

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Dewsbury College

**September
1994**

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

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

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

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 78/94

DEWSBURY COLLEGE
YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION
Inspected September 1993 - May 1994

Summary

Dewsbury College is a well-managed college located in the centre of West Yorkshire. It offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses. It has strong links with the local community and also with European partner institutions. There is good provision for students who are traditionally under-represented in further education, including those from ethnic minority communities. The senior management team provides effective line management and a clear sense of direction which is shared with staff. Teaching is well organised, and the support and guidance offered to students are good. The college has developed study centres which provide high-quality learning support for individual students. Students' achievements are good on most vocational courses. GCE A level pass rates are marginally below the national average for further education colleges. Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced, and have good opportunities for professional development. The standard of accommodation and equipment is high. While there are clear procedures for quality assurance, their implementation is inconsistent and the college has yet to develop rigorous means of evaluating and monitoring its provision, including the more effective use of performance indicators. Computerised management information systems require further development. The learning support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities lacks co-ordination. The college should improve its links with partner schools and the marketing of its provision, in order to arrest the decline in student numbers, particularly on the GCE advanced level course. It should also ensure greater consistency of practice across the college in the work of its schools, including the delivery of the tutorial programme.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	3
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
Science	3	Child and social care	2
Mathematics	1	Art & design	2
Technology	2	Humanities	2
Computing and information technology	2	English	2
Business and management	2		
Catering and food	1		
Sport leisure & uniformed services	2		

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INTRODUCTION

1 Dewsbury College, West Yorkshire, was inspected during the period September 1993 - May 1994. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term 1993. Subsequently, five full-time inspectors and 10 part-time registered inspectors spent a total of 42 days on specialist subject inspections. Inspectors visited 193 classes, held meetings with college staff and inspected a broad range of students' work. The inspectors also had access to an extensive variety of documentation relating to the college and its courses. In the week beginning 23 May 1994, six full-time inspectors and three part-time registered inspectors, including one inspector with experience from outside the world of education, spent a further 40 inspector days looking at aspects of cross-college provision. During the period of the inspection there were meetings with governors, a representative of the Calderdale and Kirklees Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), headteachers, local employers, students, college managers and teaching staff.

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

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 Dewsbury College is a community college in the centre of West Yorkshire. It is located on two major sites in Dewsbury and one in Batley and on a number of other smaller sites in the area. The college was formed in 1987 from the merger of the former Dewsbury and Batley Technical and Art College with Wheelwright Sixth Form College, as part of a tertiary reorganisation.

4 The college is organised into four schools, each of which is responsible for six or seven programme areas. The four schools are art and design; business and humanities; people and services; and science and technology. At the time of the inspection there were 10,081 students on roll, of whom 2,992 students were following non-vocational adult education courses and 355 were following higher education courses. There were 1,901 full-time students, 62 per cent of whom were under 19 years of age. Percentage enrolments by age and by level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2, respectively. The college employs 240 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 161 full-time equivalent support staff (figure 3).

5 There is strong competition for students from across the densely populated urban areas of West Yorkshire. Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield,

Leeds and Wakefield are all within a radius of 12 miles from the college, each having one or more colleges of further education. In addition, there are six schools with sixth forms and two sixth form colleges within easy travelling distance. Although the college was designated a tertiary college for Dewsbury in the 1987 reorganisation, and works with five 11-16 partner schools, the secondary schools in Batley and surrounding towns retained their sixth forms.

6 The college's main recruitment area is the northern part of Kirklees, a metropolitan council with a population of 370,000. About 8 per cent of the population of working age in Kirklees are of Asian origin, and it is estimated that 25 per cent of households in inner Batley and Dewsbury are headed by people born in India or Pakistan.

7 Manufacturing industry has been in decline locally, although it still represents 37 per cent of the total employment in the area, compared with 23 per cent nationally. Local traditional manufacturing industries predominate, whereas newer 'high technology' industries are significantly under-represented. The textile industry continues to have the largest number of employees. The area's service sector has grown to 56 per cent of total employment, although it is less dominant than in the country as a whole, where it accounts for nearly 70 per cent. The local economy is dominated by small firms, particularly in the service sector.

8 The area served by the college has an unemployment rate of 10.7 per cent. The proportion of long-term unemployed has risen substantially over the last two years. Unemployment is highest among people from ethnic minority backgrounds: for example, only 40 per cent of Asian males have full-time jobs, compared with 70 per cent of white males. Many small local businesses are failing, and surveys show that economic recovery in the area is weak. Dewsbury has been designated by the European Community as an assisted area and has benefited from a number of European Community funds. Batley is receiving extra government funding as a city challenge area.

9 Approximately 40 per cent of the working population in Kirklees have no qualifications. Many of these are in the 40-60 age band. The proportion of 16 year olds staying on in full-time education has risen from 40 per cent to 64 per cent over the last five years.

10 In its mission statement, the college aims to be the most responsive provider of quality education, training and related services in West Yorkshire. Its four strategic objectives, as stated in the strategic plan, 1993-96, are: to provide further, higher and continuing education for the people of North Kirklees, West Yorkshire and beyond; to foster a culture of lifelong learning in the area; to become a significant force in the economic and social regeneration of the area; and to maintain and develop the reputation of the Batley School of Art and Design as a national centre of excellence.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

11 The college is making a significant contribution to the achievement of national targets for North Kirklees. There is a wide provision, and courses can be followed in a variety of modes of attendance. There are good opportunities for students to progress from foundation levels to advanced studies. Courses lead to General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and to other certificates and diplomas in a wide range of vocational areas. Full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 4. The college also offers adult access to further and higher education courses. A wide range of vocational and non-vocational adult education is delivered in 22 centres, which are geographically dispersed to make it easy for members of the local community to join courses. The college is also involved in community events through its theatre and fashion shows, and through the horse shows staged by students on the equestrian studies course.

12 Some 19 per cent of full-time students are on higher education courses mainly in the school of art and design. Almost half of the work of this school is concerned with higher education, and courses have well-established links to the world of fashion and design at national, and increasingly, at international level. The college also offers higher national diploma (HND) courses in business and finance and in social care, and some franchised and collaborative degree work with Leeds Metropolitan and Huddersfield universities.

13 Last year, the college offered 20 General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) subjects, three advanced supplementary (AS) subjects and 19 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects. The number of full-time GCE A level students has declined by approximately 40 per cent since tertiary reorganisation in 1987. Some GCE A level subjects now have very small student numbers. To provide improved leadership, development and co-ordination the college has decided to create a separate GCE A level centre, with its own management structure, located in high-quality accommodation.

14 The college responds to students' individual needs in a variety of ways. There are excellent study centres for mathematics, information technology, and English and communications skills, which support course teaching and which also provide individual help for a large number of students. In business administration, the organisation of the curriculum in modules enables individual students to follow courses at different paces.

15 There is a European unit which has productive links with 26 partner institutions in seven European countries. The unit provides a wide range of work placements, joint educational projects and exchanges for both staff and students. Approximately 90 students went abroad last year and 130 foreign students visited the college in return. Exchange visits by staff focus on the sharing of good practice in course design and teaching.

16 Recently, an enterprise unit has been set up with a full-time co-ordinator to promote external activity. A good start has been made, and £160,000 has been earned in the last nine months. Many of the projects currently under way are related to the Batley City Challenge Scheme for economic regeneration.

17 Links with Calderdale and Kirklees TEC, the local authority, community representatives and industry are good. One TEC-related project involves evaluating progress towards the achievement of national targets for education and training in Calderdale and Kirklees. However, the provision in TEC-funded youth and adult training is modest. In some cases, industrial links could be more positively utilised either through a wider range of advisory committees or through task groups for specific projects. Links with partner schools are not fully effective and some opportunities for recruitment are being lost to other institutions.

18 Despite the diversity of its provision, figures supplied by the college show that FEFC-funded student enrolments fell by 15 per cent when comparing 1993-94 figures with those for the previous year. In addition to the long-term fall in GCE A level enrolments, the main areas of more recent decline have been in part-time release courses in engineering and construction. Recruitment to some art and design courses has also fallen. The major growth areas have been in caring, leisure and catering. The college has adjusted its courses accordingly. For example, engineering provision has been reduced and is well focused mainly on motor vehicle work.

19 The college operates in a highly competitive environment. It is aware of the needs of its local community, has responded well to many new initiatives and obtained good external market intelligence. The quality of its publicity material is good. However, marketing information and internal management data is under-exploited and a detailed marketing strategy has still to be developed. An external marketing consultant has been retained to advise on this.

20 The equal opportunities policy is comprehensive and includes clear guidance for grievance procedures. It is included in the students' handbook. Approximately 24 per cent of full-time students are from ethnic minority backgrounds and this matches closely the proportion in the local 16-19 population. The college is successful in enrolling students from traditionally under-represented groups. For example, there is a comprehensive programme based in the local community for adults and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The college offers courses in construction for women and recruits an increasing number of women students to computing and information technology courses. There are good creche facilities and there is access to most parts of the college for students who use wheelchairs.

21 The college caters for students with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the range of nationally-recognised courses available to them is limited. The majority of these students are

taught within separate groups, and there are insufficient opportunities for them to become integrated with other groups in the college.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

22 The Dewsbury College Corporation has 15 members. Eight members represent industry and commerce; there is a representative from the local TEC, two members representing community interests, the principal, and two members of the college staff. At the time of the inspection there was one vacancy. Women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds are under-represented on the corporation board and the membership of the board is not fully representative of the major curriculum areas of college provision.

23 Members of the board understand their statutory duties and are aware of the distinction and relationship between governance and management. Senior management and the governing body have a clear sense of the direction which the college is taking, and this is shared by staff through a well-defined consultative strategic planning process. Governors have been actively involved in strategic planning and have worked closely with staff both in college meetings and on residential conferences. The expertise of individual governors has been taken into account in deciding the membership of the board's subcommittees. Corporation meetings, held at least six times a year, are well attended and governors receive relevant documentation. Governors have attended seminars provided by the Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Further and Higher Education Colleges and received briefings from college management on a wide range of incorporation issues; for example, on funding methodology. The board has recently used the services of an outside consultant to review its organisation following incorporation. Board members have little involvement in school or programme area activities.

24 The college executive consists of the principal, three assistant principals and the head of corporate services. The senior management team comprises the executive and the four heads of school. The heads of school and their respective programme managers have responsibility for the college's academic programme. The roles and responsibilities of the management team are understood by staff, and line management arrangements are effective. There are clear lines of communication. The flow of information across the college is maintained through regular meetings of staff, supplemented by newsletters and a published calendar of cross-college committees and working groups. Nevertheless, the lack of consistent procedures and practices in programme area management across the schools hinders effective implementation and monitoring of college policies. In some programme areas of the college, management is informal: meetings lack a formal agenda and minutes, and no record is made of resulting actions. The senior management team has not set performance indicators for heads of schools other than course enrolment targets.

25 The college's unit of funding for 1993-1994 as recorded in the FEFC report *Funding Allocations 1993-94*, was £2,784 per weighted full-time equivalent student. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges was £2,444. The college has a 16-month budget of £13,701,000 of which 68 per cent is funded by the FEFC. Five per cent of its income comes from the TEC. Summaries of the college's income and expenditure for the 16-month period 1993-94 are given in figures 5 and 6. A system of delegated financial management to heads of school and programme managers has been introduced.

26 The college's computerised management information system is based on the further education management information system. Functional areas supported by the system include finance and student applications, offers and acceptances. Reports are distributed to governors and managers on a regular basis. However, the system does not effectively support strategic planning or provide college management with what is necessary to inform and monitor management policies. The college is currently seeking to appoint a management information service manager in order to develop the system further.

27 Heads of school and programme managers are involved in the setting and review of enrolment targets. Managers receive monthly reports on applications and acceptances and comparisons with the same point in time during the previous academic year. The information is effectively used to inform both the publicity and marketing functions of the college. Data on student retention is monitored on a termly basis at school and college level. Retention rates are good: in 1992-93 the average for full-time courses was 86 per cent. Data on student destinations are monitored and published annually.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

28 The student services unit is responsible for the central co-ordination of recruitment, guidance and support. The director of the unit is responsible to the assistant principal (curriculum and quality assurance) and co-ordinates the work of a team of college staff as well as drawing on the support of external agencies.

29 Prior to entry, prospective students are provided with comprehensive information about the college and its courses. Events such as open-door and women's days provide opportunities to visit the college and obtain guidance from college staff and the local careers service. In some programme areas, such as health care and art and design, prospective students are invited to meet existing students and view their work.

30 There are effective arrangements to ensure that students are placed on courses which match their abilities and aspirations. The student services unit assesses all full-time students' application forms and arranges impartial guidance interviews for those who are unsure of the course to follow. Initial interviews for all other applicants are conducted by staff

from the appropriate programme area. Arrangements exist to enable easy transfer between programmes.

31 The college is developing systems for recognising, and giving credit for, the prior learning and experience which students have before they come to the college. While not yet in general use, they are operating in nursery nursing, business administration and catering.

32 There are efficient induction procedures. The student services unit provides guidance for tutors and a handbook for students which gives names for contact and detailed information on college facilities, support services, and students' rights and responsibilities. During induction, there is extensive screening of full-time students to assess their needs in mathematics and English. Extra support in these areas is provided through the study centres, and there are effective procedures to enable course co-ordinators to follow up students' progress.

33 All full-time students receive a one-hour tutorial each week with their personal tutor. Tutors are issued with a suggested programme of topics, designed to extend students' knowledge and understanding of personal and social issues, and a tutorial resource bank provides them with relevant materials. However, there are variations in tutorial practices within the curriculum areas. In some courses, such as the BTEC national diploma in business and finance, students and their tutors choose topics from the tutorial programme for discussion, as well as holding individual tutorials from time to time. The group discussions, in particular, are appreciated by the students. In other courses, such as the BTEC first diploma in art and design, the tutorial time is spent mainly on individual tutorials, which focus on students' portfolios of work, at the expense of the tutorial programme.

34 Generally, students receive good individual support from their personal tutors: the tutorials provide opportunities for students to discuss progress with their tutors and to update their records of achievement. Personal counselling is provided by a well-qualified team of teachers, which includes the college's multi-cultural co-ordinator. As well as assisting personal tutors in their work with students, the team offers a broad range of services including home visits and liaison with the local community.

35 There are excellent child-care facilities on site for children aged from two-and-a-half years to five years. For younger children, childcare is found locally by the college.

36 Staff-student relationships are good. Staff are supportive and readily approachable. There are, however, no formal structures through which students may express their views or concerns: for example, students are not represented on the corporation, there is no staff-student liaison committee and the students' union is not active in promoting student affairs.

37 The physical needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are catered for effectively through the provision of transport and a wide range of equipment. However, a co-ordinated approach to the provision of learning support for them is lacking. The consequence is that not all teaching staff are fully aware of the educational and support needs of these students when they attend their classes.

38 Students benefit from the careers and higher education guidance provided by course teams and by Kirklees careers service. Careers officers provide advice and guidance at enrolment, open days, and higher education information evenings for students and their parents. They attend the college on a rota basis to provide careers guidance for students. However, the service is insufficiently integrated into the tutorial system and relies too much on students taking the initiative in seeking advice.

39 The demands on the student services unit are increasing, particularly as a result of the growing number of cases of financial hardship. The counselling service is not available to students during lunchtimes and after 16.00 hours. Some of the accommodation used by the unit, including the careers base, is located in an area of the college little used by students. The college recognises the lack of a central focus for student services, and plans to relocate the unit in a more central position near the main college entrance to make it more accessible to students.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

40 Of the 193 sessions inspected, 14 per cent had many strengths and very few weaknesses, and a further 45 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. The strengths and weaknesses of the work were evenly balanced in 32 per cent of the sessions. The following table shows the grades awarded as a result of the inspection.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE A/AS level		3	11	5	2	1	22
GCSE		2	4	5	0	0	11
GNVQ		1	4	2	3	0	10
NVQ		7	6	1	0	0	14
Other		13	61	49	12	1	136
Total		26	86	62	17	2	193

41 With the exception of sport and leisure, the programme areas had schemes of work which were coherent and well devised, and related to the needs and abilities of students. In general, lessons were well planned.

42 Features of the best classes included knowledgeable teachers, comprehensive subject coverage, and a variety of activities which were carefully sequenced to promote students' learning. A class on engine

diagnostics included the presentation of a video and the use of supporting handout material. Students responded well to questioning by the teacher, and a multi-choice test at the end indicated that there had been effective learning. In weaker lessons, teachers made too much use of dictation, levels of work were inappropriate or there was a failure to match the work to the needs of individual students. In some of the science classes, organisation of the work was poor and the subject matter superficial.

43 Students worked well in groups and pairs. For example, in a business studies lesson, students working in groups formulated a business plan for a new product; each group reported back to the class, enabling students to learn from each other. In a sport and leisure class, groups gave oral presentations of their findings and these were discussed by all the students before the lecturer summarised the results. In modern language classes, students worked in pairs to practise speaking and listening. In some groups, inappropriate assignments were set; for example, BTEC national certificate students in business studies were in some cases set the same assignments as BTEC national diploma students, even though they were not suitable for students in employment.

44 Practical work was well organised, and students were highly motivated. For example in catering, students' practical work was closely supervised and there was a sense of urgency and discipline which closely simulated commercial practice. Key concepts in chemistry were demonstrated to students of child studies through simple and well-prepared experiments which captured their attention. Motor vehicle students maintained a brisk work rate in their practical activities, and with close support from teachers, they co-operated well, helping and learning from each other.

45 Within the vocational areas, teaching and learning activities are in many cases designed to incorporate core skills of language, number and information technology. For example, in motor vehicle classes additional teacher support is provided to help students develop technical language. Extra teacher support was also provided for those students who had been identified through diagnostic tests as needing additional help in English, including those for whom English was not their first language. Assignments for students of art and design were devised in collaboration with mathematics staff in order to incorporate within a design context the teaching and learning of numeracy skills. Wordprocessing and information technology were integrated into assignments in business studies. However, there was insufficient attention to information technology in other areas of the curriculum, including languages, art and design, and the access to higher education course. Where it was used it was inadequately integrated with other aspects of the work.

46 Many programmes include the learning of a modern foreign language, taught in a vocationally relevant context. There are good opportunities for students to take part in joint educational projects and work experience in a foreign country, for which preparatory language courses are offered. For

example, students taking a BTEC national course in computing stayed with families in Palermo, Sicily, and studied electronics at their exchange partners' school. Another group of electronics students completed practical work experience in a French lycée.

47 The three study centres for mathematics, information technology and English are very effective. Students in these centres are set individual programmes, use well- designed self-study materials and benefit from effective individual support from teachers. Students speak highly of the study centre approach and the support provided.

48 Students generally receive helpful information on their progress from teachers. Art and design students draw up plans of action and keep records of their progress which they discuss with their teachers. In areas such as science and catering, teachers use effective systems for the continuous recording and discussion of individual students' achievements. In the foreign languages modules, the individual review of students' work is less systematic. Some humanities students have their work returned without adequate comment or sufficient explanation of the grades awarded.

49 Staff-student relationships were good in most of the classes. Staff were supportive and readily gave help to students in difficulty. In a small number of classes, however, a lack of direction on the part of the teacher resulted in low levels of motivation and poor standards of learning.

50 Teachers made good use of relevant materials and equipment. For example, motor vehicle students received well produced hand-outs and their teaching sessions were supported by the use of overhead projectors and video. Teachers of sport and leisure used appropriate visual aids and well-constructed written materials. Language students used the language laboratory to practise their oral skills.

51 Some inappropriate teaching and learning methods were used in classes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; for example, students, many of whom had reading difficulties, were required to copy lengthy notes from the board. Activities were not well matched to the needs of individual students.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

52 In most areas of work, students were eager to learn and they enjoyed their studies. In some areas, such as motor vehicle engineering, this was most evident when students were engaged in practical activities or where they had opportunities for discussions with the teacher and with each other.

53 Students responded well to teachers' questioning, speaking with clarity and a degree of understanding that was well matched to their level of study. In catering classes, for example, students demonstrated good levels of knowledge and understanding during oral discussion. Students' written assignments were detailed and well researched and their notes were generally neat and well organised.

54 The percentage of students who achieve their qualifications on full-time technician courses at advanced and intermediate levels is good. For example, of those entered in 1993, 95 per cent of the 115 intermediate level students and 97 per cent of the 218 advanced level students were successful. Ninety-one per cent of the 66 students who took the pre-degree foundation course in art and design were successful. However, student achievement on some courses was poor. For example, in the nursery nursing examinations only 48 per cent of students were successful and in some business courses, such as the advanced accounting technician courses, results were also poor.

55 There are good examination results on secretarial courses. Of the 1,564 individual secretarial subject entries 73 per cent passed, 40 per cent with distinction. Pass rates of over 95 per cent were obtained in five of the 13 secretarial subjects. However, in two subjects, audio-transcription and practical book-keeping, less than 40 per cent of the students gained a pass.

56 Pass rates on some City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) courses are good. For example, in 1993 over 80 per cent of students on courses in computer-aided design, floristry, the further and adult education teaching certificate and information technology achieved their qualifications. On some other CGLI courses, however, there were poorer results on a small number of the individual units. For example, on technology courses, where individual unit success rates were typically between 60 per cent and 100 per cent, some units such as electrical systems in motor vehicle work, and template and pattern development in fabrication and welding, recorded much lower success rates.

57 Of the 453 individual GCE advanced level subject entries taken in 1993, 28 per cent obtained a grade A-C and 59 per cent a grade A-E. These were below the averages of 34 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively, for further education colleges excluding sixth form colleges. Of the 18 GCE A level subjects where there were 10 or more student entries, the percentage gaining grades A-E varied between 41 per cent in human biology and 93 per cent in general studies. Pass rates exceeding 80 per cent were obtained in pure and applied mathematics, psychology, French, German and general studies. However, in accounting, sociology, physics, biology and human biology pass rates were below 50 per cent.

58 In 1993, the GCSE results were similar to the national average for general further education and tertiary colleges; of the 889 subject entries, 49.5 per cent achieved grades A-C. Of the 15 subjects with more than 10 entries, the percentage of entries gaining A-C grades varied from 9 per cent in chemistry to 83 per cent in modern history. The percentage was above 60 per cent in human and social biology, French, modern history, psychology and physical education, and below 20 per cent in biology, chemistry and law.

59 Achievements on language courses were good; as well as high pass rates at GCE A level and GCSE, there was a 100 per cent pass rate on Royal Society of Arts (RSA) French for commercial purposes and a 92 per cent

pass rate on the BTEC certificate courses in languages. Many of the students take English and mathematics through the college's study centres as additional options to their main course of study. In 1993, the grade A-C pass rate in GCSE mathematics was 41 per cent compared with the national average for general and tertiary colleges of 37 per cent.

60 Student retention rates are monitored on an annual basis. Figures show that a high proportion of students complete the academic year. The average retention rate on full-time courses in 1992-93 was 86 per cent and almost half of the full-time courses retained more than 90 per cent of their students. Retention rates vary from 77 per cent in the programme area for adult returners to 91 per cent in the programme area for child care and education. A number of individual courses have lower retention rates; for example, only 62 per cent of the students starting the BTEC national diploma in sport and leisure were still attending after six months. Approximately 30 per cent of the students who leave their original course transfer to another course within the college.

61 Students achieve good rates of progression into jobs or to further or higher education. For example, 54 per cent of the students finishing an advanced level course in 1993 progressed to higher education and a further 18 per cent gained employment. For technician courses at the intermediate level, 65 per cent progressed to further education and 15 per cent to employment and training. Ninety per cent of students following the full-time motor vehicle mechanics course progressed to related employment, and 83 per cent of students on the art and design foundation diploma course and 96 per cent of students finishing the national diploma in graphic design gained entry to higher education.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

62 The college's mission statement refers to the need to develop quality assurance procedures, and there is a committee structure to implement this. For example, the academic board delegates to the academic standards committee responsibility for establishing the monitoring mechanisms for quality control and for devising and implementing internal procedures for the approval of new courses. Schools each have boards of study which have quality assurance functions.

63 The roles and responsibilities of staff and the procedures used to assure the quality of course provision are documented. However, there is no overall policy statement on quality assurance. The procedures for the development of new courses are sometimes conducted on an informal basis which does not ensure that resource implications are fully considered at the planning stages.

64 The frequency of course team meetings and the degree of formality with which meetings are conducted is variable. Some course teams meet regularly and produce minutes which show that appropriate attention is given to course administration and student progress. Others do not meet

formally, and/or fail to produce minutes of their meetings. In some cases meetings are not well attended.

65 Procedures for assuring the quality of courses are clearly documented and meet the needs of the various examining and validating bodies. These procedures include the annual review of each course and the completion of a report. The reports are structured and include relevant statistics. Good features are the requirements to produce a plan of intended actions which arise out of the review process and to designate responsibilities for their implementation. Course reviews and action plans are fed into programme area and school overview reports, which are used to inform the planning processes. Moderators' reports are circulated to relevant staff and careful note is taken of their comments and recommendations.

66 Monitoring of the implementation of these procedures, however, lacks rigour. For example, there are no targets set for retention and achievement against which the course, programme area or school performance can be judged. Some of the written comments are bland and there is insufficient investigation of poor results. There is a lack of consistency in the procedures used to collect the views of students and employers and, in many course reports, there is little reference to the views of students. A 'quality group' has been established under the chairmanship of the new assistant principal for curriculum and quality to review the present procedures.

67 Staff development and student admissions procedures are reviewed regularly. However, some opportunities to use the annual course review reports are missed and, in some cases, the student questionnaires provide only a general overview of the quality of provision. For instance, student questionnaires contribute to the review of tutorial processes but the strengths or weaknesses of the tutorial provision on individual courses cannot be identified and relevant comments made by the course teams in their annual reports are not utilised.

68 There is an induction process for all new staff which includes an initial introduction to the college given by senior staff, periodic reviews and a mentoring process. In addition, staff who take up new duties, such as course leadership, are well supported. A good feature is the staff development to support teachers who have to develop new subject area knowledge. For example, teachers of mechanical engineering spoke highly of the support they received when their area of provision was reduced and they were redeployed.

69 There is a good volume and variety of staff development activity for all staff. About 1.8 per cent of the college's annual income is spent on staff development, which is appropriately linked to the college's strategic plan. The major activities include support for curriculum and assessment developments, such as GNVQ and assessor awards and support for the college's policies for equal opportunities and health and safety. The staff development programme is highly responsive to course needs and is well advertised to all staff, partly through the college's staff news

publication. The review of individual staff is at an early stage of development. Senior staff have been reviewed and it is intended that a pilot programme will be implemented for volunteer staff this summer in preparation for the review of all staff on a regular basis from next year.

RESOURCES

Staffing

70 Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. Ninety per cent of full-time staff possess a teaching qualification. However, the college lacks staff with specialist qualifications in the teaching of students with complex learning difficulties. About half the teaching staff have recent and relevant industrial experience; in the school of science and technology, the proportion is much lower. There is an appropriate balance in the deployment of full-time and part-time staff across curriculum areas. A human resources management strategy is being developed and an audit of staff has been undertaken in relation to age, ethnicity and gender. The proportion of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds, at 13 per cent, broadly matches the proportion of such students in the college. There is no staff handbook and most job descriptions pre-date incorporation.

71 Although the number of non-teaching staff is sufficient to support the teaching and learning, their distribution across the college does not correspond fully to curricular needs. For example, there are some shortages of technician support in information technology and art and design. Support staff have experience and qualifications which are relevant to their work. There is a clear organisational structure for support staff together with effective and supportive line management.

Equipment/learning resources

72 There is a comprehensive range of modern equipment in the college to support learning. For example, there are: well-resourced laboratories in science; a new computer-aided design studio for graphics students; a commercial business office bureau; a new multi-gymnasium facility; production kitchens equipped to industrial standards; and good reprographic and audio-visual facilities, well supported by media services technicians. The majority of classrooms are equipped with whiteboards, overhead projectors and screens. Some equipment in engineering and construction is becoming obsolete and there are some equipment deficiencies in ceramics.

73 The college has recently made a major investment in computer hardware, creating well-equipped information technology study centres which use a wide range of modern commercial standard software. Computing facilities are available for students' use in all other buildings, including the library.

74 The library on the main campus has recently been refurbished to a high standard. It is well equipped with six CD-ROM drives, sufficient study

spaces and a wide range of newspapers, periodicals and video-tapes. The library has suffered historically from under-funding, and as a consequence the number of books in relation to the number of students is low. The library staff are well qualified. There are no formal links between the library and the strategic planning process. The English, mathematics and information technology study centres are well resourced with self-study materials, many of which have been produced by the college.

Accommodation

75 The college occupies three major sites: the main campus in Halifax Road, Dewsbury, where 75 per cent of college activities take place; the Wheelwright Centre in Dewsbury, which is the major centre for art and design courses; and the Providence Street building in Batley, where graphics and media courses are based. The mainly Victorian buildings on the Dewsbury site are architecturally attractive and blend with the local environment. They are well furnished and clean, and provide accommodation which is more than sufficient to meet the planned increase in enrolments. There is particularly good quality accommodation for art and design, catering, science, business, humanities and the study centres. Parts of the accommodation are of poor quality, for example the electrical installation and construction rooms, and the Providence Street building.

76 An accommodation strategy is being prepared which aims to solve the problems of unsatisfactory buildings and the excess capacity. There is a planned maintenance programme, aspects of which are undertaken on a preventative basis. Access for students with restricted mobility has been provided in all buildings with the exception of Providence Street. Provision for students' social and recreational facilities is limited. A number of the staff base rooms are overcrowded and some technicians are not provided with workrooms separate from stores or classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

77 Dewsbury College is working towards its mission of becoming the most responsive provider of quality education, training and related services in West Yorkshire. Particular strengths of the provision inspected are:

- the wide range of courses offered through a variety of modes of attendance
- the productive links with the local community and with partner institutions in seven European countries
- the high proportion of students from traditionally under-represented groups, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds
- effective line management and a clear sense of direction for the college which is shared by staff
- the good support and guidance for students
- well-organised and effective teaching, particularly in catering and mathematics

-
- well-developed study centres
 - well-qualified and experienced staff, supported by extensive staff development
 - good-quality accommodation and equipment.

78 If the college is to maintain and improve standards it should address the following issues:

- the decline in the number of students, in particular on full-time GCE advanced level courses
- links with partner schools and the marketing of its provision
- inconsistent implementation of quality assurance procedures and tutorial practices across the schools
- lack of rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of course provision
- the use of performance indicators against which the achievements of programme areas can be measured
- further development of the management information system
- the co-ordination of learning support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

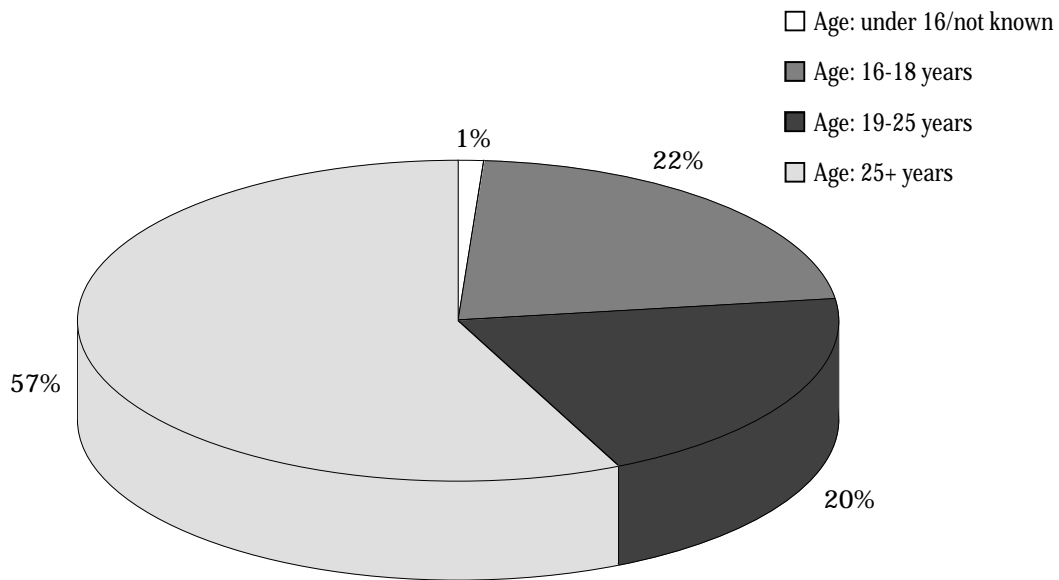
FIGURES

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| 6 | Estimated expenditure (1993-94) |
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Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

Figure 1

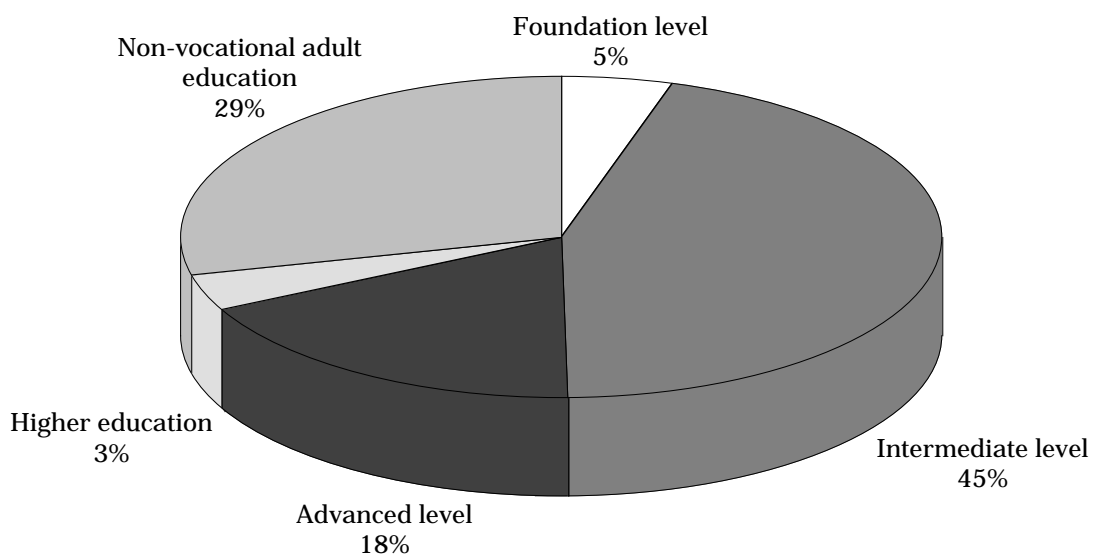
Dewsbury College: percentage enrolments by age (1993-94)



Enrolments: 10,081

Figure 2

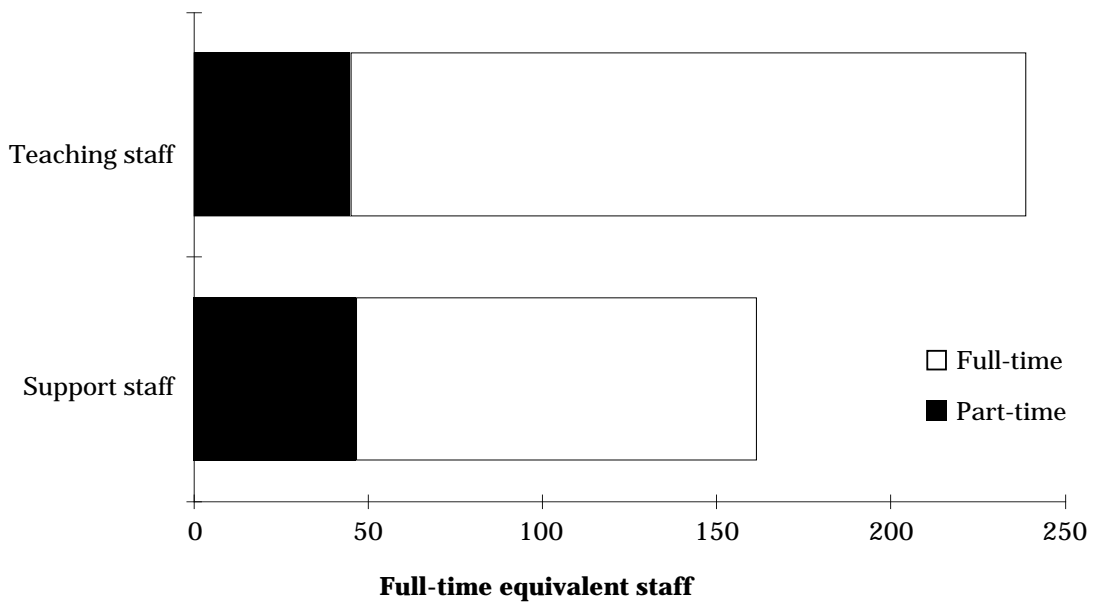
Dewsbury College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1993-94)



Enrolments: 10,081

Figure 3

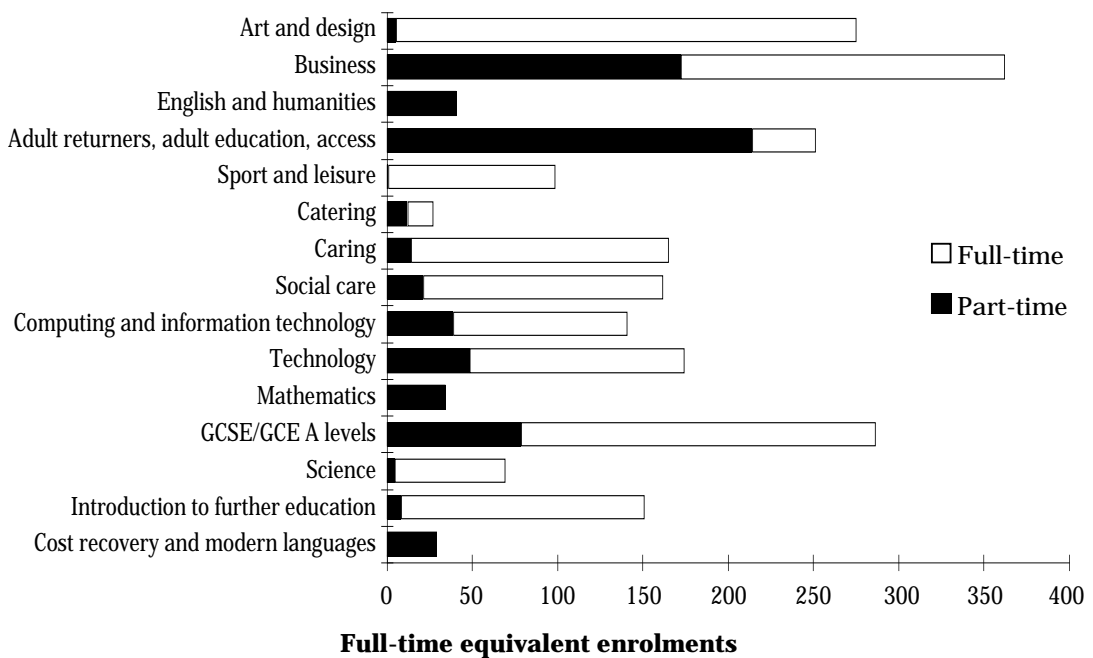
Dewsbury College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent staff: 401

Figure 4

Dewsbury College: enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent enrolments: 2,271

Figure 5

Dewsbury College: estimated income (1993-94)

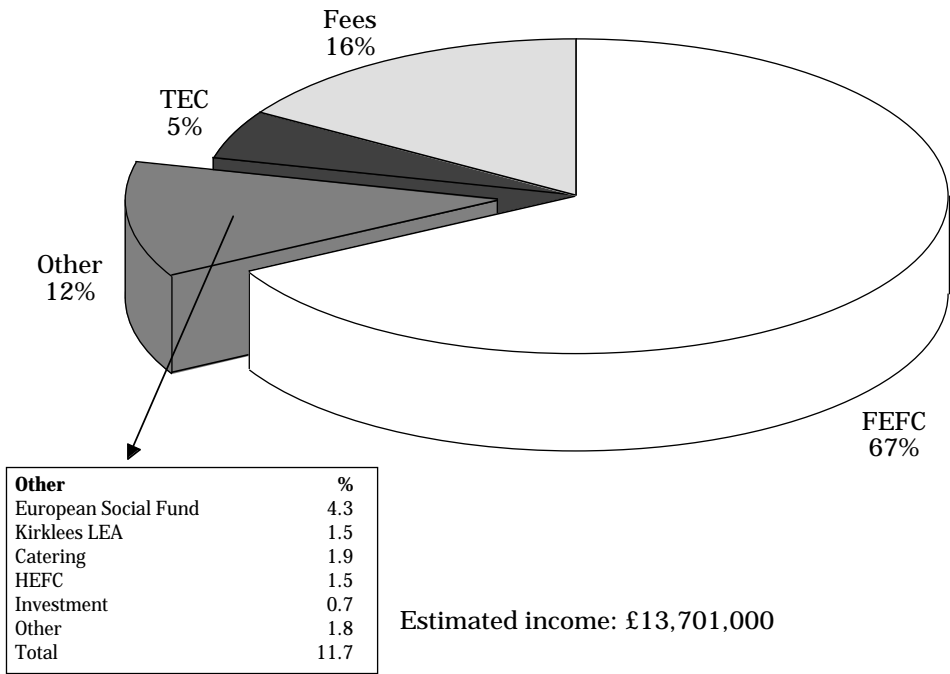
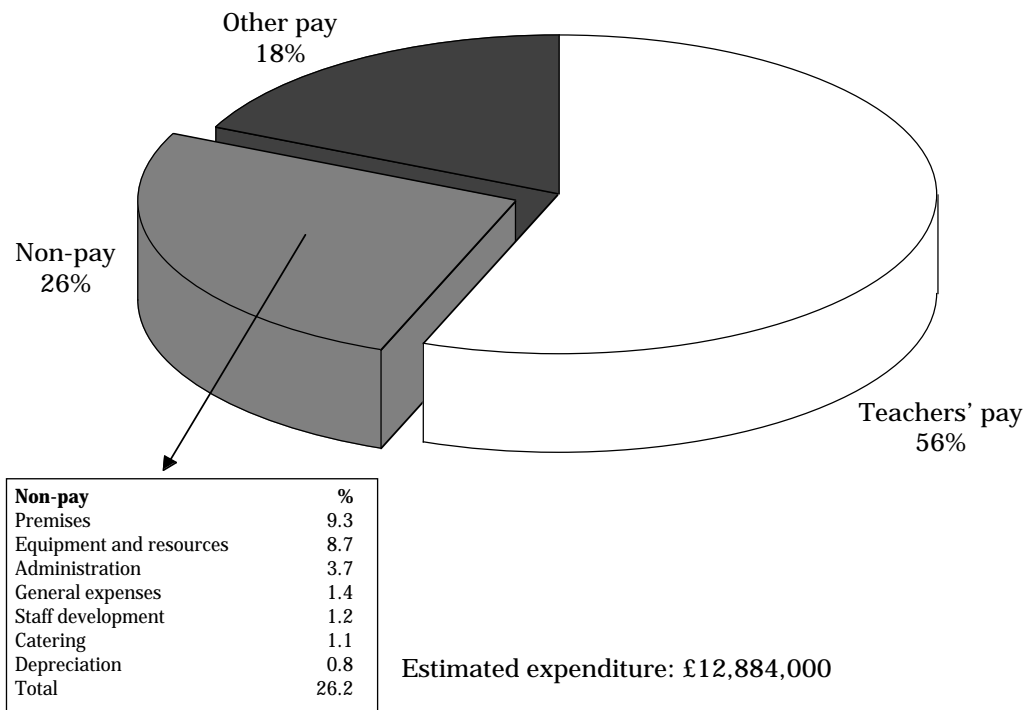


Figure 6

Dewsbury College: estimated expenditure (1993-94)



Published by the
Further Education Funding Council
September 1994