

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

**Charles Keene
College of
Further
Education**

April 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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 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 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.

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are set out in the 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.*

By June 1995, some 208 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 208 colleges are shown in the following table.

College grade profiles 1993-95

Activity	Inspection grades				
	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	60%	28%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	13%	51%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	11%	56%	29%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 45/96

CHARLES KEENE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION EAST MIDLANDS REGION

Inspected February-December 1995

Summary

Charles Keene College of Further Education in Leicester has been successful in attracting an increasingly wide range of students, especially those from groups which have not usually entered further education. This is helped by the delivery of courses in a network of centres throughout Leicester. The individual elements of the recruitment, guidance and support processes are effective. The access to higher education programme is particularly effective. A systematic approach to quality assurance is developing. At the time of the inspection, the college was facing a financially difficult period. If the achievements, particularly in the curriculum areas, are not to be jeopardised, governors, managers and staff need to pay greater attention to developing the corporate strategy, making a more systematic use of information, delegating management authority appropriately, and improving the planning processes. Other issues to be addressed are: a further improvement in attendance and retention rates, the systematic development of the accommodation to meet the changing needs of the curriculum, and the development of independent learning materials for students and associated support.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	2
Governance and management	3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	3
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Mathematics and science	3	Hairdressing	2
Computing	3	Health and social care	3
Electrical engineering	2	Creative arts	2
Mechanical engineering	2	Humanities	2
Business and management	3	Basic education	2
Secretarial	2		

INTRODUCTION

1 Charles Keene College of Further Education was inspected in three stages. Arrangements for the enrolment and induction of students were inspected in August and September 1995. Specialist inspections of curriculum areas took place in February and October 1995. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected during the week beginning 11 December 1995. Twenty-one inspectors spent a total of 74 days in the college. Inspectors visited 271 classes, examined students' work and read a wide range of college documents. Discussions were held with governors, staff, students, local employers, and representatives from the local community, local schools, a partner higher education institution, the careers service and the Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Charles Keene College of Further Education is situated in the north-west area of the city of Leicester, close to the city's shopping and commercial centre. The college began as an annexe of the former Leicester College of Art and Technology where engineering classes were held. It opened as a separate entity in 1963 and has grown in size and in range of provision. In the 1980s, the college acquired the nearby Abbey Primary School as an annexe, opened new foundry workshops and bought further adjacent buildings for workshops and classrooms. A former warehouse was refurbished as a new library and computer centre, and a new science block was built. An admissions and advice centre has been built recently next to the main entrance.

3 The college primarily serves students from the city of Leicester, which has a population of some 280,000. Over 28 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Asian origin. The city has a diverse economy with the traditional emphasis being on hosiery, knitwear and associated manufacturing trades. More recent trends have been towards distribution, banking and other service industries. The unemployment rate is currently 6.5 per cent, compared with the East Midlands average of 7.2 per cent. There are high unemployment rates in the inner city areas near to the college. The pattern of educational provision in the city is predominantly through 11 to 16 schools with some 11 to 18 schools. There are a number of 14 to 18 schools on the margins of the city. Within three miles of the college there are three sixth form colleges and a further education college. Another further education college is situated to the south of the city.

4 The college operates from its main campus and from sites across the city. Adult education, basic education skills for adults and English for speakers of other languages are provided in city-wide networks that operate in more than 50 centres. Franchise arrangements for courses exist with 17 institutions in the city and beyond. The Wyvern Business Centre provides support for young people who are launching and

developing their own businesses. A strong relationship, which is recognised in a formal associate college status, exists with De Montfort University.

5 Enrolments totalled almost 7,400 on 1 November 1995 of which 1,875 were full time. Approximately, a further 4,000 students enrol during the course of the academic year. The number of mature students has grown in recent years; 77 per cent are now over the age of 18 and 52 per cent over the age of 25. Forty per cent of the student population is from minority ethnic groups, three-quarters of them being Asian. Student numbers by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. There are 156 full-time teaching staff and a further 284 (51 full-time equivalent) part-time teaching staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. The college is organised into three principal teaching sectors which have 17 teaching divisions in total. External relations, curriculum support, publicity and marketing, student services, accommodation, personnel, and finance are provided through a cross-college management structure.

6 The college's mission is set out in its planning documents. The strategic aims are 'to promote a high quality of education and training, with access to the provision being limited only by the extent of the college resources' and 'to provide a stimulating environment within which students of all ages, sex, ethnic and cultural backgrounds can acquire relevant vocational, academic, leisure and social skills through participation in a flexible variety of learning experiences'.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 Over the last three years the breadth of provision has increased. Some courses are available at centres across the city and this has improved the access to education and training opportunities for the Leicester community. There are courses in science, mathematics, engineering, business and management, secretarial, sport and leisure, health and caring, hairdressing and beauty therapy, the creative arts and humanities. There is an extensive adult basic education and provision in English for speakers of other languages. The college also provides non-vocational community education courses. Opportunities that enable adults with non-standard qualifications to enter higher education have been increased. Although courses operate on a full-time or part-time basis, there are few opportunities for flexible attendance.

8 Curriculum links between schools and colleges are co-ordinated through a consortium which operates across the city. School pupils attend the college to gain experience of vocational courses. Some pupils on these courses receive credit for their work within the Leicester Vocational Framework. These credits are accepted by educational institutions across the region as a basis for entry to further courses. Other initiatives enable pupils and staff to gain a better understanding of further education.

Schools who send pupils to the college are provided with some information on student destinations where these are considered to be particularly noteworthy but destination information on all pupils is not provided routinely. There is good liaison between the college and schools about students with learning difficulties. Programmes designed to support students' transition into the college are available in some areas.

9 Links are maintained with the local education authority through the programme of non-vocational community education courses. Despite reduced funding, the college has been able to maintain a satisfactory range of subjects and has been able to support some of the courses through its main vocational programme. There are strong links with a range of community groups across the city. The college uses various committees and community liaison staff effectively to identify education and training needs.

10 There are good links with the Leicestershire TEC. The college is represented at director level and through the engineering advisory group. Operational relationships are productive and the college responds to training initiatives. The college has been successful in attracting TEC development funds for several projects. The college participates in the training credits scheme and the modern apprenticeship scheme.

11 Links with employers are maintained through committees, advisory groups, work experience placements in some curriculum areas, and through enquiries for training. A wide range of contacts exist in the secretarial, sports and leisure, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and the performing arts areas. There are strong employer links in engineering; a range of short courses is provided, some at regular intervals and others to meet specific enquiries. The employer links in business and management are weak and there are no formal links with local employers in health and social care. Employers sometimes have difficulty in contacting the appropriate staff when seeking training advice. Responses to enquiries can be slow.

12 The college is an associate college of De Montfort University. Relations between the two institutions are good at strategic and operational levels. The college runs a range of franchised courses at higher national diploma and first-year degree level. The link with De Montfort University provides a progression route from the college into higher education. There are some liaison and curriculum links with other universities in the Midlands.

13 The college has been successful in extending its curriculum provision through franchising. There are franchised courses in 17 community colleges, community centres, and private trainers who recruit substantial numbers of students. Franchising of further education programmes produces around 14 per cent of the college recruitment. The college also sponsors courses funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in a number of community schools.

14 In line with its mission of serving the community, the college provides a significant number of courses in adult basic education and English for speakers of other languages in 39 centres across the city. The courses provide opportunities for students from groups which have not usually entered further education and for those for whom language is a barrier to education and work. About 2,400 students enrolled on courses in adult basic education and English for speakers of other languages during 1994-95. The adult basic education provision offers different styles of course delivery, including open and distance learning. A range of qualifications is available. However, qualifications which provide a bridge to the college's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses in mathematics and English are lacking. Students either refer themselves to the basic education programme or are referred by a range of other agencies, including job centres and training providers.

15 There is a marketing policy but no clear marketing plan. Some general objectives are set for marketing and publicity but few quantitative targets are set. Much of the market intelligence and identification of new provision is gathered at sector and divisional level and the success with which this is achieved varies considerably. The central college marketing function has little support. Some curriculum areas have grown or adapted successfully over the last three years but other areas with declining student numbers have not produced clear strategies to deal with the problems.

16 There is an annual budget for publicity and advertising which is based on a detailed, fully-costed programme. An appropriate range of publicity materials includes advertising in a range of publications, participation in local radio debates, shows and exhibitions, and some sponsorship. Information obtained from attitude and perception surveys are used to influence the presentation of advertising and publicity material. Advertising material places insufficient emphasis on the vocational programmes that the college offers. Some advertising is targeted at specific provision when recruitment is low. Occasionally, the timing of the targeted advertising is not made known to the enquiries and guidance staff. Information from enquiries is used to identify potential new courses.

17 The comprehensive equal opportunities policy includes a number of specific codes of practice and supporting programmes of action. The policy is widely known by both staff and students. There is considerable emphasis on equality of opportunity in many areas of the college and the college has been successful in recruiting a diverse student population in terms of age and ethnicity. There is an equal opportunities committee which has stimulated a range of equal opportunities activities, and specific groups have been formed for particular issues. The committee monitors recruitment patterns but enrolment and retention statistics are not in a form which allows monitoring to be carried out readily.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

18 At the time of the inspection, the college was facing a particularly difficult period. Governance and management have not adjusted fast enough to the requirements of incorporation and the board is not yet exercising fully its responsibility for general oversight of the college's activities. An analysis of the risk factors facing the college's future was included in the first strategic plan written in 1993. Major factors identified were the competition in Leicester from other colleges and schools and the high proportion of the budget devoted to staffing costs. Some measures have been implemented over the last two years to reduce these risks but their effectiveness has been variable. The impact of the identified risk factors has been compounded by the failure to meet the targets set for education and training activity against which FEFC funds were allocated. Only 82 per cent of the target set for 1994-95 was achieved. Whilst the college has a reserve to buffer the effect of the substantial operating deficit from 1994-95, there is an urgent need to address this situation; a recovery plan is being prepared at the request of the FEFC. Issues of governance and management need to be addressed with speed if the good work done towards achieving the mission of the institution is to not to be jeopardised.

19 The governing body has 20 members. There are currently three vacancies for one co-opted and two business governors. Governors have recognised that this represents an opportunity to strengthen their membership and a recruitment procedure, including a public advertisement, has been agreed. More rigorous analysis of the financial and long-term implications of decisions is needed. A code of conduct has been produced and a register of interests begun. The clerk, who is a senior manager in the college, is also a co-opted member of the corporation. This unusual arrangement needs to be reconsidered. The governing body committees are finance and general purposes; personnel and employment; audit; and remuneration. The decision to review the terms of reference for these committees is timely. New corporation members will increase the pool of expertise from which committee membership can be drawn. Governors have a considerable commitment to the college. Governors shadow particular college functions; this enables them to find out more about aspects of the college's work and to become known to staff and students.

20 Governors comment annually upon revisions to the strategic plan and receive regular reports from the principal on progress towards corporate objectives. Rapid progress in one aspect of the strategic plan has been made in provision for the local community. Management control of franchising needs to become more formalised and better integrated with existing systems and procedures. There is a long-established process of development planning at the divisional level. The divisional process exists alongside the college-wide strategic planning cycle rather than being clearly linked to it. Divisional plans are collated to form the college's

annual action plan but not all staff fully understand the implications of the college's mission. Generally, plans identify development objectives but they do not identify responsibilities, deadlines, quantitative targets and intermediate steps. This makes them difficult to monitor.

21 All staff in the college have clear job descriptions. Management structures are generally well understood. There is over-reliance on individuals in some key areas which could put the smooth running of the college at risk. Further consideration needs to be given to a framework for delegation of authority and accountability within the college. The principalship comprises the principal and vice-principal. The most senior managers are the three heads of faculty for resources, quality, and administration. An extended team, called the senior staff, comprises the principalship, the heads of faculty, the nine sector managers, the personnel manager, and the college accountant. Senior staff meet fortnightly to discuss issues and to advise on policy decisions. The current management structure supports the division leaders, who are the managers closest to students' experiences. They are accountable to the resources head of faculty for equipment, to the head of curriculum quality for quality assurance and to their sector manager for other issues. Overall, their reporting and support relationships are not clear. The flow of information from senior staff through division leaders to all staff and back does not occur consistently. Most full-time staff meet regularly in divisions but the involvement of part-time teaching staff and all support staff is more haphazard. These meetings vary in their effectiveness. The college is beginning to address the issue of communication and a regular monthly bulletin is produced. During the inspection, group meetings were taking place to develop communications as part of the work towards the Investors in People standard.

22 Progress towards developing those aspects of cross-college provision identified in the strategic plan has been mixed. The commitment of staff to their operational areas is strong. This has increased the difficulty of managing change across the organisation. For example, progress in the development of consistent support for student learning and in the development of an accommodation strategy has been slow. More successful areas include the adoption of common approaches to accredited access programmes and of good practice in equal opportunities.

23 The college's average level of funding per unit is £16.86 in 1995-96 compared with £16.76 in 1994-95. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges in 1995-96 is £17.84 per unit. Understanding of the funding methodology is increasing at sector manager level. Sector managers are working with the college accountant to develop models of budgeting for cost centres. The greater involvement of the college accountant in advising on policy decisions is a positive development. Only at the level of the principal is there any oversight of the college's resources and this limits creative development. The college's

income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

24 Generally decisions need to be better informed by financial and other management information at all levels of the college. Some progress has been made in using information to monitor priority areas. Monitoring of retention is taking place this year in a far more rigorous way. Comprehensive reports about reasons for non-completion are being produced. The equal opportunities committee is monitoring enrolment data and it intends to extend its monitoring to retention and achievement. Detailed destination data are collected but its present form means that it cannot be used easily to inform management decisions. Central management information services do not have the capability to produce easily accessible, comprehensive, timely and accurate internal management reports. The management information team and the technology employed is fully stretched in meeting the demands of external bodies such as the FEFC.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

25 Admissions and guidance procedures are clear and effective. Generally, students are provided with impartial information and guidance before and on entry to the college. The student handbook is lively and interesting; it contains the student charter. There are clear, informative leaflets on childcare, accommodation, financial assistance, counselling, and equal opportunities. Publicity materials take good account of the multicultural nature of the area in which the college is sited. Student recruitment for provision for English as a second language uses ethnic languages effectively in its publicity material. Currently, availability of a service to accredit students' prior learning is restricted and the amount of use is small. The use of the service is concentrated in the secretarial, business and management, and engineering areas. Standards relating to the procedures to be used for accreditation of prior learning have been established.

26 The admissions and information unit and the student services unit have been located together in a new centre which is well sited at the entrance to the college. The centre has a welcoming environment and a good range of facilities to provide information and advice for prospective students. Staff in the centre work well together but are not managed as a coherent team. Student queries are dealt with promptly and interviews are arranged quickly in response to telephone enquiries. In August, staff were able to cope with the large volume of enquiries and, generally, to match staff to enquirers' needs. However, there was some difficulty in giving sufficiently detailed information about particular General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses. The admissions unit is meeting its own targets related to the quality of its work. Internal reviews have identified issues which have been addressed effectively.

27 Induction of students into the college works well. An appropriate quality assurance framework has been established to ensure consistency in the students' experiences across the college. Induction programmes provide a balanced introduction for students to their course and to college services. A folder is given to all full-time students which contains general information on, for example, student services. It also includes course and personal monitoring material such as a tutorial record sheet. Teachers receive guidance on induction and supporting material on topics such as study skills.

28 The management of student support involves a number of sector managers. The curriculum sector manager is responsible for the admissions and information unit, the learning resources division, and the learner support division. The learning resources division manages the open study centre and the learner support division manages the learner support workshop. The academic studies sector manager controls the college-based provision for English for speakers of other languages and the English workshop. The head of faculty for quality manages the tutorial system. The student services sector manager directs student services. While the individual elements of recruitment, guidance and support are generally effective, this complex and diffuse management arrangement hinders consistency and prevents efficient oversight of its effectiveness across the college.

29 The student services unit provides counselling, welfare advice, careers advice, and nursery facilities. This provision has a clear focus resulting in a high profile in the college and increasing use by students. It is monitored by a student services committee. A student services charter outlines the standards which have been set. Comprehensive student records are kept. Staff and students benefit from the college counselling service which continues to maintain confidentiality whilst developing an increasingly comprehensive system for evaluating its effectiveness. Students benefit from the support of an effective welfare advice service. The full-time officer works closely with the admissions unit staff, the counsellor, the careers officer and the students' union. In April 1995, a careers officer was appointed to enhance careers education and guidance. The careers service would benefit from more detailed monitoring to inform the direction of future developments. Student services staff liaise with tutors on an informal basis. The provision of adequate student support in the expanding outreach and franchised provision needs greater consideration.

30 A tutorial system for full-time students is well established. All full-time students are timetabled for up to two hours a week for group and individual tutorial activities. Each student benefits from individual tutorials which are generally held half-termly. Individual tutorials help students to monitor their progress, plan their programmes of work and maintain records of their achievement. In September 1995, a college-wide system for recording the substance of individual tutorials

was introduced; this is beginning to be used to good effect. However, there is still a lack of precision in identifying specific targets and creating measurable goals for students to improve students' achievements. There is no requirement for specific topics to be covered in group tutorials and this leads to a lack of consistency across curriculum areas and student groups. Student support services, such as careers education and guidance, are not fully integrated with the tutorial system. A tutor's resource file is available to support group tutorials but the lack of a copy for each tutor limits its use. The file contains useful and relevant support material which is updated regularly. Each sector is required to produce a report on the quality of its tutorial system. Some of the reports seen were descriptive rather than analytical. The college needs to consider the provision of adequate tutorial support for part-time students who do not currently benefit from this service.

31 Learning support for students is provided in several ways through the English workshop, the learner support centre, and the open study centre. Support is also available on a drop-in basis at some community centres. Students who attend the various support areas generally receive effective help. Support for communications skills, offered by the three different centres, is confusing. General support for mathematics across the college is limited. The English workshop provides effective support for students whose first language is not English. The learner support centre provides help for students with literacy problems. All full-time students undergo a screening test to identify if they have literacy and/or numeracy problems. Students receive individual feedback as a result of this screening. If the learner support centre is identified as the appropriate facility, attendance at a specified time for 10 weeks is agreed. At the end of the period a review takes place and either the student is advised that additional support is no longer needed or a new 10-week agreement is entered into. Personal tutors monitor students' progress, are notified of non-attendance and take action where appropriate. However, attendance is voluntary and approximately 36 per cent of the students identified in September 1995 as requiring help had not attended at the time of the inspection. The open study centre supports students who want help with English, mathematics, or information technology and subject specialists are available at specific times. There is no structured approach to the provision of support through this centre. Records of work undertaken are kept voluntarily by students. The centre is underused; there is no system to log and monitor the nature of students' enquiries.

32 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. Students are given appropriate information about their course and the services available to them. Specialist careers officers, known to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are used and contact with the careers service is encouraged by course tutors. Guidance for staff is provided in a handbook. Interviews and written reports on individual students with dyslexia are professionally and effectively handled; clear

suggestions are made to teaching staff as to how they might provide support.

33 The college has a day nursery catering for 20 children under five. Fees are subsidised by the college. The weekly attendance statistics show that numbers have fallen to about 65 per cent of capacity. There are creche facilities at a number of the community centres. A quiet study area and a common room are available for the use of adult students but neither have facilities other than basic furniture. The students' union is supported by a part-time administrator funded out of registration fees. The union has not been very active in the past and attempts are being made to generate more interest. A Christian union holds weekly lunchtime meetings and a prayer room is available for students of other faiths.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

34 Of the 271 sessions inspected, over 63 per cent had strengths which outweighed the weaknesses. Under 7 per cent of the sessions had weaknesses which outweighed the strengths. The grades awarded to the sessions inspected are shown in the following table.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		7	20	10	2	0	39
GCSE		1	8	3	0	0	12
GNVQ		2	11	12	2	0	27
NVQ		4	16	9	1	0	30
Access to higher education		6	13	3	2	0	24
Basic education		4	17	15	3	0	39
Other vocational		18	38	28	7	1	92
Other		2	5	1	0	0	8
Total		44	128	81	17	1	271

35 The overall attendance in the classes observed was 74 per cent of those registered and the average class attendance was 10. The average attendance in individual subject areas in the college varied from 52 per cent in English to 88 per cent for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The inspection overlapped the observance of a religious festival and this is likely to have affected attendance rates. In science courses attendance was poor in many classes. In mathematics courses attendance of students was variable and in some GCSE classes it was as low as 60 per cent. In business and management courses lateness was not challenged, properly recorded, or followed up. In a minority of hairdressing and beauty therapy sessions there was poor attendance. In

art, design, and media there was poor attendance with an average rate of 63 per cent in the sessions inspected. In English for speakers of other languages the overall attendance figures for the classes observed was 74 per cent; some classes had attendance rates between 50 per cent and 65 per cent. A survey by the college of eight full-time courses shows that the attendance rate in the 1995-96 autumn term averaged 81 per cent compared with a figure of 75 per cent for the same period in 1994-95.

36 In science lessons, the academic level, pace of presentation, and practical work set generally match the needs of students and their abilities. Teachers are enthusiastic and have a friendly and caring relationship with their students but students are not encouraged to achieve their potential. Some lessons lack clear learning objectives, make limited use of learning aids and use handouts of poor quality. The feedback on assignments is sometimes insufficient to help students improve their work. In sport science the majority of lessons provide a successful learning experience for the students. However, the progress of individual students during assignment work is not sufficiently monitored. In computing courses, practical sessions have clear objectives which are shared with students. There is a good rapport between students and staff. Classroom activities are covered methodically but the teaching often lacks variety. The quality of feedback on assignments is variable and, in many cases, does not assist learning. In mathematics courses the schemes of work ensure that the course content is adequately covered. The better classes are well structured and cover the work in appropriate steps. There is little use of learning aids to promote students' understanding. Mathematics learning materials are not available at sufficient levels to match the needs of all students.

37 In electrical and electronic engineering courses teachers use an appropriate balance of theory classes and related practical work. Lessons are satisfactorily planned. Effective use is made of questions to check students' learning. Some well-prepared handouts are used and some high-quality teaching material has been developed to enable flexible patterns of study leading to a national certificate. In some classes, students are using their time inappropriately to copy notes. Teachers provide helpful and encouraging comments on students' written and practical work. In motor vehicle courses and fabrication and welding courses, relations between students and staff are good. This contributes to the generally high quality of teaching and learning. A range of handouts and learning packages effectively supports learning activities. In mechanical and production engineering courses clear aims and objectives are set for lessons. There is some good-quality learning material. Feedback on some assignments does not give sufficient information to help students to improve. More attention needs to be paid to safety issues in some workshop activities.

38 Secretarial students benefit from varied teaching methods that are tailored to their needs and abilities. Feedback on assignments is generally

thorough. In some classes there is excessive copying from pre-prepared transparencies. In business and management classes there is an appropriate match between course specifications, schemes of work and assessment methods. This course planning is compromised by inconsistencies in the recording of work in progress, poor lesson planning, some poor classroom resource management and a lack of assignment schedules. Opportunities are missed for the enhancement of learning by the use of audio-visual aids. In the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced course students are not taking sufficient responsibility for their own planning and research.

39 In hairdressing and beauty therapy courses, the aims and objectives are set out clearly. Students' progress is monitored. Projects and assignments are relevant. An appropriate variety of teaching methods is used to motivate and promote learning with students from a variety of backgrounds. Some practical sessions are not sufficiently challenging and there is no introduction to information technology within programmes. Health and social care classes vary in the extent to which they provide effective and stimulating learning opportunities. In the better classes, teachers use a variety of methods to involve students in learning. Schemes of work support effective lesson planning. In some classes, however, the work lacks pace and in others there are insufficient opportunities for students' participation. In some courses, work placements make a worthwhile contribution to learning. In others little attempt is made by teachers to integrate work placement experience with work undertaken by students in the college. Assignments are well structured and contain clear and appropriate grading criteria.

40 The teaching and promotion of learning in dance and theatre is effective and well managed. The practical nature of most activities means that feedback is instant and direct. Relationships are frank and open so that students are clear about their achievement and know where improvement is required. When written assignments are set to record and confirm learning, the timings for their completion are staggered to spread the load on students' time. In art and design courses, teaching is of a high standard. Lessons and assignments are well prepared. Staff are responsive to students' needs when managing classes and giving individual guidance. Student work is marked and returned promptly. There is close teamwork amongst the staff and good rapport between staff and students. In most music classes the standards of teaching and learning are high. Students are enthusiastic and well motivated. In a few sessions assessment of students' progress is ineffective and teachers do not provide students with targets for improvement.

41 On English courses there is a considerable variation in the quality of the learning experience. In most classes, positive use is made of the differences in the students' experience and background to enrich learning for all. Some sessions are well structured and contain appropriate variations in activity. These include lively discussions where students

express opinions confidently and make critical comment. There are also some poorly prepared and structured sessions in which students' learning is not checked. There is considerable variability in the usefulness and quality of the support materials employed. The teaching in language courses benefits from exemplary planning which ensures efficient use of the overall time available. Students on evening courses are well taught, especially in oral skills. There is a comprehensive bank of well-presented materials for the teaching of French at all levels. Further study material for use outside class time to extend students' knowledge is not readily available. In access to humanities courses the skills developed by students are a good preparation for higher education. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Classes have clear objectives and appropriate methods are employed for teaching adult learners. Teachers provide support which meets the needs of individual students. Students are encouraged to think critically and discuss their views; they respond well to this. Care is taken to ensure that students retain the knowledge already gained before new work is introduced.

42 In adult basic education courses the teaching is generally of good quality. Staff adapt well to the different levels of ability of the students, make effective use of a range of learning materials, and develop good relationships with the students. Courses could be further improved by a more systematic approach to lesson planning and the use of a greater variety of learning activities in some classes. Courses in English for speakers of other languages are of good quality. Teachers make effective use of the experience of students. Classes are well planned; they include reinforcement of students' knowledge and regular checks on learning. However, schemes of work are lacking and lesson plans are not always effective. In some sessions, spoken language is not corrected sufficiently, students' knowledge is not always reinforced and opportunities for students to read aloud are missed. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from classes which challenge them and engage their interest. Teachers adapt their methods and adjust the content to meet the differing needs of students in the classes. Students are positive about their experience.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

43 Generally, students enjoy their experience in the college and respond well to their studies. The majority of students show a high level of commitment. However, in business studies a significant minority lack motivation. Some students' work is of a high standard, for example, in computing. In health and social care, assignments are generally well organised and presented. The standard of students' responses to assessments is variable in secretarial courses. Most students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities carry out project work effectively. In mathematics some students do not submit homework regularly. In general, students do not make sufficient use of information technology in their

work. In a number of areas such as health and social care, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and music, students work effectively as members of groups. In English and the access to humanities course many students are able to participate articulately in critical debate. In modern languages, students are gaining confidence in their use of oral skills. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, students' practical skills are of a high standard; health and safety guidelines are followed in practical work. In music, students demonstrate their achievements in a variety of ways, for example by participation in performances and the production of well-written work.

44 Sixty-seven per cent of the GCE advanced supplementary (AS) and GCE A level entries are for students aged 19 or over. The 103 students aged 16 to 18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1994-95 scored, on average, 2.9 points per entry. This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1995 performance tables published by the Department for Education and Employment. This is an improvement on the 1993-94 average of 2.6 points per entry. GCE A level examination results are above national averages for similar colleges in human biology, music, theatre studies, dance, English language studies, French, and German. GCE A level examination results were below average in biology, chemistry, computing, mathematics, business studies, economics, English literature, and the two-year psychology and sociology courses.

45 In 1995, GCSE mathematics results for students aged 16 to 18 were near to the average for further education sector colleges. In 1995, GCSE English language results improved markedly compared with the previous year; the overall pass rate is now similar to the national average. In modern language GCSE results were close to national averages. GCSE business studies examination results were poor.

46 Eighty per cent of the 128 students in their final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education and Employment's 1995 tables were successful. This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. For GNVQ programmes, and their precursor awards, the college average pass rate was 78 per cent. Individual programme pass rates varied from 44 per cent in the intermediate GNVQ in engineering to 100 per cent in the national diploma in performing arts. The Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in business has consistently good results, typically being 15 per cent above the national average. Vocational courses in computing have pass rates which are above average. The pass rate was good on the intermediate GNVQ in health and social care but was low on the advanced GNVQ in health and social care. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) pass rates varied from 29 per cent in business administration to 100 per cent in the certificate in management studies. Under 'other awards' there were a number of subjects with 100 per cent pass rates including level 2 typing,

autocad, electrical and electronic studies, level 2 welding, motor vehicle electronics and microprocessors, caring for children, the teachers certificate in wordprocessing, and the reading certificate of common skills in English. Over the last few years a number of motor vehicle and electrical installation students have won national awards.

47 In the access to humanities course in 1994-95, 45 per cent of the students achieved the full access certificate. Students who did not achieve the full certificate received a certificate for the units completed. Most of the English for speakers of other languages courses offer external or open college network certification. External examination results were good and there was a high achievement level on open college network accredited courses. In adult basic education, good use is made of a work review and plan scheme which is accredited by the Leicester Open College Network. Students receive certificates for the successful completion of individual units. No records are kept of those who have partially completed their programme or who have completed it but do not wish to be accredited. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the '5 Star' course achieve nationally-recognised qualifications and some go on to employment. There is variable recording of achievement on the 'Choices' course and too little of the students' work is being accredited. Systems are being considered to address these deficiencies.

48 Destination data for 1993-94 shows that 71 per cent of students on intermediate and level 2 courses progressed on to further education courses. Thirty-seven per cent of the GCE A level students and 65 per cent of the BTEC national students went on to higher education courses. Twenty per cent of the BTEC national students entered employment. In computing, a high proportion of students progressed to higher education. Music students were successful in gaining places at music colleges. In the access to humanities course, approximately 75 per cent of the students who completed their course went on to higher education in a wide range of disciplines. Destination data for students on English for speakers of other languages courses are not collated. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well from one learning support course to another and there are good routes for progression within the division. The number of students who progress from learning support courses to vocational courses is low.

49 The college is actively addressing the need to ensure that students complete their chosen course of study and guidelines have been developed for staff. In 1994-95 the retention rate for full-time FEFC-funded students, based on a comparison of enrolments on 1 November 1994 compared with enrolments on 1 May 1995, was 77 per cent. For part-time students the retention rate was 89 per cent. Figures provided by the college show that for a representative sample of 24 full-time courses retention, between enrolment in September and the 1 November census date, has improved from 81 per cent in 1994-95 to 91 per cent in 1995-96.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

50 The college has produced brief charters for students, employers and the community. The three charters identify what the college will provide and identify named college personnel who can be contacted about problems or for further information. Staff are aware of the charters and students are made aware of their charter during the induction process. The students' charter is not currently applicable to all the college's franchised students.

51 The college's quality policy has a number of relevant aims. These include the production of a set of quality standards and procedures and the establishment of processes for the monitoring and evaluating of all aspects of the college's work. The accompanying organisational chart identifies the corporation as having overall responsibility for, and oversight of, the quality policy. Though the corporation has had some training in quality matters it does not exercise this responsibility. The senior management team provides the focus for operational leadership. The academic board does not appear as part of the organisational chart but quality issues are regular agenda items.

52 The college's policy is implemented through a number of procedures, some of which have only recently been implemented in a systematic way. Monitoring instruments have been developed, including questionnaires issued to students during and at the end of their courses, and an employer questionnaire. Views are collated from external moderators/verifiers and validating bodies. The review and reporting cycle includes the production of divisional self-assessment reports, a college self-assessment report, a college action plan and board of study course reviews. Divisional self-assessment reports and course team reviews were completed, using the new college-wide procedures, for the 1994-95 academic year. Formal reviews of the work of non-academic functions have yet to be introduced in all areas. The phasing of the production of divisional self-assessment reports, the college self-assessment report and the college action plan does not currently link these processes together.

53 Procedures have been developed for the setting and monitoring of standards for a number of college activities. For curriculum areas these activities include enrolment, induction, tutorial support and individual classes. For support functions they include the refectory services, visitor reception and human resources. A planned programme of internal inspections to assess the quality of specified activities is being undertaken. Inspections have included business studies, the tutorial system and staff appraisal. The process also provides further evidence to assess the validity of self-assessment reports. A value-added analysis of the student's input qualifications in relation to their achievements in the college has not been undertaken.

54 Performance indicators have been identified for course performance and for some services relating to students. The course performance

indicators are based on the FEFC performance indicators for responsiveness, effectiveness and achievement. The first targets have been set for these performance indicators for the 1995-96 academic year. For example, a performance indicator for services relating to students is that applications for places should be acknowledged within one week with 95 per cent completed within the target time. An audit trail has been created to allow this to be checked. Other performance indicators use questionnaire data. For example, the performance indicator for student satisfaction with the quality of a course is based on the number of 'good' or 'excellent' replies returned.

55 Reports from external moderators and verifiers are seen by the principal. The head of quality produces an action sheet of key points from these reports and appropriate action is taken when necessary. There is a documented process of internal verification for GNVQ and NVQ courses. Internal verifier procedures are defined in the quality standards and procedures document.

56 The divisional and college self-assessment reports are written under the headings of the Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. They identify strengths and weaknesses for each area. One divisional quality assessment review lacked analytical rigour and there were no clearly-defined, time-limited targets including responsibilities for action. In contrast, another review was clear and objective in highlighting weaknesses. The college's self-assessment report was generally accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses although some weaknesses were absent or insufficiently recognised.

57 The responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the learning experience lies with the appropriate course team. The quality of annual course reviews varies from team to team. Reviews are structured with a front sheet which records the performance indicators. The rest of the review is based on Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement* headings. The review concludes with a proposed plan of action for the following year but does not require comment on the previous year's plan of action. Some of the sections, such as the section on induction, relate back to the quality standards and procedures document, but the main section on teaching and learning does not. Course reviews are collated by the divisional leader who implements key points. Sector managers follow through points outside the control of the divisional leader. Franchised and English for speakers of other languages work is not part of the course review process, although the franchise agreement requires franchisees to be part of the college quality system. Some visits have been made to observe performing arts students on the two franchised performing arts courses.

58 The staff-appraisal system includes observation of teaching for academic staff and can include task observation for support staff. Appraisal is generally by the line manager. The process leads to a confidential report

and to an identification of staff-development needs. Divisional leaders for academic staff, and section leaders for support staff, co-ordinate development bids from within their area. The staff-development officer produces a programme for the college and a comprehensive annual review is undertaken. The development programme, together with the associated budget allocation, is approved by a committee of senior managers. The programme receives final approval by the staff-development committee. The staff-development policy and practice document gives a concise overview of the staff-development process. It identifies programme aims covering areas linked to college objectives such as curriculum development, retraining and updating, and equal opportunities. The governors' personnel and employment committee has terms of reference which include monitoring the staff-development programme but it does not exercise this responsibility. Most staff evaluate the activity undertaken effectively using a structured document which requires responses to four or five relevant questions including the effectiveness of the event and possible dissemination activity.

59 Care is taken over the induction of staff new to the college. The induction programme lasts for eight weeks and includes talks from a range of college staff including the principal, the student services sector manager, the equal opportunities co-ordinator and the staff-development co-ordinator. Staff have the support of a mentor for six months or, in the case of new teachers, one year. The college is working towards achieving Investors in People status during 1996.

RESOURCES

Staffing

60 There are sufficient teachers for the courses offered and they have appropriate qualifications. Approximately 60 per cent of the teachers have a teaching qualification. There is no requirement for new teachers to undertake formal teacher training. Most teachers have had relevant vocational experience outside education but only 13 per cent have had this during the past five years. Effective use is made of part-time teachers who are well integrated with teaching teams and balance the lack of recent industrial or commercial experience among some full-time teachers. Thirty-nine per cent of teachers hold assessor and/or verifier qualifications; other teachers are working towards these awards. Of the full-time teaching staff, 55 per cent are female; there is one woman among the 15 senior staff. The college encourages applications for teaching posts from members of minority ethnic groups and approximately 14 per cent of the full-time staff are currently from these groups. Technician support is organised under a chief technician and provides a flexible service to the college. Support for information technology is provided by a systems manager, an operations manager and a group of computer support technicians, one of whom provides information technology support to the

outreach centres. The personnel function has been strengthened by the appointment of a qualified personnel officer. A range of personnel policies and procedures is being developed. A skills audit covering qualifications and experience and involving all staff has been carried out.

Equipment/learning resources

61 Overall, the range and quality of specialist equipment and materials are appropriate to support the delivery of the courses. Strengths include the modern equipment in the electrical and electronic and the motor vehicle engineering areas, the resources in some of the outreach open learning centres, the media suite, and the language laboratory. Weaknesses include the quantity of resources for three-dimensional studies and textiles, the restricted range of materials in the open study centre and the learner support workshop, and the lack of equipment for skills training in care courses and the NVQ level 3 course in beauty therapy. Classrooms are suitably equipped with teaching aids and there is an effective booking scheme for audio-visual equipment.

62 Over the two years, 1993-94 and 1994-95, a total of £291,000 has been spent on major items of equipment, including £169,000 for information technology. An additional £54,000 was used for the development of the college management information system. The college has adopted a policy of annual bids by budget resource managers for consumable and capital resources. The bidding process is protracted, the quality of the bids vary and some bids contain inadequate justification. Some past allocations have been significantly below the bids but there has been no formal consultation with budget managers. Neither the college nor individual divisions operate rolling programmes for the replacement of equipment.

63 The campus has approximately 300 personal computers, some 70 per cent of which are capable of running modern software packages. The computing equipment in the Abbey annexe is dated. Overall, the balance between general and specialist software is satisfactory and the range of specialist packages is appropriate to the needs of the curriculum. There are no dedicated information technology facilities open to all students on a drop-in basis. Computer rooms within the divisions are available on a rota basis and provide 24 hours of supervised access each week, although the facilities are not available in the evenings after 18.00 hours. The number of machines available at any one session varies between 10 and 50, specialist software packages may not be on the particular machines available and, in a small number of cases, there is inconsistency in the versions of software available for students' use. These arrangements do not encourage the systematic use and development of information technology skills. There is an information technology user group, with representatives from each curriculum area, which is chaired by the college information technology co-ordinator. The group has set itself a

comprehensive set of aims but it has no formal standing within the college committee structure, minutes of its meetings are not circulated outside the group and it does not formally contribute to the college strategic plan. It prepares the annual information technology estimates and, since 1991, £450,000 has been allocated for the purchase of information technology equipment and software. There is a need for a formal information technology strategy, including a clear replacement policy, which will address the long-term development needs of the college.

64 The library is an attractive area but has insufficient capacity to meet all the needs of students and staff. There are 88 study places but there are no areas to meet the differing needs of individual and group users of the library. A small area with soft seating is available near the periodicals display but the same area is also used for viewing video material and this can be a distraction to other users. The library is well used by students and there is an effective system for monitoring the use of the various facilities. The library holds approximately 22,500 books, 500 audio-visual items and 90 periodicals. The bookstock is reviewed on a regular basis and, since 1992, approximately 5,000 volumes have been withdrawn and 3,000 new books added. Despite this, the bookstocks in a number of subject areas, including science, business, leisure, and social care, are out of date and/or inadequate. Students have access to a number of compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROMs) databases including newspapers, bibliographies and abstracts, as well as on-line access to services including the De Montfort University library catalogue. The current library budget is £21,000 and divisional funding bids for books and other materials are co-ordinated by the librarian. There are effective informal links with some teaching staff. The librarian has begun a programme of meetings with sector managers and divisional staff to improve communications. Library staff provide several alternative introductions to the library which range from a 15-minute basic introduction to a one-hour detailed tour and activity session. More specialist support is being developed, for example, for degree students. There is a quiet study room for degree and access students but it is remote from the library and has no learning resources.

65 The open study centre is part of the learning resources provision of the college. It provides a programme of support in mathematics and English at all levels as well as help with foreign languages and study skills. Students are also encouraged to use the centre as a drop-in centre for self-study. It has a small number of study places, computers, and basic worksheets available for students' use. In contrast, a good deal of paper and linked audio material has been developed for adult basic education in some outreach centres. Open learning has been identified as a priority by the college in its strategic plan but, so far, developments have not been co-ordinated. A clearer and more detailed strategy which also addresses the implications for accommodation is needed.

Accommodation

66 The college is located on a compact site to the north-west of the city centre. It is inadequately signposted and is approached by a narrow lane. Most of the main teaching areas are accommodated in three linked buildings. Additionally, a former warehouse on the campus has been imaginatively converted to accommodate computing and the library in 1990. An adjacent building erected at the same time provides high-quality science accommodation. Classrooms and workshop facilities for electrical installation occupy separate and appropriate purpose-built accommodation. A former primary school dating from 1860, which houses the nursery, music and some English for speakers of other languages provision, is close to the college as is the purpose-built foundry. The Wyvern centre is approximately a kilometre nearer to the city centre and is being converted to provide new hairdressing and beauty therapy facilities. The college also uses 50 centres throughout the city.

67 Overall there is a satisfactory balance between general and specialist accommodation. The standard of teaching accommodation brought into use since 1990 is generally high and a programme to gradually improve the remainder has begun. This has created some good areas, including the business studies information technology suite and the multi-purpose laboratory for electrical and electronic engineering. Some classrooms have also been refurbished to provide a brighter and more modern learning environment. Other classrooms and specialist areas remain drab and have a dated and worn appearance. Some laboratories have been converted to computer rooms but retain the original benching and lack an appropriate modern information technology environment. Some refurbishment of the Abbey annexe has taken place but much of its accommodation is of a poor quality. Most teaching and circulation areas are maintained in a clean and tidy condition. Corridors are generally bare and lack wall displays to promote and identify the subject areas and to show students' achievements.

68 The refectory is bright, attractive and has modern furniture. Meals are provided until the early evening for evening class students and there are nearby vending machines and adequate additional seating. Students have access to a gymnasium and a wide range of fitness equipment. The students' union building is small and offers a small range of facilities. Mature students have their own lounge but it is uninviting and lacking in facilities.

69 Access for wheelchair users is restricted. Only one building has a lift. Ramps provide access to all ground floors and, where possible, classes are timetabled in ground floor locations.

70 The existing accommodation strategy needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is clearly linked to the curriculum planning process and that it addresses systematically the development and maintenance needs of the institution. The allocation of teaching accommodation is centrally

co-ordinated and an effective system of monitoring room utilisation is in operation. A comprehensive accommodation survey has been undertaken and this has identified under utilisation as an issue for the college. The survey has highlighted a number of areas where decisions need to be taken on the future development of the accommodation to meet both the needs of the developing curriculum and the requirement to operate efficiently.

71 There is a 10 year programme of planned building maintenance dating from 1994. The total budget is £1.5 million which includes £300,000 to deal with the removal of asbestos and the replacement of panels in one of the linked buildings. In 1994-95 the routine maintenance budget was £250,000 which included some non-capital special projects. The corresponding budget for 1995-96 has been reduced from £50,000 to £30,000. So far, less than 10 per cent of the £240,000 made available in 1995-96 under the Hunter programme has been spent.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

72 Particular strengths of the college are:

- success in attracting an increasingly wide range of students
- the provision offered in centres outside the main campus
- effective individual elements of recruitment, guidance and support
- the access to higher education programme
- the systematic approach to the development of quality assurance.

73 In order to build on its strengths and to improve further its provision, the college needs to address the following:

- greater attention to corporate strategy
- systematic use of information
- appropriate delegation of management authority
- improved planning processes
- a further improvement in attendance and retention rates
- the systematic development of accommodation
- greater access to independent study materials for students and associated support.

FIGURES

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- 1 Student numbers by age (as at November 1995)

 - 2 Student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)

 - 3 Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)

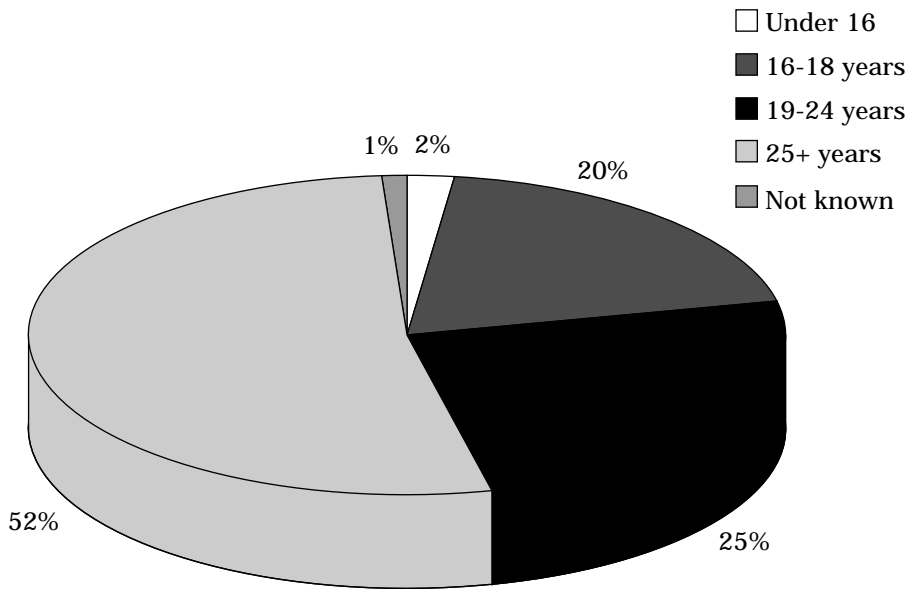
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

Figure 1

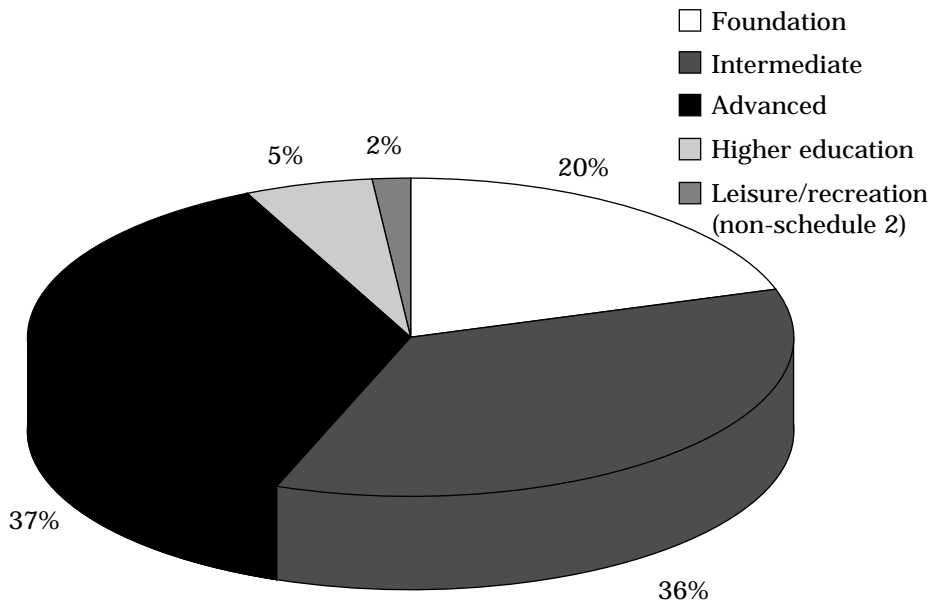
Charles Keene College of Further Education: student numbers by age (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 7,375

Figure 2

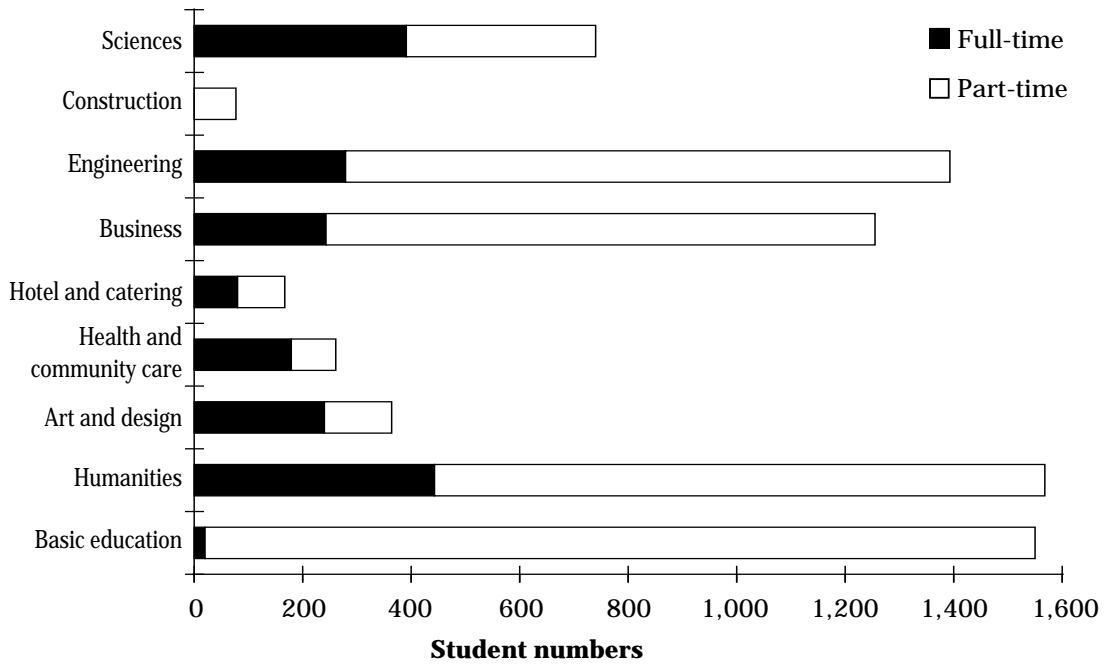
Charles Keene College of Further Education: student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 7,375

Figure 3

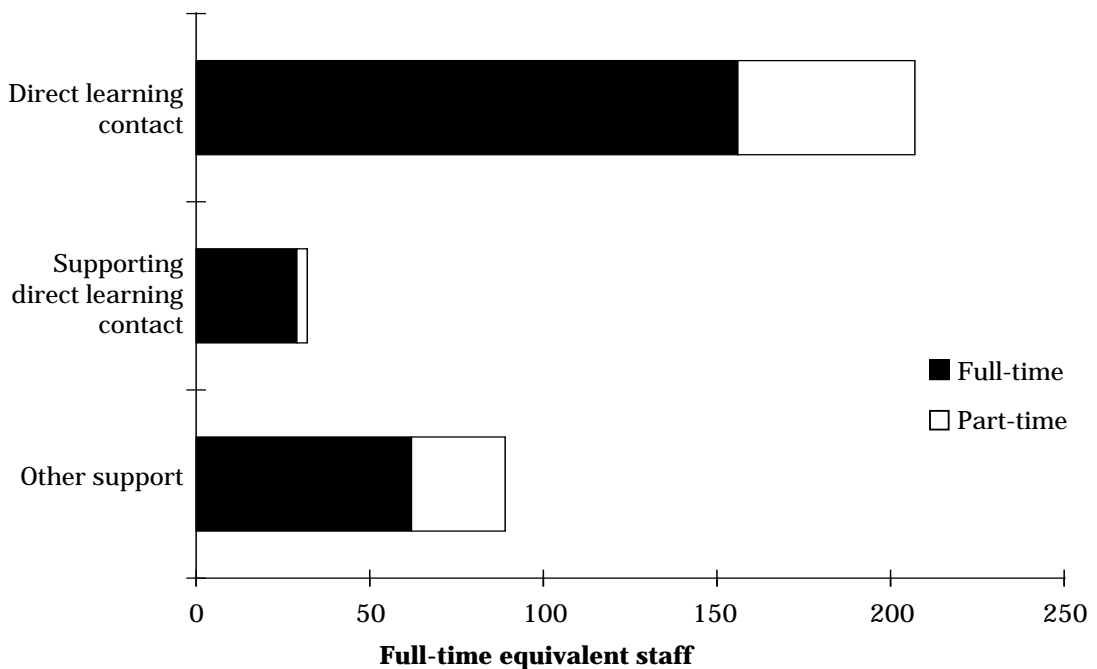
Charles Keene College of Further Education: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 7,375

Figure 4

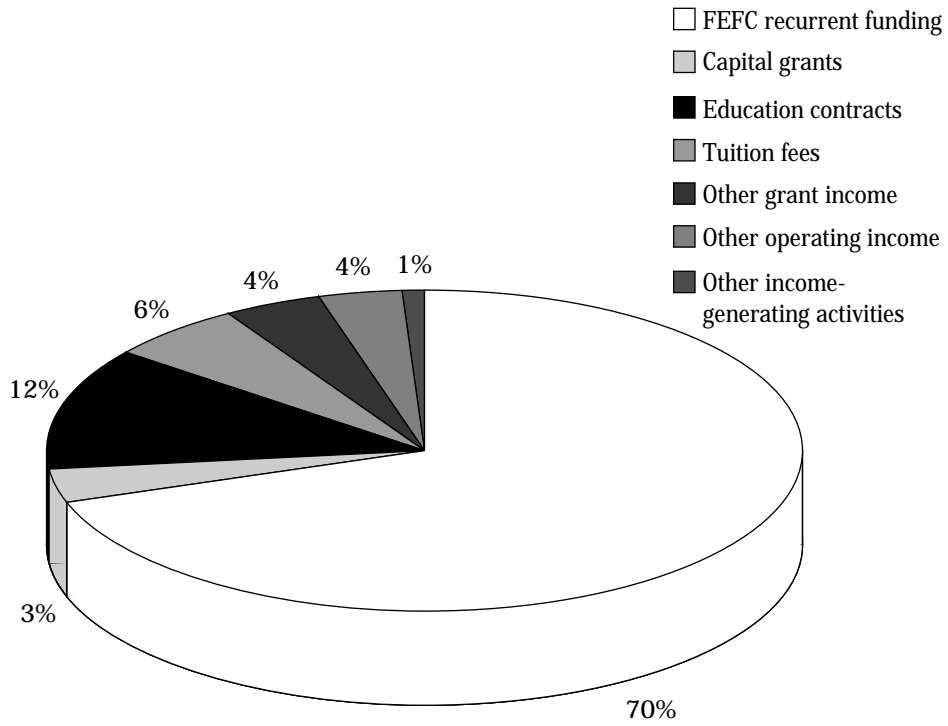
Charles Keene College of Further Education: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)



Full-time equivalent staff: 328

Figure 5

Charles Keene College of Further Education: income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Income: £9,250,000

Figure 6

Charles Keene College of Further Education: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £10,781,000

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