

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

**Clarendon
College,
Nottingham**

February 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 02/96

CLARENDON COLLEGE, NOTTINGHAM
EAST MIDLANDS REGION
Inspected May-October 1995

Summary

Clarendon College, Nottingham is a dynamic and forward-looking institution which benefits from effective governance and management. The planning process is well developed. The quality of leadership in the college results in a strong sense of shared purpose and an awareness of efficiency which permeates the organisation. The college offers an extensive vocational curriculum designed to meet the needs of the business, leisure, caring and media industries. Reaching out to the community, raising the profile of local industry and training the workforce are common threads which run through all aspects of the college's work. The college is successful in attracting people who have not normally considered entering further education. There are comprehensive recruitment and guidance services and a strong emphasis on support for students' progress. Teachers use varied and appropriate teaching methods. Core skills are systematically developed. Examination results for students aged 16-18 are satisfactory and they are generally better than this for the majority of students who are aged 19 or over. There has been a significant improvement in provisional GCSE results for 1994-95 compared with previous years. Students are well prepared for employment opportunities. However, providing sufficient high-quality accommodation for staff and students remains the major issue facing the college. The college should: continue to develop a consistent and rigorous framework for quality assurance; raise the levels of students' achievements in some areas of work; and improve its library and computing facilities.

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		1
Quality assurance		2
Resources:	staffing	1
	equipment/learning resources	2
	accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science and mathematics	2	Design, fashion and art	1
Business	1	Performing arts and media	1
Office administration	1	Modern	
Hotel and catering	1	languages/humanities	1
Leisure studies	2	Basic education	2
Health and social care	2	Community network	3
Hairdressing and beauty	1		

INTRODUCTION

1 The college was inspected between May and October 1995. Twenty-one inspectors spent 77 days carrying out the inspection. They observed 206 learning sessions involving approximately 2,600 students. Discussions were held with staff, students, college governors, representatives from industry and the local community, and the Greater Nottingham Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). A range of written evidence was also examined including students' work, the college's strategic plan and policy documents.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Clarendon College, Nottingham was founded in 1919 and established as a general further education college in 1948. It is housed in 12 buildings, all within a mile of the city centre of Nottingham. The college also delivers programmes in over 150 community venues. The Greater Nottingham TEC area has a population of 607,500, more than 60 per cent of the population of Nottinghamshire. In July 1995, unemployment in the area was 10.4 per cent, compared with 9.7 per cent for the United Kingdom. In the four electoral wards closest to the college, unemployment rates range from 23.3 per cent to 36 per cent. Nearly 6 per cent of the population in the Greater Nottingham TEC area, compared with 16.5 per cent of the college's students, are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

3 In 1994-95, 9 per cent of the 28,618 enrolments to the college were students aged 16-18; 69 per cent were over 25. Forty per cent of the students over 18 were eligible for fee remission and a third were in receipt of state benefits. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

4 The college is one of eight sector colleges in the Nottingham conurbation: there are five general further education colleges, one tertiary college and two sixth form colleges. Secondary schools in the city provide for 11-16 year old pupils. Clarendon College is an associate college of Nottingham Trent University and has links with the University of Nottingham, Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Central England. It delivers prison education services within three Nottinghamshire prisons. The college has a contract with Nottinghamshire County Council to provide adult leisure education classes.

5 The college is organised into three functional areas: the principalship, corporate services directorates and curriculum directorates. Five corporate services directors, who report to the principal, are responsible for finance, human resources, quality, students and learning, and planning and systems. The 10 curriculum directors and the cross-college managers for information and business development report to the deputy principal. The college employed 418 full-time equivalent staff in 1994-95. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

6 In its mission statement the college states that it 'provides a high-quality education and training service to meet the lifelong learning needs of the whole community', and that it is committed to work in partnership in making its contribution to the achievement of individuals, the economic and social development of its communities and the achievement of the national targets for education and training.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 Clarendon College offers an extensive vocational curriculum designed to meet the needs of the service sector industries within and beyond the East Midlands. The curriculum includes National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. There is particular support for the clothing and the textile design and manufacturing industries in the region. The college provides programmes in languages, basic education, English for speakers of other languages, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and access to higher education. Science and information technology programmes are more recent developments. The range of courses, which extends from foundation to higher education level, provides opportunities for students of all abilities to study and progress. Many programmes place great emphasis on progression to employment as the desired objective.

8 The college markets its courses successfully. Many courses have substantial waiting lists. Effective use is made of events such as award ceremonies, performances and exhibitions to celebrate the success of students and to publicise provision. Courses which are not recruiting successfully are subjected to a rigorous review process and new courses are launched only after a careful testing of the market.

9 Links with local schools are strong. Many activities are focused on building a relationship with prospective students at an early stage. These include opportunities for school pupils to 'shadow' students at the college and to sample courses. The college has been the driving force behind the establishment of a management advisory group involving local schools and colleges. Recently, work has been undertaken with two local secondary schools to help low-achieving pupils gain qualifications. The schools and the college are working together to encourage such pupils to progress to further education.

10 The college's international strategy is designed to benefit students and provide ways of improving quality. The college works closely with several colleges in North America and Europe. Exchange visits and joint staff conferences are arranged to enable staff to share good practice in teaching and curriculum design.

11 The college has a strong commitment to meeting community needs. It has established a good working relationship with Greater Nottingham TEC; there is effective collaboration at all levels within the two organisations. One partnership initiative, aimed at raising the profile of

the traditional textile industry in Nottingham and promoting its regeneration, involves the college, the TEC and other agencies working together with the clothing and textile employers to implement a training strategy. The college provides programmes for new entrants to the industry as well as training designed for existing workers and adults returning to work. Another initiative, promoted jointly with the health authority and social services, involves the Clumber Day Centre which has been established so that carers can leave their charges in the centre while they themselves attend college courses to update their skills or to retrain. The centre is staffed by people with appropriate qualifications, registered with social services and endorsed by the Carers' Federation and Nottingham Health Authority.

12 The college has a good reputation amongst employers for meeting their requirements in a flexible way. Employers have a direct influence on the content of courses and modes of delivery. Specially-designed programmes allow students to enter and leave at points which suit them. Staff in the various curriculum areas liaise with employers in different ways. For example, there is an effective catering employers advisory committee, part of whose role is to raise the profile of catering as a career. Many courses are delivered on customers' premises, some through franchising arrangements. Clarendon Business Services is the college's successful commercial arm, delivering full-cost courses to organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors.

13 Improving the skills of people in deprived areas is an important part of the college's mission and there is a clear focus on preparing students for further study. Outreach provision is delivered mainly through a community access network. The college has invested in the management of the network by appointing two regional co-ordinators, one in the East Midlands and one in London. An interesting aspect of the community provision is the London-based work with Kurdish refugees from Turkey, a newly identified group with distinctive educational needs. Arrangements for community education and training include direct delivery, where the college hires tutors and runs courses, and franchises under which community organisations themselves run courses for their members. An English for speakers of other languages home tuition scheme has been established using volunteers. Courses on childcare are being developed in the community. At the time of the inspection, there were 102 groups and 1,719 students registered in the network. One effect of the community network's operations has been to raise parents' awareness of opportunities for their children, especially amongst minority ethnic groups.

14 In providing for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the college has shifted the emphasis from discrete classes in the community towards the integration of provision for those students with mainstream programmes delivered at the main college sites. The college has doubled its provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities since

1993. Students attend the college full time following individualised study programmes within the mainstream curriculum. The college also offers life skills classes which prepare students for further basic education. The college's commitment to students with learning difficulties shows itself in a number of ways. A student who uses a wheelchair assisted with a survey of the college sites and a guide to the college for wheelchair users is being produced. A weekly group is run for people with head injuries, enabling its members to provide mutual support and encouraging access to college courses. An occupational therapist acts as tutor to this group. The college is also involved in helping those in the community with hearing impairments. There are special links with sympathetic employers to ensure that students with special needs can undertake carefully-selected work placements.

15 Mental health work is well advanced. The college has progressed from using part-time tutors to provide assistance with rehabilitation to appointing a full-time tutor whose responsibilities include addiction forensic services. There have been some 200 referrals for counselling and guidance in two years. Assistance is given on an individual basis. There is one-to-one support for students through enrolment procedures and further help with programmes of study. Short courses have also been introduced as part of the mental health service; many of the participants in these courses progress to mainstream courses. Some college tutors have been trained to help in the recognition and referral of students with mental health problems.

16 The college has a contract with the Home Office to provide education at three Nottinghamshire prisons. It works within the prison regimes to provide inmates with courses to improve their basic skills and to develop their vocational and educational opportunities. The prison education departments have achieved the quality mark certificate, awarded by the basic skills agency, for the development of occupational basic skills.

17 The college is active in promoting equal opportunities. The equal opportunities policy and an entitlement statement have been accepted by the academic board and the corporation. The 1993 planning cycle identified as a priority an increase in the recruitment of students from groups not normally involved in further education. Successful initiatives have included programmes for the Muslim Women's Association, introduction to management skills and training, accredited courses for the African Caribbean Nationals Association, courses for groups on the Crabtree Farm Estate and an assertiveness course for women with learning difficulties. Work is also being undertaken to develop relevant skills within community organisations with whom partnership arrangements exist. This includes free initial teacher training and management development for managers of community centres and voluntary body committee members. The college's commitment to equal opportunities is also evident in the facilities, including a prayer room, which are provided to take account of the varying religious backgrounds of staff and students.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

18 Governors fulfil their duties effectively. The current membership of the corporation comprises the principal, two staff governors, four co-opted governors (including one vacancy) and 11 business members including a nominee from Greater Nottingham TEC. In addition to the finance and resources, audit, and employment and remuneration committees, the board has extended its committee structure to include an estates and health and safety committee and a curriculum and quality committee. This reflects the key part that accommodation and quality improvement hold in the college's strategy. An executive group has been formed to consider issues of board membership and procedure, and to carry out the principal's job performance review. The board has set up a working party to examine its effectiveness and make recommendations for changes in composition and procedure. The result of this has been a resolution to increase the membership by two independent members to 20. The criteria for new members have been drawn up and the search process begun.

19 Governors are well aware of issues of public accountability and probity. A code of practice has been accepted and there is a register of interests. New governors receive an induction from the principal and chair of the corporation. Continuous training occurs. The college has produced its own guide for governors. This is a useful document which includes information on curriculum and personnel as well as material related to governance; it is revised annually. Governors are well known to many staff through their wide involvement in college activities.

20 The planning process in the college is well developed; the wide level of participation in the process has helped to develop a strong team ethos within the college and high-quality leadership has fostered a strong sense of shared purpose. Governors initiate the strategic planning cycle at an autumn conference where their ambitions for the college are clarified. These broad aims are translated into corporate objectives at a management conference and college teams subsequently devise their own plans to contribute to these objectives. Team managers are required to address quantitative targets set by the principalship. The team's plans are submitted to the principalship for approval and amended, where necessary, in consultation with team members. The college's budget is set to meet its declared strategic objectives and any mismatch between the demand for, and availability of, resources is discussed and priorities for expenditure are determined. The budget is debated fully by the governors. Reports on the progress towards achieving planned targets are produced during the year and an annual review informs the next planning cycle. It is not sufficiently clear how college-wide policies are related to strategic planning. Some policies, such as those for health and safety and personnel, have been established by an appropriate consultative procedure and are reviewed periodically. Other policy documents are of more uncertain status and are not subject to regular review and monitoring.

21 The college management team comprises the principalship, curriculum directors, corporate service directors and key cross-college managers. Management responsibilities are clearly assigned. Despite their heavy workload, middle managers are highly effective and are committed to continuous improvement in the service they offer. Managers have a good understanding of their areas, the tools and techniques of management and the issues facing further education in general and the college in particular. Sections are efficiently administered, particularly where the administrative support staff identify closely with the section team. The dating of documents and the origin would improve the flow of information. Managers are self-critical, open to suggestions for improvement and sensitive to opportunities for their own and their section members' professional development. The degree of risk taking is tempered by a concern for efficiency which staff understand and share. Managers terminate new projects when the costs are perceived to outweigh the benefits. No penalties are attached to taking such action; managers at all levels are supported in implementing decisions. The principalship plays a key part in developing managers, delegating authority appropriately and supporting innovative projects. Good practice is quickly identified and disseminated. The college has successfully managed growth of 28.6 per cent between 1993-94 and 1994-95.

22 College managers are well aware of funding issues. The college's average level of funding for 1995-96 is £14.36 per unit. The median for general further education colleges is £17.84 and the median for the sector is £18.56. Curriculum areas are developing a modelling process using a specific departmental average level of funding figure. This enables managers to examine their contribution to the corporate target of funded units of activity and to investigate the impact of retention, achievement and teaching patterns on efficiency. The overhead costs of central functions are also converted to units and assigned to departments, with the aim of increasing departments' awareness of, and accountability for, such costs. Whilst some of the assumptions that underpin the pilot work are still crude, these activities illustrate the widespread understanding of efficiency that underpins the college's work. Staff and governor training sessions promote financial awareness. The college's central finance team produces regular financial monitoring statements. However, the software used does not provide sufficient detail to enable departments to monitor effectively their expenditure, so managers have developed their own monitoring instruments for this purpose. The strengthening of control systems over the part-time staffing budget which is delegated to each director is a timely development.

23 The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

24 Governors and managers receive reports from the college's central information services. The range of information is comprehensive although there is still room for improvement in the accuracy, degree of sophistication

and level of detail included. Information reports are increasingly used to inform decision making at all levels. The frequency of reports is adjusted to the needs of the users but the service is highly responsive to requests for additional information and alternative reports. Central information services have developed effective reporting on GCE A level subjects as well as providing course-based information to curriculum teams. The college's human resources team supply regular reports on staffing to teams, the principalship and the governors. The team is exploiting the capability of the software to develop increasingly accurate methods of recording and analysing the information.

25 Many aspects of internal communication work well. College-wide consultation is taking place on a declaration of good practice in communication, which includes appropriate standards. Meetings are run effectively. They have clear agendas, supporting information papers, and are conducted at a brisk pace. Minutes are concise and accurate and matters raised at one meeting are followed up at subsequent meetings. Curriculum and corporate service teams are central to the flow of information. The academic board also serves as an important vehicle for communication between the principal and a cross-section of staff. The college recognises a need to strengthen communication between staff teams and to improve methods of formal communication with part-time staff.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

26 The corporate services directorate of students and learning has responsibility for guidance, welfare, counselling, additional learning support, and careers guidance. In addition it is responsible for developing learning support systems.

27 There is comprehensive information on college courses and arrangements for guidance and enrolment are well publicised. Customer services and reception deal with applicants' enquiries promptly, providing initial advice and guidance. Where further advice on careers or study programmes is required, this is available from a knowledgeable central advice team. Advice and guidance on specific study programmes are provided by specialist curriculum staff. Some 40 students identified as having additional learning needs during the advice and guidance process were invited to attend assessment sessions during the summer in order to determine more precisely the extent of those needs. Individual support programmes are available for the September start of the academic year. An academic staff rota system is in place during the latter part of August to deal with the rush of late applicants. The quality of the advice provided is high.

28 The enrolment arrangements for 1995 were good. The college set up an extended postal enrolment service and there was a free park and ride service scheme for those visiting the college. Additional staff were recruited

and equipment leased to enable enrolments to be registered smoothly. During the enrolment period, representatives from the benefits agency attended the college and were able to provide general guidance to potential students. Staff from the agency continue to visit the college on a fortnightly basis. The effectiveness of this service has yet to be evaluated but other aspects of the enrolment process are evaluated against the quality targets which the college has set.

29 The induction process is generally effective in making students aware of the college and its facilities, introducing them to their programmes of study and familiarising them with their rights and responsibilities. However, curriculum teams are free to design their own induction programmes and inconsistencies in the provision they offer mean that some students receive a better service than others. The college is reviewing its induction procedures with the aim of identifying and spreading the good practice which exists. A deputy head of a local school has been seconded to the college to advise on the transition arrangements, including enrolment and induction, for students transferring from school to college. Her recommendations will be shared with other members of the local schools and college's management group.

30 All full-time students are assessed for their competence in numeracy and communication. In the majority of cases, a basic skills test is used but, in other study programmes, self-diagnosis is considered more appropriate and is proving effective. The college is the United Kingdom's lead partner in implementing a pilot for computer-based diagnosis of students' needs. In 1995, almost 30 per cent of the full-time students included in the pilot were operating at or below stage 1 in reading skills and 43 per cent at or below stage 1 in numeracy when they entered the college.

31 In most cases, core skills are delivered and assessed through vocational programmes. Support is provided on a group or individual basis. Students identified as requiring additional learning support are referred for further diagnosis to the learning support team who devise individual learning programmes. These then form an important part of the student's plan for personal improvement. In some instances, students are counselled to change the level of their course. Support is available in numeracy and mathematics, communication including English for speakers of other languages, information technology and study skills. Forty staff hours are allocated specifically for the development of students' oral communication skills. On some courses, additional staffing is used to help with numeracy and communication or to provide English language support. Within GNVQ programmes, support for core skills development is well established and effective. On most courses, there are significant efforts to make core skills an integral element of main course assignments. For example, information technology teachers establish links with particular curriculum areas to review assignments and identify where using information technology can support and improve the work.

Mathematics staff attend some course team meetings to advise on the teaching of numeracy. There are regular meetings of staff from each of the curriculum teams who have responsibility within their own team for the development and assessment of the application of number skills. This has helped to create a greater understanding of the standards required and to make the recording of achievement more consistent.

32 Students with disabilities are assessed and the required support is provided. There are eight full-time staff providing specialist classroom support and these are supplemented by other staff recruited as and when demands arise. The classroom support staff have expertise in particular curriculum areas and are involved with lecturers in planning and delivering the courses. Support for the hearing impaired is now well developed. Academic staff involved in teaching these students receive relevant training. Support for visually impaired students is limited and it is one of the college's current objectives to improve this service.

33 The college's new tutorial system has been designed to take account of students whose study programme spans a number of curriculum areas. The aim of the system is to ensure that there is a teacher who has an oversight of the student's welfare and academic progress. It also enables students to keep the same 'progression tutor' throughout their time at the college, even if they move from one course to another. The progression tutor has responsibility for monitoring overall progress in developing personal skills, following up the student's personal improvement plan, general welfare advice and ensuring the student receives appropriate careers guidance. The academic tutor remains the point of contact for all issues related to a student's main course and is responsible to the curriculum director. In many cases, particularly in full-time vocational provision, the academic tutor and progression tutor are the same person. In progression tutor sessions, there is a strong emphasis on action planning, in which students set their own learning objectives and review their own progress. Completion of the national record of achievement is voluntary. Tutors have links with parents, guardians and employers. Progress reports on students are sent out twice a year. Parents are also invited to parents evenings and attendance at these is generally high. The quality of the evenings is evaluated through questionnaires completed by parents. They indicate a high level of satisfaction.

34 Students are encouraged to take responsibility for seeking careers advice. There are a number of options open to them. Careers guidance is available from tutors, the central advice team and Guideline, the local careers agency. Careers information, including computer-based software, is readily available. Students appear to take good advantage of these opportunities.

35 Providing high-quality guidance and support to students on courses franchised to community groups has proved a challenge for the college. It has made good progress in adapting its own procedures although some

difficulties remain. There is an equal opportunities leaflet, an amended college charter and a handbook specifically designed for students on the network. Each group follows a structured induction programme delivered by the college's full-time staff. Progression tutoring is available by telephone if necessary. All franchise students can become members of the college's student union. Locally-based students have ready access to college facilities; others fail to receive the same quality of initial guidance, access to learning support, careers guidance and counselling.

36 The college offers a good range of subsidised childcare facilities. A parent-carer charter has been produced. There are both day and sessional playgroup and nursery facilities and after-school care is available for 6-14 year olds up to 21.00 hours.

37 Student representatives are elected on a course basis. They meet staff regularly and have a meeting with the principal each term. The system works effectively in allowing students to present their views. The student union receives financial support and is provided with a part-time administrative assistant. At present, the union has a low profile within the college.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

38 Strengths outweighed weaknesses in 81 per cent of the classes inspected. This is much higher than the average percentage for colleges inspected in the 1994-95 quadrennial inspection round. Almost half the lessons observed were graded 1 by inspectors. Weaknesses outweighed the strengths in only 2 per cent of sessions. The following table summarises the grades awarded to the sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level	17	15	6	1	0	39
GCSE	2	2	1	0	0	5
GNVQ	20	8	7	0	0	35
NVQ	8	10	3	0	0	21
Access to higher education	3	2	4	0	0	9
Higher education	3	1	0	0	0	4
Other	48	28	14	3	0	93
Total	101	66	35	4	0	206

39 The average level of attendance across a range of courses on a sample day during the inspection was 80.5 per cent.

40 Science courses have clear schemes of work which are shared with students. Handouts and learning materials are well prepared. A variety of teaching and learning methods is used in classes. Learning objectives

are not always met, mainly because some lessons are not adequately planned. Students studying numeracy and mathematics are well supported in the classroom and in the learning resource centres. Learning difficulties are dealt with sensitively. Students receive a wide range of high-quality learning materials and these are used effectively to provide them with activities appropriate to their abilities. Problems are set in realistic contexts which lie within the students' experiences. Practical tasks are designed to widen their interests. There are opportunities for students to make their own comments when they hand in completed work. Work is regularly marked and teachers provide useful feedback. Records of students' progress are comprehensive and attendance is closely monitored. Good organisation and planning has led to a successful introduction of the advanced, intermediate and foundation GNVQ in information technology. The level of support during practical sessions helps full-time students to develop appropriate computing skills.

41 Business, professional and management studies students receive a good learning experience. Expectations for achievement are high. Students benefit from working to identified learning targets. Teachers regularly monitor their action plans. Excellent teaching and learning schemes, and detailed lesson plans, ensure a comprehensive coverage of the syllabus. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods, including team teaching. They also offer students the opportunity for independent learning. Students with hearing impairment who wish to become teachers or signers receive excellent support. Staff are following up absences at an early stage in the course in order to improve current levels of attendance. Attendance on a sample day in October 1995 was 75 per cent.

42 Office technology and administration sessions are well planned and have clear learning targets. Teachers work with students to guide and support but they are not over directive. Students are encouraged to seek solutions, develop their own ideas and manage their own workload. Staff are knowledgeable and up to date in their subject areas. They are enthusiastic and give unstintingly of their time. They set standards of excellence which motivate students and encourage them to raise their sights. In shorthand skills sessions, good-humoured competition between groups helps to encourage learning. Instant feedback is given wherever possible so that students know their results and can learn from teachers' comments. The business centre provides a valuable realistic work environment. NVQ students also undertake work experience programmes and learn to develop balanced portfolios of their work.

43 In catering, the standards of teaching and learning are high. Practical sessions have appropriate objectives. Teachers are skilled; students come prepared for work and their performance is effectively monitored and evaluated. Theory classes are underpinned by sound schemes of work. Lessons have stated aims, teachers' expositions are clear, relevant and up to date and there are opportunities for students to discuss issues and

to develop their own ideas. Good use is made of visual aids and well-structured handouts. In NVQ programmes, planning for the assessment of skills is thorough and provides the opportunity for students to be accredited as soon as they achieve the necessary competence. Students undertake supervised work experience and educational visits. They develop their personal skills in practical food service and reception studies where they serve the general public. They are well prepared for employment.

44 In leisure and tourism, the college offers clear study routes, enabling students to progress from foundation to higher national diploma level. GNVQ students are offered a wide range of relevant learning activities. There is a particularly stimulating mixture of theory and practice in first aid. Core skills are developed in the context of work related to the sports industry and this enables students to appreciate their relevance. There is a wide choice of additional option courses leading to coaching qualifications in sport and sports leadership.

45 In the best health classes, students make use of excellent learning materials. Clear instructions provided by teachers help to encourage lively and effective group work. Teachers use questions effectively and students respond well. However, some students experience too narrow a range of methods of working and teachers do not always share the good practice which exists. Full-time students are issued with course handbooks; assignments are well documented and the criteria for assessment are clear. Teachers' marking is helpful to students. It is often checked by another member of staff.

46 Hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes are well planned. Classes have clear aims and objectives and there is systematic recording of students' achievement. Students are expected to take care over the timing of treatments and to work consistently to commercial standards. Teachers encourage them to take pride in their work and they give praise wherever this is appropriate. Students' sessions with clients are fully exploited for assessment purposes. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported; assignments and workbooks have been developed especially for them. Common core skills are not yet integrated effectively with other aspects of provision.

47 Energy, enthusiasm and the hard work of staff and students are characteristics of performing arts and media provision. Strong links with the community create opportunities for performance to a professional standard and interesting and relevant assignments are built on these opportunities. Many assessment activities are sufficiently imaginative to engage the interest of learners. Teams of staff co-operate to plan and deliver well-organised programmes and there are good working relationships between teachers and students. Students are drawn from different programmes and they integrate well. Students are appropriately challenged. Their responsibilities to others are made clear and the disciplines which are fundamental to creative expression are reinforced

constantly. This rigorous approach to the acquisition of fundamental skills enables them to achieve high standards. Provision for music, encompassing both classical and popular music, is of a very high standard. Activities are suitably varied. Students are interested and learn effectively. Generous financial support is provided for individual instrumental tuition and there is a consistent emphasis on practical music making.

48 There is a positive working atmosphere in the design, fashion and art section. Links with sectors of the industry are strong and this results in students being able to draw on industrial visits and work placements and to undertake realistic projects. The majority of the provision is located in a refurbished Victorian city centre building in the heart of the Nottingham clothing industry. Teaching methods are appropriate to the subject matter and the abilities of the students. In the majority of sessions, students work independently in studios or workshops with personal tuition available from staff. They work purposefully and have access to a variety of learning support materials including books and periodicals, slides, worksheets, project briefs and technical samples. Teachers track students' progress and keep thorough records of their achievements.

49 The standard of work in humanities is high, and particularly so in modern languages. Teachers employ a wide range of teaching methods. In languages teaching, there is an appropriate emphasis on communication skills which are taught effectively within a cultural context. Invariably the objectives and the contexts of humanities lessons are explained to students. The work is appropriately challenging. Students engage in a variety of learning activities. They are involved thoroughly in what they are doing. They are happy to raise questions and to debate issues frankly. Group discussions are lively. Teachers use well-directed questions to test students' learning. Resource materials are of high quality. Teachers share their notes and handouts and this helps them to maintain consistent standards. Humanities base rooms are enhanced by displays of thematically related work. There are some excellent course handbooks which include calendars for the submission of assignments.

50 The college provides a successful access programme for adult students with no previous qualifications who wish to enter higher education. The programme is carefully designed to support students and to help build their confidence. The curriculum is divided into units or modules, each carrying Open College accreditation. Students have freedom to construct their own programmes, to choose the most suitable mode of attendance and to decide how long they wish to take to gain the number of module credits necessary to complete the course successfully. The quality of teaching is high. The present system for recording students' achievements, particularly partial achievements through the acquisition of credits, is not sufficiently developed.

51 English provision for speakers of other languages is located at the Berridge Centre, in other outreach centres, at Nottingham University and in students' homes. Home tuition is delivered by volunteers who are

trained by the college. The curriculum area has strong links with the community. There is a good recording system which includes information on students' achievements from initial interviews to final assessment, lesson plans and schemes of work for both Open College and other external accreditation. The skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking are assessed separately and students are placed accordingly in the appropriate level of class. There is a thorough system for monitoring students' progress and giving them guidance. However, opportunities for progression from English courses for speakers of other languages to mainstream courses in the college is not made sufficiently clear, and there is no bridge to facilitate student access to mainstream provision. Links with vocational areas within the college need strengthening. Adult basic education students complete diagnostic assessments and then negotiate individual learning programmes. There is strong emphasis on the outcomes of learning and on accreditation. Students receive strong support from tutors.

52 Two-thirds of the 24 community network classes inspected were in Nottingham. The others were located in Coventry, Wolverhampton and London. Classes cover a wide range of curriculum areas including art and design, computing, basic skills and humanities. Many of the courses are well planned. Students learn in a supportive atmosphere and there are excellent working relationships between staff and students. Strengths outweighed weaknesses in 58 per cent of the sessions inspected. Weaknesses arise from the isolation in which many of the network's teachers work. There are few opportunities to share good practice. Teaching is not always pitched at an appropriate level and students experience too narrow a range of methods of working. In some cases, students' work is not checked with sufficient consistency.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

53 Vocational courses comprise 83 per cent of the college's work. Eighty-two per cent of students aged 16-18 in their final year of study on the vocational courses included in the 1994 performance tables by the Department for Education (now the Department for Education and Employment) were successful compared with an average for England of 81.2 per cent. This places the college in the middle third of colleges within the sector on this performance measure. However, more than three-quarters of the final year entries on vocational courses were of students aged 19 or over, who are not included in the Department's performance tables. The examination results for these students, although variable, were better overall.

54 In business, management and professional studies, students develop appropriate levels of knowledge, understanding and skill. Individual students have achieved notable success in national examinations and awards. A GNVQ intermediate business student won the bronze award from the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) as student of the year in 1995 and an advanced student came first in the 'links-up'

business student of the year award. Unusually, seven students studying GNVQ advanced business achieved level 4 in application of number. All 23 students were successful in the Association of Accounting Technicians final membership examination. In information technology and administration, students produce work of a professional standard, demonstrating a high level of accuracy and good presentation skills. Students have a thorough understanding of the standards expected in industry and commerce. NVQ portfolios are good, particularly at level 3. The accreditation of students' prior learning has created a fast-track route to the achievement of a full NVQ level 3.

55 Catering students achieve high standards. They demonstrate good skills, high standards of presentation and the ability to work as a team. In sports and leisure, NVQ portfolios are well presented and of a high standard. There is a particularly noteworthy standard of achievement on the Institute of Sports and Recreational Management qualification. In hairdressing and beauty, students' level of achievement is at or above the national average with 56 per cent of level 2 hairdressing students achieving the full NVQ certificate. In health and social care, there are good results on the first GNVQ mandatory tests but examination results on year-two care courses are below average at 61 per cent. The number of student withdrawals is a cause for concern.

56 Students achieve success in performing arts programmes. Music students demonstrate their achievements publicly in their collective and individual performances both within and outside the college. In July 1994, the college choir and brass group gave a concert in Leipzig in the church in which J S Bach worked for the last 30 years of his life. A second-year student gave a lunchtime song recital before over 50 fellow students as an assessed component of her double GCE A level examination. Pass rates in GCE A level music are consistently above 90 per cent. On art and design courses, pass rates are above the national average for general further education colleges. All students from foundation and BTEC graphic art and design courses progressed to higher education. The work by fashion technology students is of a consistently high standard.

57 In humanities, examination results were generally satisfactory. The best results at GCE A level were in sociology, economics, government and politics, communications, English literature and language and French. In foreign languages, students demonstrated high levels of achievement in all the major language skills; pass rates for the Institute of Linguists examinations were at or above the national average.

58 Students aged 16-18 entered for GCE A level examinations in 1993-94 scored, on average, 3.7 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This placed the college in the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 tables published by the Department for Education (now the Department for Education and Employment). The vast majority of GCE A level entries

were for students aged 19 or over, who generally achieved better results. In 1994, the overall pass rate in GCE A level examinations was 71.7 per cent compared with the national average for general further education colleges of 68 per cent. The college is trying to improve its GCE A level results partly by giving more realistic guidance to prospective students about the possibility of success.

59 In 1994, the percentage of entries achieving grades A-C in GCSE subjects was 53.2 per cent. This is above the average of 49.5 per cent for general further education colleges. There were especially good results in mathematics; the pass rate at grades A-C was 75 per cent. GCSE English language results were poor and most other GCSE results were at or below national averages. However, there has been a significant improvement in GCSE results in 1994-95. Seventy per cent of entries have been provisionally graded A-C. There were spectacular gains in some subjects. For example, the provisional A-C pass rate in human biology rose from 42 per cent in 1993-94 to 73 per cent in 1994-95.

60 Destinations of students are monitored thoroughly. Of the 524 full-time students who completed their studies in 1994, 27 per cent went into higher education, 27 per cent continued in further education and 39 per cent entered employment. Seventy-five per cent of the adult students following courses for access to higher education were successful in obtaining places on higher education courses. Information on community network students' achievements is limited. Students' work is of variable quality; it is not always at a standard that matches the qualification for which they are aiming. Currently, 25 per cent of community network courses receive accreditation through a college certificate. The level of achievement is not always clearly defined and the currency of the accreditation is uncertain. The college is intending to seek national accreditation for these courses over the next year.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

61 The college is gradually creating a total quality management framework. Its approach to quality assurance and improvement is built on developing and supporting teams. Quality assurance and continuous improvement are integral elements of the planning process, which involves self-assessment and reviews of performance measures against corporate objectives. The self-assessment process, supporting documentation and subsequent action plans are of high quality. A summary report of the college's self-assessment was made available to the inspection team. The college's self-assessment showed a high degree of correlation with inspectors' judgements.

62 Procedures for course evaluation and review are laid down in a college-wide framework. Curriculum teams are given freedom to adapt these appropriately within their areas. Regular student feedback is obtained through questionnaires and the views expressed by student representatives

on course committees. Students' perception of college-wide issues are covered less effectively than their perception of their courses. The quality assurance system also embraces provision delivered on employer premises and in the community; it includes site visits to observe the quality of teaching and learning. Many of these quality improvement activities also occur in the operation of corporate services teams.

63 Staff understand the importance of quality assurance and are clearly committed to continuous improvement. A significant number of staff have already been trained in the techniques which have been used in planning and quality improvement projects and the college is extending this training to more staff. Quality improvement teams have been trained to undertake peer assessment, including the observation of teaching and learning. However, a pilot scheme for peer assessment, conducted in one curriculum area during 1994, proved to be too costly and the original intention to extend the pilot into other curriculum and corporate service areas has been suspended.

64 Governors receive quarterly reports on quality. They use an external consultant to help them review their own performance. One outcome of the latest review has been to identify the need for a curriculum and quality subcommittee of the corporation to monitor progress on the strategic aim relating to quality. An important element of the college's framework for assuring quality is the internal validating panel which has been in existence for over two years and on which governors are represented. It evaluates the rationale for, and potential quality of, new courses being proposed. Both curriculum and corporate service teams report to the principalship on their evaluation of service delivery.

65 The college charter has been revised this year following a review. It contains clear informal and formal complaints procedures. There is an appropriately amended version to take account of the circumstances of students who are part of the community network provision. Staff have received a day's training designed to ensure that they understand the charter.

66 The college has made a commitment to improving the quality and reliability of information on retention, progression and achievement. The system for monitoring retention is already operating effectively. The college has responded quickly to the publication of Council Circular 94/31, *Measuring Achievement*, and is using the six performance indicators that it sets out. Further work is required to develop the rigorous and consistent use of appropriate performance indicators across the college.

67 The college should identify more clearly the previous learning achievements of students so as to be able to monitor the progress they have made whilst attending the college. There are examples of good practice in evaluating student achievement; for example, comparing examination outcomes with national averages, and reporting examination results to the principalship and the corporation together with suggested

action plans where these are required. However, the college's quality assurance procedures do not ensure that there is a consistent approach to comparing expected outcomes with actual levels of achievement.

68 The college is intending to achieve Investor in People status during 1995-96. It makes a substantial investment in staff development which it costs as over £1 million for 1995-96. The system for reviewing individual development needs links well with team and corporate objectives and contains opportunities for performance review. Nearly all full-time staff have been through the process at least once. There are plans to extend it to all part-time staff during the current academic year.

RESOURCES

Staffing

69 The corporation is a major local employer providing jobs for over 1,100 individuals. In 1994-95, expenditure on staff pay was 59 per cent of income, compared with a target of 61 per cent. Staff work with enthusiasm. They feel valued and appreciate being involved in decisions about their work within their team. They are encouraged to be innovative and responsive by contributing projects and new ideas which help the college to fulfil its mission.

70 Teachers are well qualified. Most have relevant industrial or commercial experience. The college has a human resources directorate which is responsible for the corporate strategy for staff employment, deployment and development. Fifty-nine per cent of the college's staff, including support staff, are qualified to level 3 or equivalent standard compared with the national target for the year 2000 of 60 per cent. Forty per cent of college staff have a vocational, professional, academic or management qualification at level 4 or above, compared with the national target for the year 2000 of 30 per cent.

71 Practice in the selection and recruitment of staff is carefully monitored. One objective of the college's equal opportunities policy is to work towards a staff profile which reflects the respective proportions of women, people from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities in the Nottingham area. At present there is a higher than proportionate number of women, who make up 69 per cent of all staff; 8 per cent of all staff are from minority ethnic groups and 3 per cent are registered disabled.

Equipment/learning resources

72 The college's equipment strategy is guided by an awareness of the requirements of the relevant employment sectors. The business studies area has a comprehensive range of appropriate machinery and equipment. The hairdressing and beauty therapy section is well resourced with equipment, books and materials. The number of computers and the amount of software for music is inadequate. However, the college has an unusually good stock of musical instruments, including pianos, electronic

keyboards, a harpsichord and stringed, woodwind and brass instruments. The keyboard workshop has electronic keyboards with connections to a master keyboard/control unit. This permits up to nine students to practice simultaneously, hearing their music through headphones. The fashion and clothing courses have access to a range of industry standard equipment which is located in a specially created space which replicates the working environment commonly found in industry. The specialist and non-specialist equipment for languages is of high quality and deployed effectively.

73 The college has made an investment in technological infrastructure which includes a network to support the provision of management information. Equipment is being installed to provide interactive television broadcasting through community venues networked to the college's studios. A number of pilot 'classrooms' have been established at various sites. Cable television is being developed as a vehicle for sharing best practice between areas of operation. The college has played a leading role in a partnership to introduce inter-active video as a means of teaching courses at specific locations in the community. The service is seen as a test bed for the technology involved and for applications within further education on a wider scale. Initially, the service covers five sites. Plans are being developed to use an electronic network to link community groups in London with groups in the East Midlands.

74 The increase in the availability of computers has not kept pace with demand. In August 1995, there were 306 computer workstations, providing a ratio of 13 students to each workstation.

75 There are 195 study spaces across the college. The majority of books and journals in the learning information centre are accessible using a card index system. A computerised information system is developing. Library staff are working with curriculum teams to extend the compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database facilities across three of the main sites. Helpful library induction sessions are provided for students. Handouts are issued indicating the information and general support available when carrying out research. Significant information is available about the resources for each curriculum area. The bookstock for science and information technology is inadequate and the centre has insufficient space for journals and computer terminals.

Accommodation

76 A key part of the college's strategic plan is its strategy for improving accommodation. The college has already carried out an impressive amount of work to increase and upgrade its accommodation. It has refurbished and decorated a substantial number of rooms, particularly public and reception areas and students' learning rooms. However, the college does not have enough suitable accommodation to meet demands.

77 Currently, the college operates from a campus at Mansfield Road and from seven other sites within a radius of 1.5 miles. All sites are surrounded

by busy roads and there are major parking problems. The college's commuter strategy, designed to off-set the problem of parking and to improve the environment, is at an early stage of implementation. The estate consists of one leasehold and seven freehold titles on 2.32 hectares. The total accommodation space measures 22,042 square metres. A full room-utilisation survey showed an occupancy rate of 58 per cent. The buildings with a higher than average rate are those at the Mansfield Road site, Hanwell and Clumber. The accommodation includes a number of Victorian and listed buildings, some of which require substantial refurbishment. The college plans to rationalise its current provision to three main centres and to deliver 30 per cent of its work on employers' premises or on premises which belong to community organisations and public bodies. This approach is already being used with some success. Community network provision is all located in public buildings but the standard of the accommodation is variable. Access for students with restricted mobility is not always available.

78 Since incorporation, the college has increased its space by 40 per cent and invested in high-quality conversions to provide professional and industry standard accommodation. The business, management, professional and teacher training areas are of a high standard. The rooms are large, well lit and carpeted throughout. The business centre is a professionally realistic reception and office area. Business accommodation is fully timetabled but students can use rooms outside class time. The specialist accommodation for food production and service is designed and equipped to a professional standard and provides a realistic work environment for students to develop skills appropriate for employment. The hairdressing and beauty reception area has been suitably developed to welcome clients and to provide for curriculum requirements. However, the performing arts and media section is spread across several locations; ready access to performance areas, specialist equipment and other material for teaching and learning is difficult, although this does not appear to have had an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Accommodation in art and design is spacious, well lit and attractively decorated. There is appropriate accommodation for music, including individual practice rooms, but it is coming under increasing pressure because of rising student numbers. There is good-quality provision for languages and business development located in the heart of the city at King Street.

79 Progress has been made in making the accommodation accessible to those with restricted mobility. As a result of a recent building programme at the Mansfield Road site, lifts and ramps have been installed in the main building to improve access for students with restricted mobility. Four of the eight college buildings have lifts, allowing wheelchair users access to more than 90 per cent of the accommodation used for teaching. However, provision for wheelchair users is poor at the Berridge centre and other annexes.

80 The students' common room at the Mansfield Road site is attractive and popular with the younger students. However, it is too small for the numbers using it. Student facilities in other buildings are limited. There is pressure on space in refectories. The first-aid room in an upstairs bedroom in a house annexed to the college is basic and not well equipped.

81 Work rooms for some teaching staff are too small. They do not provide congenial working areas. There is a lack of storage space, particularly in the Clumber building.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

82 The college is a dynamic and forward-looking institution. Its strengths are:

- effective governance and management
- a well-developed planning process which creates a strong sense of shared purpose
- the awareness of efficiency at all levels of the organisation
- a commitment to the regeneration of local industry through partnership with other interested bodies
- the flexible provision designed to attract students from groups not normally involved in further education
- the strong emphasis on teamwork and the commitment of staff to continuous improvement
- the comprehensive recruitment and guidance services and a strong emphasis on support for students' progress
- appropriate and varied teaching methods which result in an exciting experience for students in a substantial number of lessons
- the systematic development of core skills
- the effective preparation of students for employment
- the implementation of a comprehensive accommodation strategy.

83 The college should:

- continue its efforts to provide high-quality accommodation for students and staff
- improve the computing and library facilities
- raise the levels of student achievement in some areas of work
- continue to develop a consistent and rigorous framework for quality
- continue to improve provision for students and support staff in the community network.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (as at July 1995)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at July 1995)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1995)

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

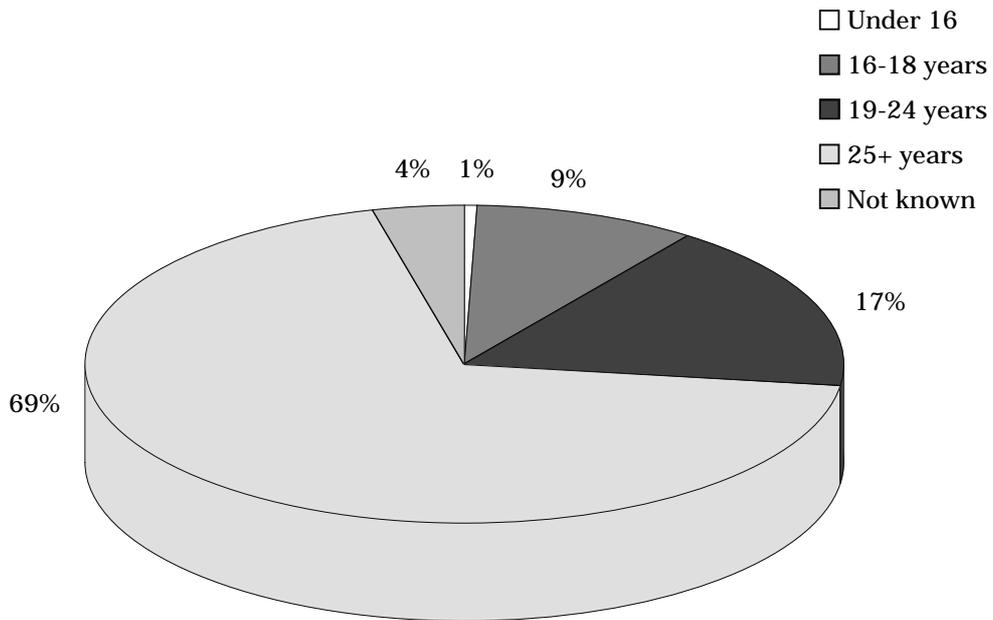
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 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

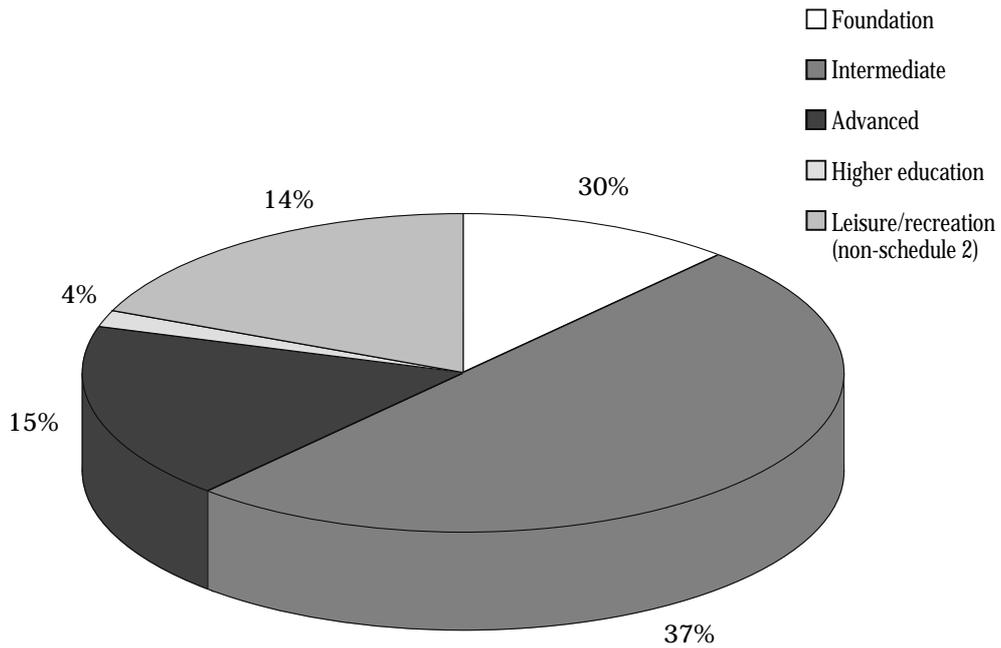
Clarendon College, Nottingham: percentage enrolments by age (as at July 1995)



Enrolments: 28,618

Figure 2

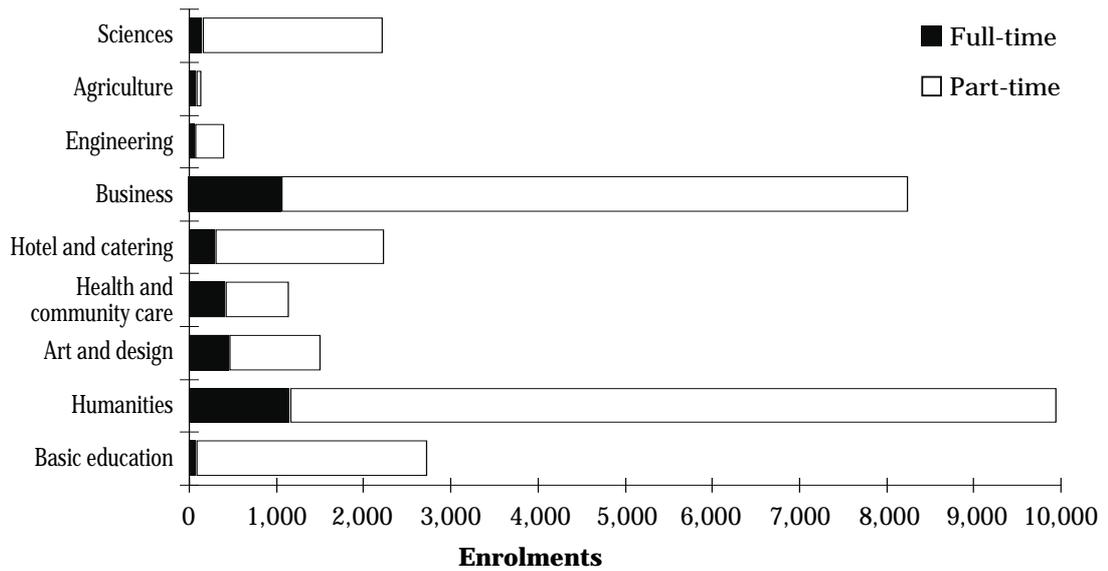
Clarendon College, Nottingham: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at July 1995)



Enrolments: 28,618

Figure 3

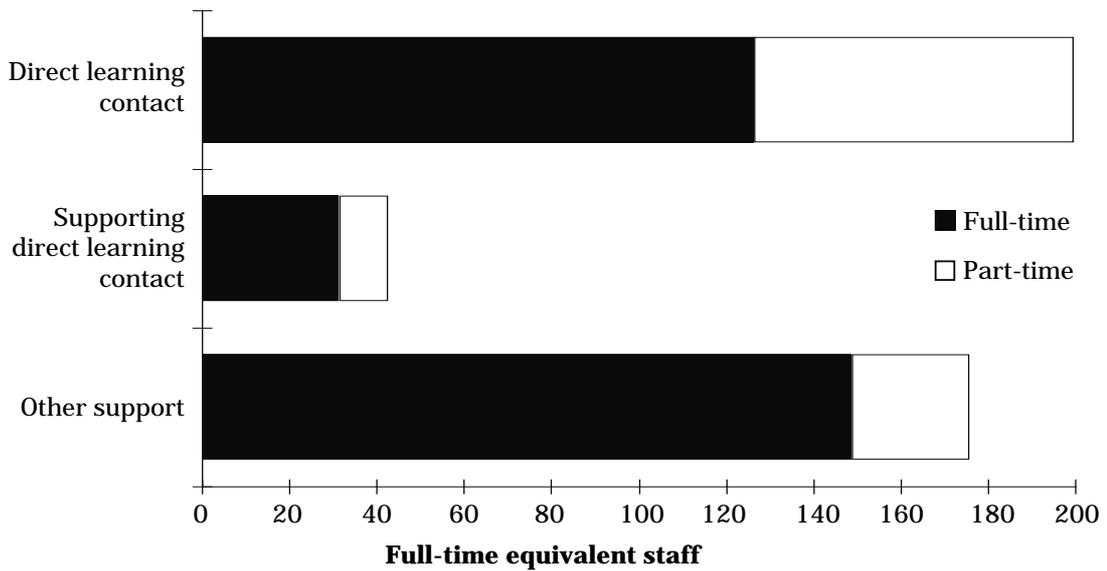
Clarendon College, Nottingham: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1995)



Enrolments: 28,618

Figure 4

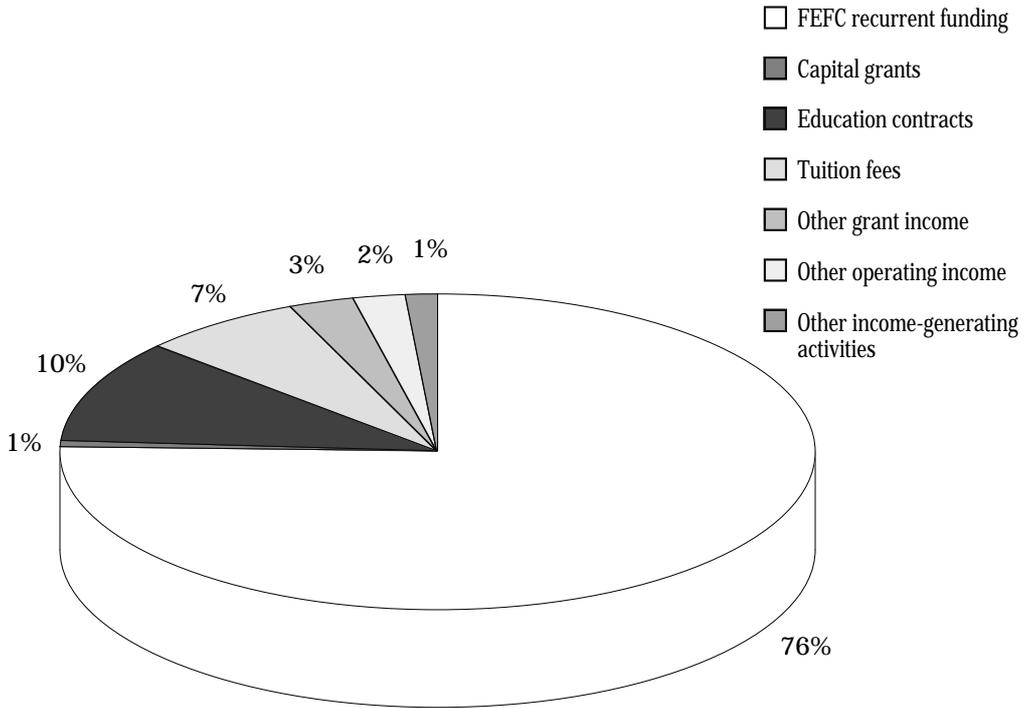
Clarendon College, Nottingham: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at July 1995)



Full-time equivalent staff: 418

Figure 5

Clarendon College, Nottingham: income (for 12 months to July 1995)

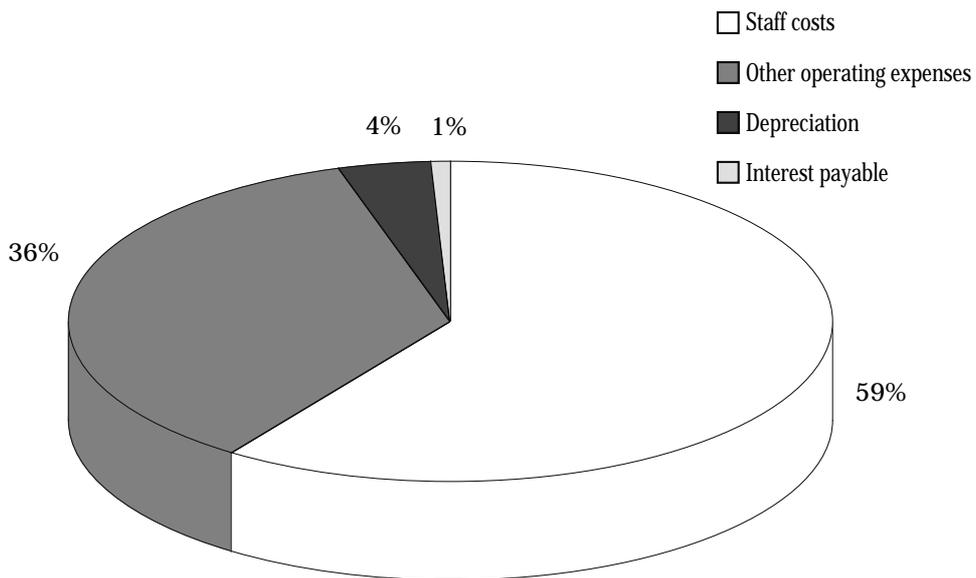


Income: £14,142,000

This chart excludes £34,000 other income (interest received).

Figure 6

Clarendon College, Nottingham: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £13,551,000

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