**Figure 6**

**The Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education: estimated expenditure (1993-94)**



Estimated income: £17,639,000

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