

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

**The College of
Richard Collyer
in Horsham**

May 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education every four years. The inspectorate also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum and gives advice to the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge 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.

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

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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 71/96

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER IN HORSHAM

SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected April 1995-March 1996

Summary

The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham, West Sussex, is a sixth form college. Most of its students are aged 16 to 19, attend full time and come from Horsham and its environs. The college offers a wide range of GCE subjects and some GNVQ courses. This year, a limited range of evening classes was introduced for adult students. Links with the college's partner schools are close. Guidance and induction procedures for new students are effective and well-managed. The governing body is strong. Management is effective at departmental level but the college's overall management structure is under review. The quality of teaching and the standards of students' work are high. Teachers are well qualified and strongly committed to furthering their students' success. Examination results are particularly good. The college's tutorial system ensures the careful monitoring of the students' progress. There is a well-managed resources centre to support learning. The college should: ensure that all its policies are translated into action and address the ineffectiveness of, and lack of a clear role for, faculties; improve communications with parents and students about college policies; implement more vigorously a quality assurance system for the whole college; develop a clear policy on marketing; introduce a policy on equal opportunities for staffing; identify more clearly priorities for staff development; and address inefficiencies in the use of accommodation.

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 | 2 |
| Students' recruitment, guidance and support | 2 |
| Quality assurance | 3 |
| Resources: staffing | 2 |
| equipment/learning resources | 2 |
| accommodation | 2 |

| Curriculum area | Grade | Curriculum area | Grade |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Mathematics | 1 | Languages | 1 |
| Science | 2 | English | 1 |
| Business | 2 | Humanities | 2 |
| Arts | 2 | Social sciences | 2 |

INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham, West Sussex, took place in three stages. The college's guidance, enrolment and induction procedures were inspected for two days during June and September 1995. During the weeks beginning 3 April 1995 and 22 January 1996, one full-time and eight registered part-time inspectors spent 27 days on specialist subject inspections. They visited 111 classes involving approximately 1,300 students and examined students' work. In the week beginning 4 March 1996, two full-time inspectors and five registered part-time inspectors spent a total of 28 days assessing aspects of cross-college provision. During the inspection there were meetings with members of the corporation, the senior management team, heads of faculties and of departments, teachers and support staff. Discussions took place with students, parents and representatives of local community organisations, industry and commerce, and of Sussex Enterprise, the local training and enterprise council (TEC). Inspectors also attended governors' meetings and college meetings, and examined policy statements, minutes of committees, working papers and documents relating to the organisation of the college.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 The college was founded under the terms of a bequest from a prominent member of the Mercers' Company of the City of London, who died in 1532. He provided for 'a Free School in Horsham in the County of Sussex'. For the next three-and-a-half centuries the government of the school was shared between the Mercers' Company and the parish of Horsham. In the late nineteenth century, a new charter allowed governance to be shared between the Mercers' Company and the district council. Under the 1944 Education Act, the West Sussex County Council took over the role of the district council and Collyer's became a voluntary-aided grammar school, owning its buildings and land, but with its running costs paid by the county council. It became a sixth form college in 1976, and a designated sixth form college in April 1993. The long-established associations with the Mercers' Company and the parish continue.

3 The college is in the north of Horsham, an old market town of about 42,000 people in West Sussex, halfway between London and the south coast. Horsham is within commuting distance of London, and many different kinds of economic activity such as pharmaceuticals, insurance and the service industries associated with Gatwick airport, have developed in the town and nearby. Despite the recent recession, unemployment levels remain low. In November 1995, 4.6 per cent of the workforce in mid-Sussex were unemployed, compared with an average of 6.2 per cent for the south east region.

4 Full-time student numbers have increased over the last 10 years from 503 to 960. This year, adult education classes have been offered for the first time, resulting in 380 evening enrolments. 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. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. It is the college's mission 'to provide academic and general education of the highest quality to those who live in Horsham and the surrounding area, and who wish to continue their education beyond the years of compulsory schooling'.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

5 The college offers a good range of 33 subjects for the General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level), 12 GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects and 15 for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). New subjects include GCSE psychology and GCE A level physical education, law and philosophy. The number of vocational courses is growing. In addition to courses leading to the qualifications of the RSA Examinations Board (RSA), the college introduced in 1994, courses leading to General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) at intermediate level in leisure and tourism and at advanced level in leisure and tourism, business and health and social care. In 1995, vocational provision was further expanded with the addition of GNVQ art and design at advanced level and the National Nursery Examinations Board (NNEB) diploma in nursery and social care. In 1995, a limited range of evening classes was introduced and this has attracted 380 part-time students, mostly adults.

6 As a result of the introduction of GNVQ intermediate level, enrolments for some GCSE subjects fell sharply and these had to be discontinued. Similarly, the introduction of GNVQ art and design at advanced level has drawn enrolments away from GCE A level in art and design.

7 The college offers little opportunity for students, particularly adults with outside commitments, to come to college at times which suit them to work individually, using learning materials tailored to their needs. A working party was set up two years ago to raise the awareness of staff about the feasibility of widening participation through the flexible use of timetabling and resources. There was some development of open learning materials which students might study on their own at home or in learning centres at times of their choice. The college is further investigating the scope for such provision and the possibility of more flexible timetabling to facilitate the attendance of part-time students during the day. The college is a member of the Open College Network. The college has recently opened creche facilities through the Headstart nursery and baby unit and these are enabling parents to study.

8 All full-time students take part in a programme of complementary studies which includes information technology and study skills, recreational and sporting activities and opportunities for community service. Some students are, however, unable to participate in organised recreational and sporting activities because these clash, on Wednesday afternoons, with classes they have to attend. Students have a number of opportunities to travel abroad. There are regular exchanges with French

students in La Rochelle and with Spanish students in Pamplona. The GNVQ travel and tourism course has a connection with the tourist centre in Boulogne, and is working to establish more permanent liaison with a French college.

9 Most staff are aware of the government's policies for further education and the national targets for education and training. This awareness is reflected in the development plans of departments and in the college's strategic plan.

10 There are well-established links with the college's three partner schools. The extent of liaison with other schools varies. The college works hard to establish a productive relationship with some schools which resist contact. Students on the GNVQ leisure and tourism course have made successful presentations about their course and the college to prospective applicants in local schools. The college responds to special requests from schools and as a result, Spanish for business was offered last year for the first time. The college's links with higher education are substantial, and stem largely from its students' applications to universities. The college is a member of the Surrey University compact.

11 There are good and improving relationships with Sussex Enterprise, the local TEC. Funding from the TEC supported the establishment of a language centre. The centre has offered a TEC-sponsored course for exporters. In September 1995, a compact was formed to strengthen relations with employers. The college seeks to develop more commercial activity and has recently appointed a member of staff to oversee links with industry. Teachers of vocational courses have established valuable contacts with employers. For example, GNVQ business students have benefited from visiting speakers and assistance with business planning assignments provided by major insurance and banking companies. Work shadowing in companies is also developing. Community groups provide opportunities for students to experience voluntary service, and a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in playwork is planned in liaison with the day nursery.

12 The college has no marketing policy or plan. Departments are expected to take the lead with their own marketing activities. These are not co-ordinated and their effectiveness depends on the skills and enthusiasm of individual members of staff. Full-time students have been attracted by the high reputation of the college and its good examination results. The college is promoted successfully through word of mouth and good links with partner schools. Analysis of responses by students to questionnaires provides a valuable source of information on the extent of students' satisfaction. Although the TEC provides local labour market information, it is not used systematically to identify needs the college might meet. Market research was used to identify the need for evening courses for adults. Printed promotional material is of consistently good quality; it is colourful and imaginatively presented.

13 There is extra help available for students who need support with their learning. Their difficulties are identified initially by partner schools and at enrolment. Support programmes are also agreed at this time, and these are highly valued by students. The college has been able to meet the needs of students with moderate learning difficulties. In spite of the difficulties imposed by a split-level site and Victorian buildings, sensitive programming has enabled three students with cerebral palsy to take GCE A level courses, and one has gone on to university.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

14 The land and buildings of the college are the responsibility of the trustees of the Collyer Endowment. Governors have close links with the trustees, but have a separate legal existence. There are 15 governors. Six are nominated by the Mercers' Company, two by the trustees and one is always the vicar of Horsham. Of the remaining six, one is the nominee of the TEC, one represents parents, one higher education, and one the staff. The principal is not a governor.

15 The board has four committees: finance and general purposes; audit; a governors' and trustees' liaison group; and a joint staff-governors' consultative committee. The governors' and trustees' group was created recently to concentrate initially on the relationship between finances, and the buildings and land. All of these groups have clear terms of reference and links with the board. The board and its committees are well served by the clerk who is a senior manager, and by senior staff who make presentations as required. The standard of background documents, agendas and minutes is consistently high. Attendance at governors' meetings this academic session is good at 83 per cent.

16 The governors form a powerful and effective body. They offer a wide range of experience and have particular strengths in finance, property, education, public service, and the professions. Whilst supporting the mission of the college and its senior management, they are not uncritical. At meetings, governors ask searching questions based on well-prepared papers and detailed financial information. Governors fully understand their roles and responsibilities. The distinction between governance and management is observed. Governors make strategic decisions which are implemented through the principal and then reviewed and evaluated. Governors require the principal to report to them regularly on major issues according to a fixed calendar. This process forms the major element of review of the principal's performance.

17 The college's mission is supported by governors and by staff. Staff, led by the principal, are committed to the achievement of academic excellence which they see as a distinguishing feature of the college.

18 The college's strategic plan was originally constructed by two senior tutors, two heads of faculty, the systems manager, the librarian, and the vice-principal. Each member of this group was responsible for areas of

the plan, in consultation with others as appropriate. The process for updating plans is under review. There is little evidence to suggest that ideas originating from staff at departmental level are considered in relation to the plan. There is no formal involvement of rank and file staff in the devising or review of the plan, except indirectly through committees. Staff view the plan as something produced centrally which is remote from their interests.

19 There is a wide variety of college policies. These are generally clearly written. The composition of some of the committees formed to implement them is sometimes inappropriate. The health and safety committee has no terms of reference and its functions entail making recommendations to senior managers in general rather than to the principal. The equal opportunities committee has no calendar of meetings and its records are not sufficiently clear. The equal opportunities policy is more concerned with students than with staff. There is no senior management representation on these committees, and reports of their activities are not made in any systematic way to the governing body. Governors and senior managers are unable to monitor the implementation of these important policies.

20 The college makes provision for religious education and for collective acts of worship, satisfying the requirements of sections 44 and 45 of *The Further and Higher Education Act 1992*.

21 The college is reviewing its management structure, which is based upon departments and faculties. Teachers belong to departments based on subjects. Heads of faculty meet in the curriculum committee chaired by the director of studies. There is a senior management team comprising the principal, the deputy principal, vice-principal and assistant principal, the registrar, the bursar and the director of studies. The senior management team was recently restructured, and it meets weekly. It is an increasingly effective instrument for making college policy. Tutors are responsible to senior tutors who meet under the chairmanship of the deputy principal. In addition to the senior management team, there is a management group comprising the senior management team, the four heads of faculty, five senior tutors, the librarian and the systems manager and this is primarily a forum for the discussion of management issues.

22 The college's review of its management structure is timely. At department level, management is effective and the arrangements for the pastoral care of students work well. However, faculties are not used to best effect. They are a positive avenue for communication, but their role in relation to the curriculum and co-ordination of provision needs clarification. Accountability can be complicated, with some individual staff having simultaneous responsibilities as tutors, heads of department and, sometimes, in a cross-college role. This leads to uncertainties amongst some staff as to how the overall management of the college works. They also find that their opinions can go unheeded. The successful operation of

the college owes much to the goodwill of staff and the harmonious relationships prevalent in the college.

23 The college enrolled above its target for student numbers in 1993-94; it achieved 95 per cent of its target in 1994-95; and it estimates that it will exceed its target in the current year. Growth of 6 per cent is planned for 1996-97. The college's average level of funding per unit for 1995-96 is £19.29. The national median for sixth form colleges is £19.37. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6. Budgets for staffing and fixed costs are managed centrally, and the remaining 4 per cent of expenditure is delegated. The college does not use unit costing and money is allocated by a system of bidding. Budget holders receive regular information about their financial positions and senior managers are able to monitor expenditure adequately. The process is managed effectively by the bursar and the finance and general purposes committee.

24 The management information system is based upon the schools information management system, supplemented by programs developed by the college. Data for enrolments, examinations and, less precisely, for destinations are generated by the system, as are financial reports. The college has made good progress in the development of computer systems. Systematic use of data by managers is at an early stage.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

25 There is a clear policy on the recruitment of students and on guidance and support for full-time students. The responsibilities of students and staff are appropriately defined. The assistant principal is responsible for admissions, the registrar for enrolment procedures, and the deputy principal for the tutorial system. Provision of guidance and support for adult students is independent of that for full-time students and it provides effectively for their particular needs. Students make good use of the learning support services and appreciate the quality of the guidance they receive.

26 The rights of all students to guidance and support are described in the college charter. Students' complaints to their tutors are usually dealt with satisfactorily. For instance, car parking facilities for students and speed ramps have been provided in response to students' requests. The complaints procedure, in relation to the curriculum and teaching and learning, is regarded as less effective by students and parents. The students' council, with elected representatives from each tutorial group, deals with concerns raised by individual students. The council is, however, not representative of the whole college because adult students are not included on it.

27 There is a well-executed programme of events for prospective students. It enables them to make appropriate choices of subject or course and it is reviewed regularly with partner schools and students. Admissions

for full-time students are conducted by a team of senior tutors with three members of senior management. Members of this team, often accompanied by students, visit partner schools to introduce the college to pupils. In November there are two open evenings for prospective students and their parents. Interviews are carried out at the partner schools and at the college during the spring term. Prior to enrolment, students attend at least four 'taster' lessons to inform their choice of subjects. Students are allocated to tutors at the 'welcome day' in June, and they attend brief seminars with subject teachers. The usefulness of this day varies among the departments and it needs better co-ordination. Some parents believe that their children are coerced into making inappropriate choices because of the over-zealous promotion of some subjects. Students who have made a wrong choice receive help and guidance in changing their subjects or course. There is a formal appeals procedure available to those who are not offered places at the college.

28 Full-time students have regular access to advice on academic and pastoral matters through a well-organised tutorial system. Full-time students, and their parents, receive reports on their progress. The profiling system for students is well managed. Records of achievement are maintained for all full-time students. Action plans are drawn up for students with particular difficulties or problems. Tutorial groups are organised in five houses. Each senior tutor is responsible for 10 to 12 tutors, each of whom provides guidance for up to 20 students on welfare, academic and behavioural issues. Tutorial groups contain a mixture of students from different courses and years, and they meet daily for 30 minutes. Students value the tutorial system. Careers guidance is continuous. It is managed as part of the tutorial system. Advisers from the West Sussex careers service attend the college weekly and there is careers information available on computer databases.

29 The revised personal and social education programme is delivered through the tutorial system each week. The programme stimulates discussion which, in turn, fosters cohesion within the tutorial group. The programme, as yet, is mainly concerned with comparatively non-controversial issues. It does not cover sex education or drug abuse. Tutors vary in their ability to deliver sessions on this programme. Each house has a personal and social education teacher to help the tutors. Nevertheless, many tutors feel that they are not sufficiently prepared to handle these sessions as expertly as they would wish. Some whole-day events are held for full-time students on health issues.

30 There is well-managed provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since 1992, the college has provided additional support for learning. The support team consists of a full-time teacher and a part-time assistant. Members of this team are involved in the admissions procedure for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and identify their needs well before enrolment. Support staff have regular contact with their counterparts in schools and with West Sussex county

advisers. Staff and students are particularly welcoming towards those with learning difficulties and help them to integrate successfully with the communal life and work of the college.

31 There is a confidential counselling service for students and staff. A qualified counsellor is available for half a day each week on an appointment basis. There is an emergency drop-in session, and the counsellor makes special visits when required. The counsellor has sought the views of students to determine the most appropriate location of the appointments diary. The college has not yet ascertained the students' opinions on the value of this service.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

32 There was good teaching in all curriculum areas. The standards of work in English, languages and mathematics were particularly high. The average attendance in the classes inspected was good at 88 per cent and was particularly good in science, humanities and art, at 93 per cent. Languages had the lowest attendance at 79 per cent. Of the 111 sessions inspected, 81 per cent had strengths which outweighed weaknesses. This result is some 20 per cent above the average recorded in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1994-95*. Less than 2 per cent of classes had weaknesses which outweighed the strengths. The following table summarises the grades given to each of the teaching sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

| Programmes | Grade | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Totals |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| GCE AS/A level | | 24 | 45 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 83 |
| GCSE | | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| GNVQ | | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Other vocational | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | | 29 | 61 | 19 | 2 | 0 | 111 |

33 Most courses are well planned and have appropriate schemes of work. The scheme for GNVQ in business is particularly good and refers to teaching and learning styles, the use of resources, time allocation, assessment methods, outside visits and speakers. In contrast, science schemes have no standard format and some lack detail. In English, course aims and objectives are clearly defined, and well-designed course handbooks contain comprehensive guidance for students. In general, lessons were carefully planned. In some instances, teachers used too narrow a range of methods of working. They failed to ensure their lessons had sufficient variety to stimulate and hold the students' interest. In some lessons, teachers could have made better use of directed questioning to involve every member of the class. There is scope for teachers, collectively, to identify the principles of good practice in teaching and learning and

share these more with one another. The expectations which teachers have of their students are high, but realistic.

34 In the sciences, the quality of teaching varies. Some lessons, especially in geology and environmental sciences, are well planned and capably delivered and they motivate the students and excite their interest. Students help to compile useful handbooks on these subject areas and collect relevant news items for them. Practical lessons are well prepared and tasks are carefully planned to ensure the full participation of all students in the class. In a few instances, teachers failed to follow up and explore issues which resulted from successful practical work. For instance, in a GCE A level science class, the students carried out a variety of experiments with the aim of using equipment to record data more quickly and accurately. The activities were successful but the teacher did not use the time saved to explore new areas of work and many students left when their initial tasks were completed.

35 Teaching in mathematics is good. Teachers develop and explain topics confidently and ensure that all students are involved in the lesson and understand what they have learnt. There are clear aims and objectives for the teaching and learning of mathematics. Lessons are challenging and students respond well to demanding work. A GCSE lesson provided an example of excellent organisation and practice. Students were required to carry out a range of tasks under simulated examination conditions. This was followed by a practical session involving careful drawing and measuring. The students were fully involved in their tasks and intervention by the teacher was always encouraging whilst being constructively critical.

36 Students on GNVQ business courses enjoy teaching which is stimulating. On both GNVQ business and leisure and tourism courses, they carry out well-planned tasks in which all participate fully. These tasks are often followed up by visits to employers when the students can witness comparable activities in a real working environment. In one instance, GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism students visited a local hotel and a football club in the same week. They were able to compare and contrast the different styles of management they had seen and explore these further in a worthwhile assignment. GNVQ students receive good teaching in wordprocessing and use well-prepared learning materials which have been devised within the department. By contrast with those used on the GNVQ courses, teaching and learning activities in GCE A level economics and business are less varied and imaginative.

37 In art and design, schemes of work are generally thorough and well prepared. Art and design teachers are based in six departments and there is scope for them to work more closely as a team to devise projects which integrate all their individual specialisms. The standards of the students' practical work are never less than satisfactory and in some instances, are excellent. Some lessons plans have overambitious aims. Some lessons would have been improved if they had been carried out within the structure of a clear introduction and conclusion.

38 In the social sciences, lesson planning is thorough and careful. Emphasis is given to the development of essential skills. Teachers display an infectious enthusiasm for their subject. They devise a proper variety of learning activities which ensure the full participation of the students. For instance, in geography, role play is used to good effect. In one particularly successful and well organised lesson, students were required to take decisions about land use. They conscientiously applied themselves to planning, then carried out inventive role play and concluded with appropriate debriefing. Good use is made of audio-visual aids. In a GCE A level sociology class, students watched a video on the impacts of colonialism and industrial growth. They then engaged in lively debate in which they argued cogently, defending their views or challenging those of others.

39 The teaching in humanities is often good. Teachers sustain the students' interest with an appropriate variety of teaching and learning methods. In a successful GCE A level history lesson on international relations, the students were divided into groups. Each group assumed the identity of one of the major powers. The students engaged in animated discussion which was well directed by the teacher. Learning was reinforced through good handouts. Some lessons lacked clear aims. In some instances, teachers did not question students sufficiently to ensure they understood what they were learning.

40 Teaching in both classics and modern languages is good. Schemes of work are well planned and lessons are well prepared. In modern languages, emphasis is given to the importance of conducting lessons in the language being studied. Learning is strengthened through excellent use of display materials in classrooms and adjacent corridors. Good use is made of a wide range of audio-visual aids. In a GCE A level Spanish lesson, the teacher introduced a Spaniard who had lived through the transition from the regime of General Franco to the constitutional monarchy of King Juan Carlos, a period which the class were studying as part of the syllabus. The Spaniard described vividly in Spanish the feelings of ordinary people at that time and recounted incidents in which he or his family had been involved. Afterwards, the teacher checked thoroughly that the students had fully understood the visitor's presentation and explained vocabulary which was new to them.

41 Teachers of English have designed a challenging scheme of work for the GCE A level syllabus. Teaching is carefully planned and well managed. Teachers have clear aims and objectives. They encourage students to identify links with literature and work already covered. Teachers set their students a good example by being scholarly, exploratory and constructively critical. English lessons are infused with a sense of intellectual excitement which stimulates and motivates the students. There is an appropriate variety of learning activities in lessons. Teachers skilfully direct the working of students in pairs, in groups, in plenary sessions, or as individuals. In an excellent English literature class, students compared two versions of a sixteenth-century love poem, one in modern English and the other with original spelling and punctuation. After careful work in

small groups, students shared their observations in discussion. Prompted by sensitive intervention from the teacher, the students offered perceptive views on poetic themes and forms. Students taking English are encouraged to review their progress through a process of self-evaluation which is moderated by staff.

42 Students are encouraged to learn wordprocessing. Most make good use of information technology in their studies. There is scope for more wordprocessing in mathematics as the majority of coursework and projects are handwritten. Some students need help with study skills, particularly note-making.

43 Work experience is arranged as part of the full-time vocational courses in leisure and tourism, business, and health. For the majority of students following GCE AS/A level courses work shadowing is available. It is designed to build on previous work experience at school. The scheme is voluntary, and only 30 first-year students participated in it in 1995.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

44 Students aged 16 to 18 who were entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1995 scored, on average, 5.7 points per entry, compared with an average of 4.8 for sixth form colleges nationally. The college is in the top 10 per cent of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the tables published by the Department for Education and Employment.

45 Student achievements in GCE A level examinations have been consistently high, exceeding the national averages for sixth form colleges both for passes at grades A to E, and at grades A to C which are often necessary for entry to university. In 1993, there were 834 GCE A level entries in 33 different subjects, with a pass rate of 90 per cent. In 1994, there were 926 entries in 32 different subjects and the pass rate was 91.5 per cent. In 1995, there were 977 entries in 34 different subjects and the pass rate was 93 per cent. In 1995, every student entering the examination in the following 12 subjects passed: English literature, media studies, music, Spanish, classical civilisation, religious studies, photography, technology, mathematics, decision mathematics, further mathematics, and food and nutrition. There are some particularly good results. For example, in English literature in 1994, grade A to C passes exceeded the national sixth form college average by 16 per cent. In technology in 1995, nine of the 11 candidates achieved grade A.

46 In 1995, there were 185 entries for GCE AS subjects, and a pass rate of 81 per cent. This is considerably better than the provisional national average of 73 per cent. Pass rates exceeded provisional national averages in all cases other than in the one-year government and politics course, one-year English literature courses, and two-year law courses.

47 In GCSE examinations, the achievement rate consistently exceeds the national average for sixth form colleges. There were 438 entries in 1993, and the rate of achievement of grades A to C was 62 per cent. In 1994,

with 413 entries a rate of 65 per cent at grades A to C was achieved. In 1995, with 321 entries across 15 subjects, the rate of achievement at grades A to C was 67 per cent. Only in history were results below the average for sixth form colleges.

48 The college subscribes to the Advanced Level Information System which demonstrates the extent to which students taking GCE A level perform better or worse than was predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. The 1994 and 1995 analyses show that students are achieving better than, or in line with, expectations in most subjects.

49 The number of vocational courses offered by the college before September 1995 was relatively small. In 1995, there were 455 entries, but of these 405 were for RSA examinations in wordprocessing, modern languages, integrated business technology, and computer literacy and information technology. Eighty-four per cent of students entered for these examinations were successful. Of the five students taking the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, four were successful. Forty-five students took City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) examinations in numeracy and photography, and all were successful.

50 The student retention rate at the college is excellent at around 96 per cent.

51 The college publishes a summary of the destinations of all students together with their examination results. The principal provides the governing body with a detailed report on the destinations of students in higher education. In 1995, of the 456 full-time students gaining awards, 61 per cent progressed to higher education; 23 per cent continued in further education; 13 per cent entered employment; and 3 per cent either took up other activities or their destinations were unknown. Data on students' achievements were efficiently collated in preparation for the inspection and proved to be reliable when audited.

52 The college provides a range of extra-curricular activities. Teams compete in local leagues in football, rugby and netball. Individual students have played international hockey, represented England in women's rugby, achieved gold and silver medals in county athletics, and have been commercially sponsored for model car racing.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

53 The college has had long-established quality assurance procedures at departmental level. These have been primarily concerned with GCE A level work. Departments have produced annual reports which contain information about examination results and the views of students on their teaching and learning and the college in general. In September 1995, the college's director of studies introduced a pilot scheme for quality assurance. This aimed to bring uniformity to quality assurance procedures across the college. Responsibility for quality assurance rests with departments. A range of performance indicators is used. Recruitment, attendance and retention rates and students' destinations are scrutinised.

54 Although the new processes for quality assurance have not been in place for a year, it is already apparent that there are inconsistencies in the way they are implemented across the college. The college's policy on quality assurance is not fully explicit. Procedures for the use of performance indicators are vague. The quality assurance system itself is too protracted. Issues related to quality are regularly discussed at the curriculum committee which reports to the senior management team. The role of the heads of faculty in the quality assurance process is unclear.

55 Senior managers are aware of the deficiencies of their quality assurance systems. Together with governors, they are determined that priority should be given to the establishment of a comprehensive policy on quality assurance and clearly-defined procedures for its implementation. Governors have expressed their willingness to act in an advisory capacity drawing upon their professional experience of quality assurance.

56 The college has made a commitment to achieve the Investors in People award by December 1996. With assistance from Brighton University Centre for Training and Development and the local TEC, the college has drawn up its action plan. Surveys carried out as part of this process have highlighted weaknesses in present arrangements for staff development. The staff-development programme gives undue emphasis to the training of academic staff. Support staff do not feel that they have adequate opportunities for their development. The staff-development programme should be more closely linked with the college's strategic plan. Annual spending on staff development is low at £12,000 which represents 0.45 per cent of recurrent income from the FEFC. Only 1.5 days are designated for staff development. Staff development is organised through the staff-development committee, although the curriculum committee processes individual applications for training and allocates funds. Recently, meetings on staff development have been introduced and all staff have been issued with a copy of the staff-development policy. The staff-development committee carries out an annual survey of needs. There is no formal system for the induction and mentoring of new staff.

57 There is a detailed policy on staff appraisal. All staff are appraised over a two-year period. Most find the appraisal system beneficial. There are, however, weaknesses in the appraisal system. Insufficient time is devoted to it. There is little or no follow-up action after appraisal. The outcomes of appraisal do not influence the content of the programme for staff development.

58 The college's charter is published in the handbook for students. It was introduced in September 1994. Students and staff are aware of the charter and explanation of its contents forms part of the induction programme. It is succinct, but it makes no reference to measurable standards. The charter's effectiveness is reviewed annually. In a recent survey which they carried out, students criticised the college's charter for lacking detailed information on a complaints procedure.

59 The college's self-assessment report, although factually accurate, is predominantly descriptive and it lacks evaluative content. The report follows the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, but it makes little attempt to identify the college's strengths and weaknesses. The section on students' achievements lacks detailed analysis. The report fails to provide any self-critical evaluation and it is unlikely to serve the college's own needs in quality assurance.

RESOURCES

Staffing

60 The college has 58 full-time and eight part-time teachers, representing 62.2 full-time equivalents. Staff are hard working and have a strong commitment to the achievement of high standards. Ninety-three per cent of teachers have first degrees; 25 per cent have higher degrees; and 75 per cent have a recognised teaching qualification. Since the introduction of GNVQ programmes in 1994, nine staff have acquired Training and Development Lead Body qualifications for assessors and verifiers, and four are qualified to assess prior learning. The college is gradually making the deployment of teaching staff more efficient. The staff:student ratio has increased from 1:13 in 1994-95 to 1:15 in the current academic year. The average size of classes has risen to 14.3. Thirteen per cent of classes have fewer than 10 students. Nearly all teaching staff are tutors. All members of the senior management team except the bursar teach.

61 There are 13 full time and 9.98 full-time equivalent part-time support staff. Most have appropriate qualifications and experience to fulfil their roles. There is good technical support for the information technology network. However, there are no technicians in the expanding art and design department. Recent appointments have been made to strengthen the finance and premises sections. Reductions in administrative and clerical staffing have highlighted the need to update information technology skills to cope more effectively with increasingly complex demands.

62 There are personnel procedures for discipline and grievance which are well documented. Advice on personnel matters is readily available through an agreement with West Sussex County Council, and legal advice is available from the education department of the Mercers' Company. Fifty-nine per cent of staff are male and 41 per cent female, but there is a marked imbalance in favour of male staff in the senior management team of seven, of whom only two are women. At senior tutor and head of faculty level only two of nine staff are women. There is no reference in the college's policy on equal opportunities to new appointments or to the internal promotion of staff.

Equipment/learning resources

63 The college has an appropriate range of equipment and learning resources. Most classrooms have boards, screens and overhead projectors.

In several subjects there are good collections of books, magazines and reference materials. There are good audio-visual materials for English and languages, and materials for private study in statistics and mechanics, business studies, and geography. There is equipment of professional and commercial standard in photography. The standard of maintenance of science equipment is high. The availability of audio-visual aids for history, and for government and politics, is inadequate. The college has a central purchasing procedure and an assets register which is updated regularly.

64 The learning centre is well managed. It is housed in the former library and an adjoining area and has places for 100 students. In addition to a well-used network of computers, the centre contains 10,700 books, 600 items of audio-visual material and 100 learning or project packs which students may use on their own. There is a good selection of magazines and periodicals. While the bookstock is below the figure recommended by the Library Association for a college of this size, it is relevant and up to date. Liaison between the learning resources manager and heads of department is good. The learning resources manager is a member of the college's curriculum committee. Whilst the bookstock is very good for art and design and for languages, it is not sufficient to meet current demands for English. Financial constraints have led to a 30 per cent reduction in the library budget. The manager conducts an annual survey of the views of staff and students to assess the quality of service provided. Systematic monitoring using the computerised database demonstrates that good use of the bookstock is made by staff and students. Notable recent acquisitions include *The Oxford English Dictionary* on compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database and access to the Internet. Normal opening hours are from 08.30 to 17.00 hours, but on three evenings a week there is an extension to 20.00 hours to serve the adult education courses. The centre is well used at these times by full-time students and increasingly by part-time students. A number of departments maintain their own book collections. The learning centre's database holds no record of these materials, some of which might be useful to other curriculum areas.

65 The college is developing a policy on information technology. The college has 123 computers, of which 93 are of recent specification. This provides a ratio of one computer to eight students. Whilst access to machines for students is generally adequate in the learning centre, more efficient use could be made of facilities in classrooms. For example, students on the GNVQ leisure and tourism course have only limited access to computers, whilst facilities in the technology area are underused. The number of computers in the learning centre has been increased but at the cost of removing many of those originally allocated to the mathematics and science departments. Recent failures of the system have been caused by overloaded equipment.

Accommodation

66 The college is located on a spacious site of 6.53 hectares, near the centre of Horsham. It is well served by public transport and there is ample parking for both staff and students. There are extensive playing fields on the east side of the site, and the whole complex of buildings is enhanced by attractive quadrangles which provide pleasant outdoor social areas for students.

67 The college has a mixed set of buildings. The main building, the former grammar school, was built in 1893. New blocks or modifications to existing buildings have been added in almost every subsequent decade. The most recent project, a sports hall, was completed in the summer of 1995. This represents the successful implementation of phase two of the college's well-conceived accommodation strategy. The sports hall includes four new classrooms. Modifications to the former gymnasium and canteen have enabled the college to create four additional teaching spaces, a new media studies room, an enhanced art and design area, and a new refectory. Another space has been used to create a well-equipped language centre. Two leased portable buildings provide accommodation for the nursery. The nature of existing buildings makes access to them difficult for users of wheelchairs. The college's reception area is not appropriately located nor is it of suitable design. The college has plans to improve it.

68 The majority of classrooms are adequate in size. They are well maintained and pleasant and are often enhanced with displays of work by students. Some classrooms in an extension to the original building are unsatisfactory and can only accommodate up to 12 students. Where possible, classrooms are grouped together and designated for an area of work. This arrangement works well and specific rooms can be appropriately resourced for a particular subject. The frequency of the use of rooms is 63 per cent during a comparatively short day running from 08.45 to 15.30 hours.

69 The college has a three-year maintenance plan based on a thorough survey of the external and internal condition of buildings. Several areas of the college are in need of redecoration or refurbishment.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

70 The particular strengths of the college are:

- high standards of teaching and learning
- very good examination results
- a wide range of academic subjects
- effective governance
- strong and effective departmental management
- a clear college mission which is supported by governors and staff
- productive links with schools

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- a clear policy for students' recruitment, guidance and support
 - effective enrolment and induction of students
 - effective monitoring of students' progress and achievement at department level
 - well-qualified and committed staff
 - a well-managed learning centre
 - a pleasant social environment for students.

71 Issues which the college should address if it is to further improve its service include:

- absence of a marketing policy
- inadequate strategies for implementing health and safety and equal opportunities policies
- the uncertain role of faculties and ineffectiveness of the faculty system
- an underdeveloped quality assurance system
- inadequate communications with parents and students over the college's policies
- the lack of an equal opportunities policy for staffing
- absence of a staff-development policy and weak links between staff development and the college's strategic plan
- lack of a clear policy on information technology
- some inefficient use of accommodation.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)

 - 2 Percentage 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)

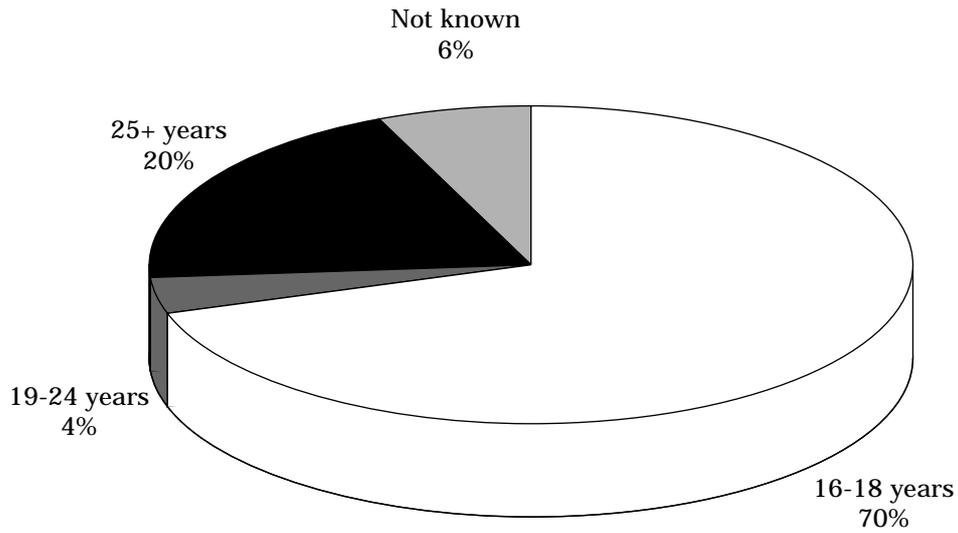
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 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

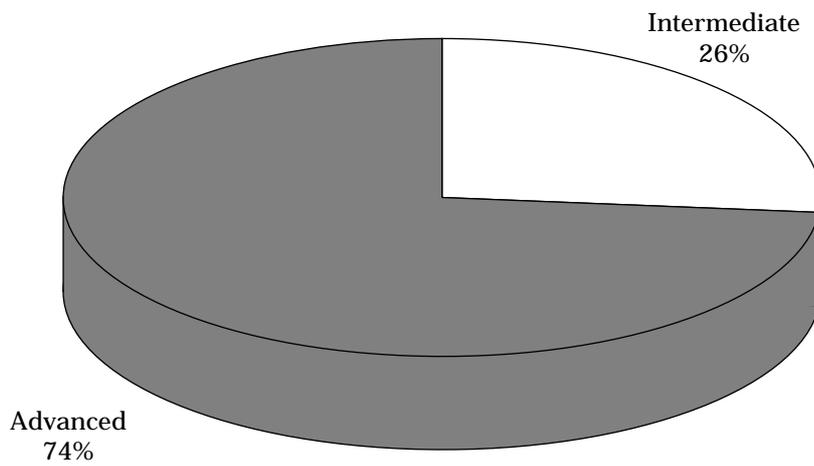
The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 1,336

Figure 2

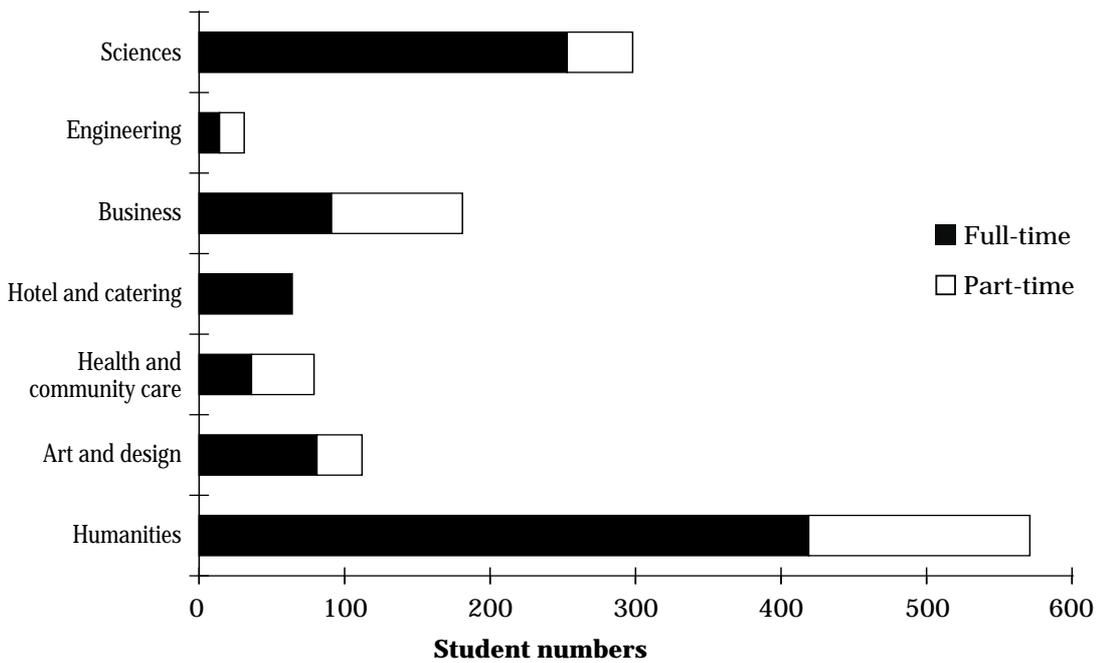
The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 1,336

Figure 3

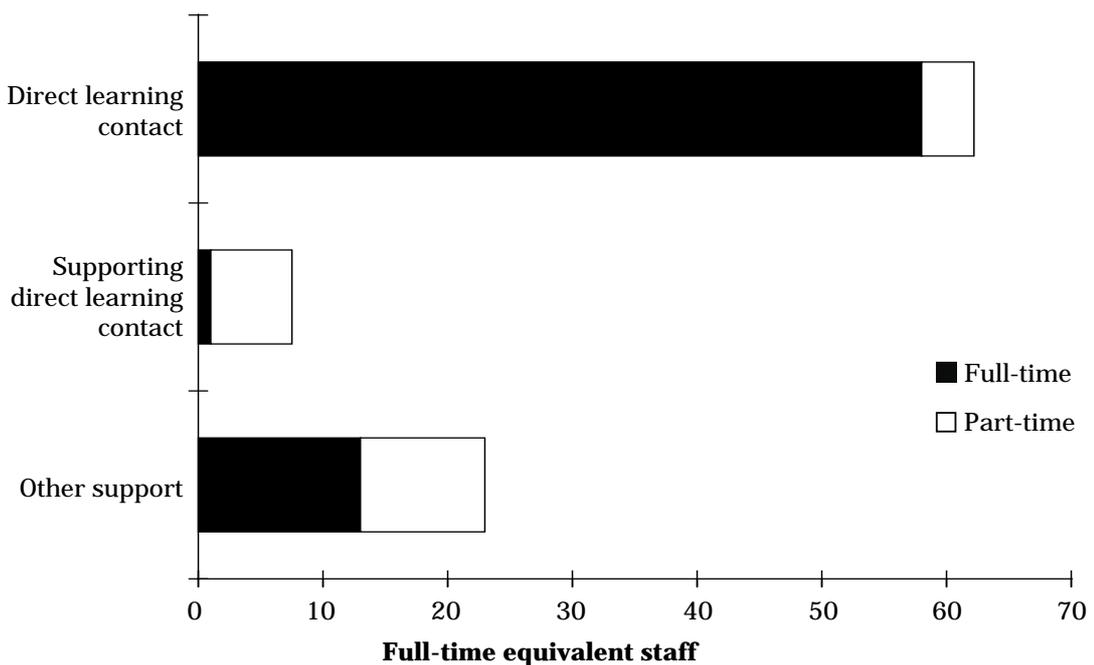
The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 1,336

Figure 4

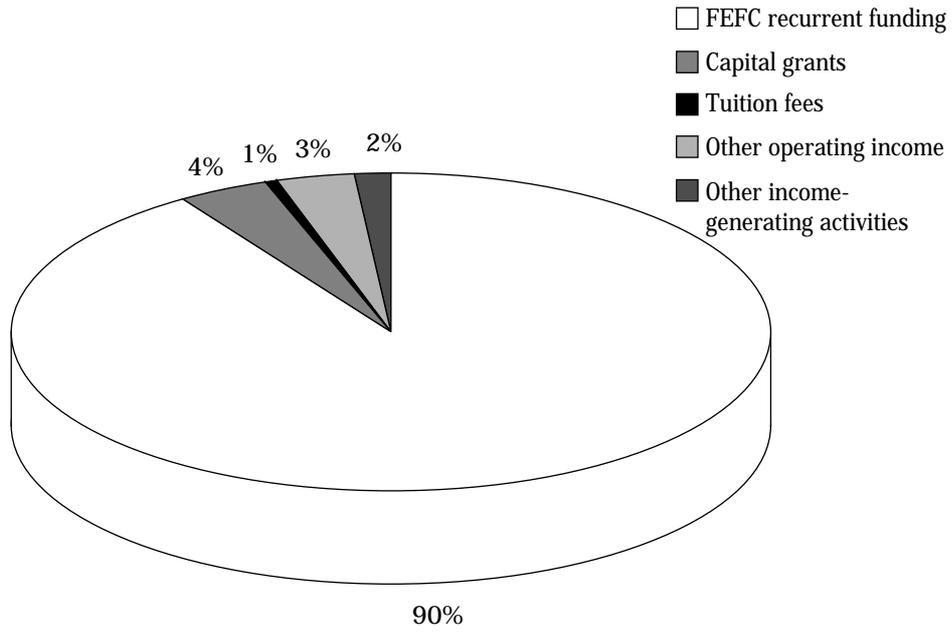
The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)



Full-time equivalent staff: 93

Figure 5

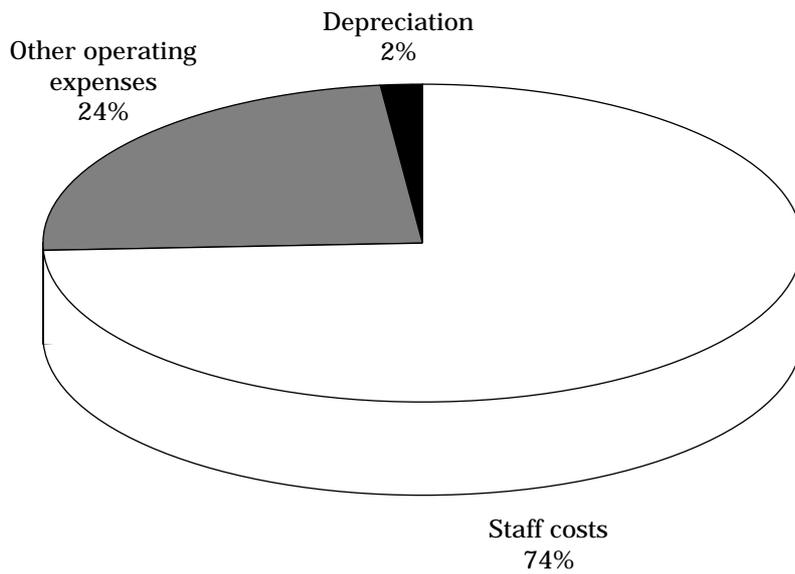
The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham: income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Income: £2,716,000

Figure 6

The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £2,814,000

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