

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Dudley College of Technology**

**July 1996**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council has a 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.

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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**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Inspection grades</b>				
	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%

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 61/96

## DUDLEY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

### WEST MIDLANDS REGION

Inspected February 1995-February 1996

#### Summary

Dudley College of Technology is a major provider of post-16 education and training. There are good links with the local community, employers, schools, the local TEC and universities. Marketing is well managed. The strategic plan addresses the need to develop and update skills locally and nationally. The corporation provides effective strategic direction. Senior management is effective but the quality of middle management is more variable. The college substantially exceeded its growth targets for 1994-95. Management information systems generally work well. Tutorial and guidance systems are effective. Enrolment and induction procedures are efficient. There is strong support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of teaching and learning is variable; there are particular strengths in art and design. Examination results in vocational areas are reasonably good but GCE A levels and GCSE results are modest. Most staff are well qualified. Substantial resources are committed to effective staff development. Resources are mostly adequate. Accommodation is generally good. Quality assurance is effective in cross-college areas, but there is need to improve it at course level. The college should: address low levels of attendance; carry forward its initiatives to improve retention rates; obtain more information on students' destinations; and continue to improve aspects of the community franchise programming.

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

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science	3	Art and design	1
Engineering	2	Humanities	3
Business studies	2	Adult basic education	2
Business administration	2	SLDD provision	2
Health care	3	Community franchise education	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Dudley College of Technology was inspected between February 1995 and February 1996. Specialist visits took place between February and October 1995 and included 'outreach' provision in community centres as well as courses offered on the college's main sites. Enrolment and induction were inspected at the beginning of the 1995-96 academic year. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected at the end of January and the beginning of February 1996. Twenty inspectors took part in the inspection for a total of 88 inspector days. Inspectors visited 239 classes and scrutinised samples of students' work. Meetings took place with members of the corporation, senior managers and other staff, students, employers, members of the community, parents, and representatives of the Dudley Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). Inspectors examined a substantial number of documents relating to the college and its courses.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Dudley College of Technology, which traces its origins back to the Dudley Mechanics Institute, is located in the heart of the Black Country, on the western edge of the West Midlands conurbation. It is a large general further education college which operates on four main sites within the metropolitan borough of Dudley. The college serves the borough of Dudley and draws students from the neighbouring areas of Sandwell, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall and South Staffordshire. The college's main site is attractively located in pleasant surroundings near to Dudley Castle. A second major campus is adjacent to the Wrens Nest Nature Reserve. Other sites include an internationally renowned glass centre at Brierley Hill. An extensive building and refurbishment programme has been completed recently. Many outreach sites are used in the delivery of community and franchise provision.

3 The dependence of the local economy on manufacturing has been severely affected by two major recessions in recent times. Manufacturing employment and training needs have declined to a greater extent than they have nationally. There has been growth in the services sector, for example, the creation of Britain's second largest retail park at Merry Hill. Projected employment patterns in the Dudley area show an overall decline in full-time jobs and a rise in part-time working and self-employment up to the year 2000. During the same period, changes in occupational employment are expected to show a continuing decline in unskilled, manufacturing and clerical occupations and an increase in managerial and administrative occupations. There is a large number of small-scale employers in the locality among whom there is no substantial tradition of training. The requirements of employers for a multi-skilled workforce are not matched by the skills available among the many unemployed.

4 In August 1995, the unemployment rate for Dudley was 8.4 per cent. In the wards from which many students are recruited unemployment rates were much higher, averaging 14.3 per cent. Among the minority ethnic

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groups unemployment was 22 per cent for males and 16 per cent for females. In the Dudley TEC area in October 1995 11,304 people were classed as long-term unemployed, 41.4 per cent for 12 months or more.

5 There are six general further education colleges, three tertiary colleges and several schools with sixth forms serving the immediate area from which the college draws its students. In addition, some local grant maintained schools are seeking to re-establish sixth forms, resulting in increasing competition for students. In meeting this challenge, the college has sought to widen access by forging partnerships through collaborative arrangements with 10 schools, franchise agreements with three universities, six community and 20 commercial organisations, and through the provision of educational services within 10 prison establishments in the West Midlands. The college has grown by more than 600 per cent since 1980 and 52 per cent since incorporation.

6 The curriculum of the college is organised into 12 divisions which are grouped into three faculties: art, design and community education; business studies and humanities; and, science and technology. In 1994-95 there were 22,658 students enrolled on college programmes of whom 4,378 were full time, 14,162 were part time and 4,118 were enrolled as part of the Prison Education Contract. The 1991 census for Dudley showed a minority ethnic population of young people below working age of 27 per cent which exactly mirrors the current minority ethnic population of the college. The age profile of the students shows that 67 per cent are aged 19 and over, excluding prison education students. Study at foundation and intermediate levels accounts for 52 per cent of the total. The numbers of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. The college employs 609 full-time equivalent staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

7 The mission statement of the college is: 'Serving the community through high-quality education and training'. In fulfilling this mission, the college seeks to identify the needs of clients and to assure continuous improvement in the quality of its provision. The opportunity for students to fulfil their own potential is provided through clearly-defined progression routes. The aim is to provide opportunities for education and training, leading to recognised qualifications, which are accessible to the local, regional, national and international markets. The college is committed to working closely with other organisations in order to provide a coherent and progressively developing programme of education and training opportunities.

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

8 The college's commitment to responsiveness and flexibility is evident from the emphasis of the 12 corporate objectives in its strategic plan. Eight of these are concerned with the college's commitment to meet the

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needs of a diverse range of potential clients. The plan recognises the importance of the college's provision to assist the achievement of the revised national targets for education and training. Staff are well informed, for example through newsletters and bulletins, about issues affecting further education, national education initiatives and priorities and local needs.

9 The college identifies education and training needs through the work of the enterprise team, the marketing department, the overseas recruitment manager, the company liaison manager, the community liaison officer, and staff responsible for school liaison pre-16 and post-16. The diversity of the markets which the college serves requires a broad based approach. Each teaching division has a responsibility for identifying needs within its own specialist area. There is effective interaction between divisions and staff with college-wide responsibilities. Marketing is well managed and supported by a regularly reviewed marketing policy and plan. A detailed report, following an evaluation of the 1995-96 marketing campaign, incorporated proposals for further development. The college has a database of 7,000 employers and education and community organisations located within a radius of about 20 miles of the college. This is used increasingly by college managers for market research and publicity. A newsletter is produced to maintain and improve employers' knowledge of the college. College publicity uses a wide range of media. A common house style has been established and print material is attractive and informative. The college video recently received a national award for the best promotional video of the year.

10 The college has good links with the TEC for which it is the largest training provider. It also works with the neighbouring TECs in Sandwell and Walsall. The partnership with Dudley TEC is effective at both strategic and operational level. The principal is a member of the board of the TEC and of the Chamber of Commerce. An assistant principal has designated responsibility for overall co-ordination of links with the TEC and many other college staff have a direct working relationship on specific contracts and projects. The TEC has a high regard for the responsiveness and customer orientation of the college, and for its support for TEC projects and initiatives.

11 The college gives a high priority to maintaining contact with employers across the range of vocational sectors. There are particularly strong links in engineering, business and secretarial studies, and art and design. In health and community care, effective links with local employers are now being established. The college undertakes an annual questionnaire survey of employers who sponsor employees at the college. In 1995, 384 questionnaires were distributed and yielded a response rate of 19 per cent. Companies registering any dissatisfaction were contacted personally by the company liaison manager. There were generally high levels of satisfaction with the information, advice and enrolment



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arrangements, but significant dissatisfaction with other aspects, including financial administration.

12 The college seeks to meet the needs of individual employers. The range of activities includes franchising of training programmes on employers' premises, many leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Ten companies are members of the Dudley College Training Association which provides continuing in-company training for trainees completing skill development credit programmes and a broad range of other NVQ programmes. The college undertakes an increasing amount of consultancy with employers including Investors in People, International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9000 quality systems, development of training plans and specific skills programmes.

13 The college provides a broad range of education and training opportunities for a wide variety of students. These include programmes for all ages and abilities with good progression routes, in many cases, from basic education to degree level study. Courses are offered with flexible attendance patterns and cover nine of the 10 Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) programme areas. The college is a major centre for glass technology courses. General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses are offered in eight vocational areas at all levels, except at foundation level in leisure and tourism. Thirty-one subjects are offered for the General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and 32 subjects for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). There are agreements with three universities through which parts of higher education courses are taught in the college. Initiatives undertaken to extend the range of education and training opportunities include flexible timing of courses to meet students' needs. Other examples are the use of the resource based learning centre, the open learning centre and the recent establishment of the weekend college. A regular free bus service with a published timetable is provided for students to travel between the main sites. However, students' views of its efficiency were mixed. There is increasing opportunity for students to gain credit for completion of elements of a programme through, for example, accreditation provided by the West Midlands Access Federation.

14 There is an extensive and imaginative programme of additional studies and activities aimed at full-time students but available to all. Designated staff provide a core studies programme, from which course tutors can select those most appropriate for their particular course. Many courses are taught jointly by core studies teachers and subject teachers to ensure effective integration with the students' overall programme. The entitlement programme also includes work experience, international exchanges and visits and a range of recreational and sporting activities.

15 The college provides for adults through courses located on the college's own sites and in four adult education centres and other local outreach centres. Some provision is also franchised to community agencies

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in different parts of the country. The main provision within the college is English as a second language, numeracy and literacy. Community outreach courses such as English as a second language, dressmaking, family literacy, and playgroup practice are run by staff employed by the college. These programmes successfully attract students who would not otherwise enter further education, in particular adults from minority ethnic groups. There is a community liaison officer in the division of community education. The college has a database of the community and voluntary organisations with which it works.

16 The college believes that, despite the difficulties that the management of franchising entails, it contributes to increasing access to education by students who have not usually entered further education. Franchised agreements with community organisations have been established to make college provision available in specific community groups, in one case at a considerable distance from the college. In 1994-95 there were 120 of these franchised courses with 1,171 students. The majority of provision is in Urdu, English as a second language, textiles and Islamic studies. Most courses are run in Birmingham and Burton-upon-Trent and a few are run in Coventry and Oldham. Some staff in the community agencies do not have a good understanding of further education and its requirements and there is limited curriculum support and leadership. The college has decided to restrict expansion while it establishes effective systems for monitoring and support.

17 The college provides education in 10 penal institutions. This is a substantial element of the college's work. It involves a total of 104 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 47 are full time, and over 1,200 full-time equivalent students. All but three of the staff are based in the prisons but they draw on college expertise for advice on teaching and learning, and for staff development and student support.

18 There are many productive contacts with local schools. These include curriculum links with secondary schools, link courses, taster days, open days and sessions for intending students. The strength of these relationships varies markedly between subjects. They are particularly strong in science and construction. Many primary school pupils attend days in the construction workshops when they can practise some basic skills. College staff are also involved in a range of projects in primary schools and in teaching students from eight secondary schools who are following GNVQ or NVQ units in a variety of subjects. There are regular meetings with special schools and an established programme of link courses for students from these schools. The programme includes nine special schools and involves 119 students in the current year. Course options available include engineering, construction, hairdressing, fashion, glasswork and horticulture.

19 There are well established links with the local education authority (LEA), although the contract with the LEA to deliver adult education has

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been reduced as a result of the LEA's policy to develop schools into community education centres. The college, with two other local colleges, is funding local adult advice and guidance provision following cessation of funding by the LEA.

20 A range of links with education and training organisations in Europe and beyond has been developed. More than 100 students from 15 countries are undertaking study programmes in the college. A college prospectus has been produced in a number of different languages as part of an initiative to increase this provision. A wide range of international exchanges and visits is undertaken and there is an increasing amount of consultancy work under the aegis of the British Council.

21 The college is strongly committed to ensuring equality of opportunity. A vice-principal has designated responsibility for this area. The equal opportunities and welfare committee oversees policy and evaluates cross-college data on gender, ethnicity and disability. Action is initiated through the curriculum management team. The college's approach to equal opportunities has been outlined in a policy framework and distributed to all staff for comment. This sets out the statutory position; the college's own policy statement and aims; the responsibilities of the college, staff and students; recruitment practices; and implementation arrangements. The college promotes equality of opportunity in many ways, for example, through staff and student induction programmes and recruitment measures to attract students from under-represented groups. Several courses have been designed specifically for minority ethnic groups and for women. There is a wide range of separate specialist courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The course arrangements are flexible and provide a range of vocationally-based options.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

22 The corporation is effective in giving strategic direction to the college. Membership has recently been increased from 10 to 14 to strengthen gender and ethnic representation and to ensure that corporation committees remain quorate. There are 10 independent members, one nominated by the Dudley TEC, two elected by the teaching staff and support staff, respectively, and the principal. Members have expertise in law, accountancy, surveying, medical practice, personnel and industrial relations. Two members are female and there is one member from a minority ethnic background. New members have been appointed after informal contact and interview by members of the corporation. The need to establish a search committee with appropriate terms of reference has been recognised. Meetings are mostly well attended, although difficulties in achieving a quorum in the audit committee led the corporation to increase its membership. Meetings of the corporation and its committees are clearly minuted and records of attendance are kept. A code of conduct and a register of members' interests, including those of senior

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management, was approved in February 1995. The clerk to the corporation is a postholder in the college. Both the chairman and the clerk are aware of the need to ensure that the clerk can provide independent advice. This should be helped by the production of a formal job description which is currently under consideration. Corporation papers are available, upon application, both from the clerk and the principal's office.

23 The corporation has established four major committees: legal and finance, personnel, estates and audit. The committees have clear terms of reference, meet regularly and undertake detailed evaluation of issues in their sphere. The consistent reporting of decisions and minutes to the corporation and a regular principal's report ensure clear oversight over college affairs. The use of specialist expertise to enable committees to assist the corporation was illustrated by the personnel committee's contribution to resolving issues relating to contracts of employment. Recently, the corporation has called upon members of senior staff, other than the principal, to attend its meetings and provide specialist briefings. This has assisted in the wider sharing of responsibility within senior and middle management. The corporation receives information on students' achievements and examination results. There is scope for the corporation to evaluate this aspect of the college's operation more thoroughly, perhaps helped by evaluative commentary on the results by senior management.

24 The corporation has an informed understanding of the distinction between strategic and operational matters. The relationship between the principal and the chairman is characterised by a clear understanding of respective responsibilities. The corporation takes a keen interest in strategic matters, often challenging and being concerned to test proposals coming from the senior management. Risks associated with new developments, for example the annual bidding for funding units, are generally assessed. However, the corporation did not analyse in depth the implications of the development of the major community franchise. Members have attended training seminars to assist them in their duties. In meetings with inspectors they showed clear enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the college. Members attend college events, such as awards ceremonies.

25 The college's strategic plan is well attuned to local need and is informed by labour market information. It has clear priorities based upon corporate objectives. College staff at many levels have been associated with the development of the plan. Corporate objectives were shared among teams who worked on the strategic plan. Teaching divisions also worked upon the implementation of corporate objectives and fed their conclusions to faculties. Clear operating statements show how corporate objectives can be achieved. There is an annual and mid-yearly review by the corporation, of progress made towards achieving corporate objectives. In 1994-95, the review showed that 46 of the 55 actions in the operating

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plan had been achieved and substantial progress made on the remainder. The strategic plan is complemented by divisional plans of varying quality. These have objectives, supported by analysis of existing provision including strengths and weaknesses, and development plans with explicit or implicit targets. The strategic management and quality group keeps the plan and its implementation under regular review.

26 Effective leadership is given by the executive committee, which meets weekly. It comprises the principal, three vice-principals, with responsibility for business management, resources and academic affairs, respectively, and the head of finance. Following advice from the corporation, the head of financial affairs began to report directly to the principal in the autumn of 1995. This was an appropriate development. The third tier of management comprises three heads of faculty and seven heads of cross-college activities. The fourth tier comprises 12 teaching divisions. The college has mostly clear lines of responsibility and reporting arrangements. Communications are effective and are driven by an appropriate range of senior management committees. A well-designed annual action planner provides a coherent timetable cycle for meetings and ensures effective linking of senior management committees with faculty and divisional boards. College staff at all levels reported that they were well informed about cross-college issues and able to raise matters with immediate line managers and those above. Regular newsletters and termly meetings of all staff with the principal support communication across the college.

27 The academic board is representative of teaching and support staff and acts in an advisory capacity to the principal. It reviews a wide range of curriculum issues, including course provision, examination results and students' achievements, and course monitoring. It also receives faculty board minutes and is involved in programme review and evaluation.

28 The quality of management within the curriculum is variable. Examples of good practice include well-managed provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a genuine sharing of aims and objectives by staff in business studies and the use of development plans in secretarial and administration courses. Lines of communication are good in art and design and hairdressing and beauty therapy. In contrast, inspectors found no clear link between development plans and resource allocation procedures in science, and weaknesses in communication between the curriculum area and senior staff in mathematics. The lines of communication for support and accountability in the community network are not understood by tutors. There is need to clarify the management of GNVQs. In engineering, new management structures were not effectively operating at the time of the specialist inspection in March 1995 and management issues have still not been fully resolved.

29 College policies for health and safety and equal opportunities are in place and carefully monitored. The health and safety policy and procedures

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are currently being revised by a newly-appointed, full-time, qualified health and safety adviser. All divisions have a nominated person who has responsibility for health and safety. The health and safety officer is improving staff and students' awareness of the value of accident prevention.

30 Enrolment targets are set and the college exceeded its growth target for 1994-95 by 17 per cent. Information supplied by the college revealed serious retention rate issues in 1994-95. Withdrawals were 26 per cent for full-time students and 21 per cent for part-time students. The college has established improved retention as a key priority for 1995-96 and has set a target of 85 per cent. Staff met during the inspection confirmed that much greater attention has recently been paid to retention, assisted by the more precise information now available on students' attendance. Early returns indicated a fall in students' withdrawals in comparison with the same period last year.

31 The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The college's average level of funding for 1995-96 is £16.44 per unit. This is well below the median for general further education and tertiary colleges, which is £17.84. Budgets are derived from a bidding process involving heads of divisions and sections and are monitored monthly. The college has had difficulty in the past in producing sufficient and timely information on financial issues for the corporation, but steady improvements have been made and new software, soon to be purchased, should continue this process of improvement. Sophisticated and useful information has been developed on unit costs, produced by course. This includes earned income from all sources and expenditure on full-time salaries, using a standardised norm per division. Divisional heads find this approach helpful in alerting them to the contribution they make and raising staff awareness of financial matters.

32 Management information systems are being developed to give more effective support for strategic management. The college supplied its individual student record returns to the FEFC on time. The management information system is sufficiently advanced to enable senior managers to model alternative strategies for the college's development. Middle and senior managers mostly have on-line access to the system though not all are convinced about the reliability of the data provided. On-line access is incomplete since the Mons Hill site is not yet networked but plans are in hand to address this. Major innovations have included systems which give precise, rapid and accurate information on enrolments. The computerised register system has the potential to give comprehensive information on attendance, although the quality of information remains dependent upon entries from registers kept manually. Staff development could improve the effective understanding and use of management information systems. There is clear information on students' achievements and examination results on GCE A level and GNVQ courses but not for courses in many vocational areas.

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

33 There are clear policy statements for the main areas of student support and guidance, including admissions, induction, accreditation of prior learning and student records. Service standards are agreed for the main areas of student support. The need for prospective students to receive accurate information and impartial advice is recognised by those staff with responsibilities for student services and marketing. Some revised procedures have been in place for one round of recruitment and are subject to continuing review. The extensive range of support services is related directly to the students' curriculum entitlement. A positive feature of student support and guidance is the generally cordial relations between students and teaching staff.

34 Procedures for dealing with enquiries, and the selection and enrolment of students, are well considered and mostly effective. The problems of fragmentation of these activities in the past have been acknowledged. Action is being taken to ensure more co-operation and greater consistency in the various aspects of support and guidance for students. This is helped by the increased co-ordination by student services. Generally, students receive appropriate advice from the college before enrolment and during their courses.

35 A college shop is located in a Dudley shopping area and serves as a drop-in centre for students who wish to obtain advice on the college and its courses. The shop handled nearly 900 enquiries in 1994-95, a reduction on previous years. Of these, more than 25 per cent led to enrolments on college programmes. The shop is particularly well regarded by students seeking advice and information on the community programmes.

36 Efficient and helpful new procedures for the enrolment of students are in place. Students have ready access to advice from teaching and student services staff. Extra staff are engaged to assist and the process is organised to avoid unnecessary delay. Clear directions are given and each student is given an individual identity number to enable the rapid production of summary data.

37 A concerted effort has been made to introduce a common induction programme for all full-time students. Significant progress has been made and students in many areas of the college have appreciated the structured induction sessions. Effective use is made of checklists in some areas. Informative handbooks are provided for students. Nevertheless, implementation of induction has been inconsistent and the college is intending to improve future arrangements. The balance between essential college information and that which relates to particular courses has not met the needs of all student groups. Students' knowledge of the college charter and their rights in respect of key services varies between programmes. Some of the technical language used in induction documents, for example in relation to British Standards, is not understood by some students.

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38 The college has a clear commitment to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, through separate specialist courses and a network of care attendants. The support available is promoted within college and course literature. All full-time students without a grade C in GCSE English and mathematics or equivalent, receive a diagnostic assessment of their needs in literacy and numeracy as part of their induction. These assessments are followed up and specific programmes agreed. Feedback on the diagnostic assessments is not provided systematically for those students who do not have additional needs. In autumn 1995, about 20 per cent of all new full-time students were identified as needing additional numeracy or literacy support. The large majority were subsequently supported through agreed and clearly-documented programmes. Other kinds of support may be provided; for example, a student with a speech impediment was given additional support to help the development of oral presentation skills. The wide range of separate specialist courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is clearly meeting the needs of most students. However, not all students are clear about progression routes and opportunities available to them, or why it is not possible for them to follow some mainstream course options.

39 The college has an explicit policy for the accreditation of prior learning and related procedures are documented. The application of accreditation of prior learning varies considerably across the different areas of the college. There are examples of good practice in some areas but there is little use in others.

40 All full-time students maintain a 'personal planner'. This is an extensive file which belongs to the student and is the key component in the development and maintenance of personal records of achievement. It includes progress review and tutorial records. All students have access to their planner, though many have yet fully to understand its purpose. The file is organised into sections, some of which are standard and others which are tailored to meet the needs of particular student groups. Some personal planners offer a useful and extensive record of student commitments, records and achievements, though others are not well maintained.

41 The tutorial system is part of the strategic and operating plans of the college and is defined as such in the college charter. The tutorial entitlement is clear and provides a core syllabus of personal development and also regular individual review. Tutorial records are maintained and include feedback comments from students on their studies. A successful feature of many tutorials for full-time students is a dual staffing arrangement whereby a specialist subject tutor and a core skills tutor share the session. All students are offered at least one individual tutorial each term. The quality of the tutorial record sheets is variable; some lack the necessary level of detail or information on action required. Generally, support and guidance is less well developed for students following



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franchised community programmes, where there are inconsistencies in the fulfilling of tutorial agreements and the sharing of records with students.

42 The college has, on its Broadway site, an attractive and welcoming student services centre. A wide range of support services is offered, including guidance, counselling, nursery provision and medical nursing. A more limited facility is located on the Mons Hill site. Student services also have a liaison role with the students' union. Students receive ample information about college support services, through printed literature, including a regular newsletter, and by noticeboards. A carefully-considered programme of careers support is provided for full-time students through the core skills tutorials. Specialist careers officers are also available in the college for 3.5 days a week through a service level agreement with the Black Country Careers Service. Students have access to a substantial and well-organised careers library which has information in printed form and on computer. The college has recognised the need to improve its counselling service in line with changing national standards. A full-time professional counsellor was appointed in February 1996, supported by three seconded academic staff. The nursing surgeries dealt with about 5,000 appointments in 1994-95, covering students and staff. The three nursing staff also maintain a large library of health leaflets and posters and regularly contribute to health promotion events within the college. A small nursery on the Broadway site has 12 places for the children of students and staff. Currently, there are some vacancies. The qualified staff provide a stimulating environment for the children, most of whom belong to women who are returning to study. Some parents are assisted in paying the modest nursery fees with financial support from the college access fund.

43 Student attendance rates are monitored, though the reasons for non-attendance are not consistently followed up at programme level. Attendance is a problem in some areas. College monitoring figures for 1994-95 show a level of below 70 per cent in four of the 11 areas of work. A new register system has been introduced which offers the potential for more rigorous monitoring. The college has also begun a close monitoring of student attendance over the first six weeks of programmes, to try to identify potential difficulties. Where attendance is registered at less than 80 per cent, the student can be referred to student services for advice and support. The college is piloting a scheme, developed from individual testing, aimed at providing early information on those students likely to have problems and who might benefit from additional support

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

44 Of the 239 sessions inspected, 63 per cent had strengths that clearly outweighed weaknesses. In 8 per cent, the weaknesses clearly outweighed the strengths. The following table summarises the grades given for the teaching sessions inspected.

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

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
GCE AS/A level		3	18	14	2	0	37
GCSE		2	7	4	1	0	14
GNVQ		2	8	16	4	0	30
NVQ		7	20	5	1	0	33
Access to further and higher education/ higher education		1	8	6	2	0	17
Basic education		6	11	4	2	0	23
Other vocational		21	37	19	7	1	85
<b>Total</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>239</b>

45 Teaching and learning in computing and science varied in effectiveness. Some computing sessions used modern technology and techniques but in others the technical content was not up to date. Students were actively involved in most sessions. However, in a few sessions, students were not working productively and a lack of commitment slowed the progress of many students. In one science session, students were studying the structure and function of the heart and component parts. The topic was introduced by clear exposition and demonstration using models and related handouts which students were required to annotate. This was followed by a practical investigation of an animal heart, following clear guidance on safe working practice. The varied activity, brisk pace of work and high level of motivation of students in some sessions contrasted with the lack of challenge and variety in the work and poor interest in others. In science, schemes of work existed for most courses but they were limited in scope and not always followed. The approach to the setting and returning of students' work was inconsistent. Many students failed to return work set. Records of marks obtained by students were not always kept.

46 Teachers in mathematics showed good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Lessons were well structured, subject material was clearly presented and good use was made of handouts and worksheets. However, there was little variety in teaching methods and few teaching aids were used. Group activities were not used in the classes observed. In most classes, students were attentive and well disciplined. The pace of work was appropriate for the average level of student ability but the more able students were not sufficiently challenged. Generally, students responded well in question and answer sessions, but in some classes insufficient effort was made to involve all students. Classwork exercises and assignments were marked thoroughly and comprehensive student records were kept.

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47 The teaching in engineering was characterised by well-prepared lectures and effective practical sessions. Most sessions were effective in encouraging students to increase their knowledge and practical skills. In a class where students made and tested timed circuits their understanding was enhanced by the use of a relevant software application and the teacher's requirement that students should describe the key elements. Self-study was used extensively in the motor vehicle resource centre where high-quality learning materials were available. Learning could be improved in engineering by better teaching of common core skills. The co-ordination of assignments and timing of phase tests was poor. The delivery of the new GNVQ pilot programme had shortcomings. Students were not informed of course requirements and the learning was too dependent on copying or taking notes from dictation. Some handouts were of disappointing quality.

48 Sessions were generally well managed in business studies and business administration. There were appropriate schemes of work but the use of lesson plans was rare. A variety of teaching methods was employed and teachers displayed sound subject knowledge. There was limited checking of students' learning in many of the sessions observed. Most lessons maintained students' interest. Students were challenged and extended by their studies which catered well for the different levels of ability. Most learning material was of good quality. Records of students' achievements during the course were well kept and students were aware of their progress and what further development was required. Assessments were set and marked appropriately, graded accurately and returned on time. Innovative assessment methods were used for reception and petty cash procedures.

49 A variety of teaching and learning methods was used in hair and beauty, including group work, demonstrations and the use of audio-visual aids. All sessions had a lesson plan linked to coherent schemes of work, but some lacked detail. Flexible programmes helped adult students to attend courses to suit their individual timetable. There were few educational visits or visiting speakers, and little competition work to stimulate students. The high standard of teaching accommodation supported the learning process, especially in practical sessions. However, the lack of facilities for storage of materials adversely affected the teaching and learning in practical sessions. Little use was made of separate reception areas for hair and beauty as a teaching resource. Information technology was not used for clients' records.

50 In health care, most lessons seen in the National Nursery Examinations Board (NNEB) and access courses had clear objectives and well-prepared lesson plans, which were linked clearly to schemes of work. However, in some practical sessions, lesson plans were not available, nor were schemes of work. Aims of teaching sessions were not always shared with students. A good range of teaching and learning methods was

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employed. Class activities were reviewed and set in context. The needs of students with differing abilities were recognised. In most classes students were keen to contribute to discussion and debates. Some staff made good use of previous industrial experience or work placement activities to reinforce learning. Work was clearly marked and teachers advised students how to improve standards. The assignment schedules for the GNVQ programmes need to be more clearly communicated to students, with defined submission and return dates. Course administration did not provide a suitable framework for the delivery of the GNVQ advanced course. Core skills development was weak, except for students on the access course.

51 Teaching and learning in art and design had many strengths. Staff were knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The area provided a coherent and integrated approach with its courses. Lesson plans were used for each class observed. There were clear aims for each session and for the extended projects to which many sessions contributed. Teachers gave expert demonstrations of practical procedures and techniques. This was particularly true of the sessions observed in glass technology, ceramics, dance and fine art. Adult students in creative studies were unanimous in their support for the course, both in terms of techniques acquired and in a growing sense of confidence in their ability to proceed to self-employment. Marking of students' work was consistently rigorous and, together with regular use of self-assessment procedures, helped students to improve their work. There were extensive records of students' achievements and progress. Regular action planning for students ensured that their workload was evenly spread.

52 In humanities, teaching was variable but there were some examples of good practice. GCE A level and GCSE teaching in English was generally authoritative and staff were knowledgeable in their subject. Sessions were normally well organised and used a variety of teaching methods. Schemes of work varied in quality. Some sessions benefited from the imaginative use of audio-visual aids and the availability of helpful handouts. In several lessons the aims and objectives were not clearly set out at the beginning. The differing needs of students within groups were not always well managed. Students' responses in classes were variable. Mature students often responded well and participated enthusiastically. In contrast, younger students were often passive and only volunteered ideas in response to repeated questioning. These students' oral skills were often poor. The quality of response by second-year GCE A level students, in comparison with first-year students did not show substantial advancement. In general, the quality of teaching in psychology was good. There was a variety of learning activities. Lessons were well thought out and taught by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff to attentive students. Helpful handouts were provided for students. In many adult classes, the teachers ensured a good level of student participation in discussion. Students' responses in class showed good subject knowledge and powers of

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expression. The extent to which teachers review work and progress with individual students is inadequate. In sociology, the teaching was challenging and helped most students to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. In the less successful sessions, students did not participate sufficiently, the pace of work was hurried and teachers did not adequately test students' understanding.

53 Overall, for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities the quality of teaching and learning was good. Most sessions benefited from clear aims, and the work had sufficient pace and progression to meet the learning needs of individual students. In a photography lesson students used a specialist room with the appropriate facilities to produce contact prints. The teacher used her knowledge of individual students' skills and difficulties to ensure their active participation. The achievement in producing the contact prints was valued by students. Curriculum documentation, assessment and recording of students' progress were good. In the weaker sessions the match between students' ability and the learning task was sometimes inappropriate. There was insufficient checking of students' learning. Classes in adult basic education were well planned and coherent. Teachers were knowledgeable. Students were enthusiastic about their studies and were making progress. In an English as a second language session there was a lively discussion about practical motor vehicle maintenance work which developed students' knowledge of technical vocabulary and reinforced pronunciation and spelling. However, there was too little marking of students' work and feedback to students about the levels achieved in accredited courses. In some literacy and numeracy classes teaching methods lacked variety. Teachers did not always draw on students' experiences and views, or manage group discussions effectively.

54 In the community franchised courses the quality of teaching varied widely. A range of teaching methods was used to aid learning but, in many classes, teachers had low expectations of students and failed to set challenging work. Too little account was taken of students' different levels of ability. Few programmes of study were designed to meet accreditation requirements. Some inappropriate learning materials were used in a few sessions. Often students undertook little written work and the quality of marking and feedback varied. Several tutors lacked appropriate knowledge in their subject areas. Some teachers were aware of their lack of experience and were keen to learn and improve their teaching.

### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

55 Students worked well in the majority of sessions and responded to the challenges set by teachers. In art and design, students' motivation was high. Group work was particularly effective in engineering where students were mostly willing to take responsibility for their own learning. There was good teamwork in hairdressing and beauty therapy. In other

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areas, for example humanities, students gained little experience of group work.

56 A good feature of many areas was the attention paid to health and safety and effective practical work. Students in engineering were aware of safe working practices in workshops and handled equipment with confidence. There was high regard for safety among art and design students, helpfully reinforced by the completion of a safety awareness course. However, in some classes within the franchised community network safety was less well monitored. For example, in one sewing class trailing wires presented a hazard and in other classes, there was insufficient supervision when small children were present.

57 Core skills were often well developed. Engineering students applied information technology well through the use of software packages. Similarly, in art and design information technology was mostly well integrated with the work. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, while core skills were well developed, few students demonstrated achievement in information technology. In business studies, few assignments were wordprocessed.

58 The quality of assignments varied. In Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) science they were of high quality. This was less true of GCE A level science, where low attendance and infrequent setting of work for students hindered achievement. In engineering, students' assignments showed clear evidence of the acquisition both of technical expertise and skills. In business studies, assignments were regularly set at a level to match students' ability. Second-year students in hairdressing and beauty therapy were developing evaluative and analytical skills. In performing arts, students did not develop equally their performance skills and production design skills. In computing, although students developed appropriate knowledge and skills, many failed to meet assignment deadlines.

59 The quality of students' written work varied. In mathematics it was of a satisfactory standard and the more able students were working well with resource based learning packages. In health and community care, students' ability in written work was good. In English, students' work often had weaknesses in spelling and grammar. In psychology, students' written work was clearly expressed. Many students in sociology were encountering difficulty in grasping theoretical concepts.

60 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were able to take advantage of the wide range of accreditation opportunities. Students were enthusiastic about their studies, particularly the work opportunities in vocational areas. However, opportunities for students to act as adults in taking decisions were restricted. The need to pay for their own costs deterred many adult basic education students from seeking accreditation. Participation in the college's awards ceremony was helpful in celebrating students' achievements and in spurring them to further work. Most

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students had good opportunities to progress to other courses but in some adult basic education classes a few students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had stayed in classes at the same level for some years.

61 Achievements in the college's franchised community programme varied. The programme does not offer external examinations since it aims to assist students to move onto accredited courses. Students were mostly highly motivated and committed to their courses, even when class activities lacked challenge. The quality of students' oral skills and written work was variable.

62 Each year, some 6,000 students at the college achieve awards. The great majority of these awards are in areas which, as yet, lack clear national statistics against which the college's results can be accurately judged. Nevertheless, achievements in these areas are generally good. GCE A level, GCSE and vocational students, aged 16 to 18, who are represented in the performance tables published annually by the Department for Education and Employment, comprise a relatively small proportion of the college's students. Their examination results are generally on a level with, or below, the averages for sector colleges.

63 Seventy-five per cent of the 187 students aged 16 to 18 in their final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education and Employment's 1995 performance tables were successful. This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

64 The college supplied comprehensive information on achievements in vocational awards for 1993 and 1994. In many areas, for example vocational science, construction, business studies and business administration and vocational languages, achievements were good. A particular strength was in art and design where pass rates were good in all subjects in 1993 and even better in 1994, when no pass rates in the area fell below 80 per cent. In the business studies area, a large number of courses were achieving pass rates at or near 100 per cent. These included the NVQ level 2 retail course, the BTEC national certificate and the higher national certificate course in business and finance. There were also good pass rates in many RSA Examinations Board (RSA) typing and wordprocessing courses. In basic education, pass rates were uniformly high. Areas where achievements were more variable included engineering and health and community care. Poorer results were recorded in 1993 and 1994 on City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) carpentry and joinery courses, the C&G recreation and leisure courses and the International Health and Beauty Council beauty special diploma course, where there was a pass rate of only 34 per cent.

65 In 1994-95, the 203 students aged 16 to 18 entered for GCE A level examinations scored, on average, 2.9 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2). This places the college in the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data

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in the 1995 performance tables published by the Department for Education and Employment.

66 In the period 1993-95, the college's results in individual subjects at GCE A level have been variable. Relatively few students have achieved high grades. There were a large number of entrants in English language, mathematics, sociology and psychology. Significant numbers also entered for art and design, biology, economics, history, law and accounting. In art and design, GCE A level results have been consistently above national averages and the proportion of students achieving good grades has increased. In English and biology, results have been erratic, both exceeding and falling short of national average pass rates in specific years. In mathematics, achievements were below the national average for the sector in all three years. Passes in sociology were below the national average in 1993, 1994 and 1995. In psychology, economics, history and law, passes achieved have been around the national average in all three years.

67 Examination results in GCSE have been variable. In mathematics where there were a large number of entries in the last three years only 34 per cent obtained grade A to C passes in 1993 and 32 per cent in 1994. The pass rate in 1995 was 45 per cent, close to the national average for sector colleges. This improvement from the very poor results in previous years followed a review of the admissions policy for GCSE courses. In English language, 50 per cent of candidates obtained grade A to C passes in 1993, 61 per cent in 1994, and 54 per cent in 1995. These results were below national averages. Pass rates equalled or exceeded national averages in psychology, sociology and photography, but in science subjects, business studies, history and geography they have often fallen below national averages.

68 Individual college students have been successful in gaining national awards. These have included medals for quantitative methods and data processing, a BTEC student of the year semi-finalist award in 1994-95, and the first higher national certificate by open learning in 1994-95. College students were the first nationally to achieve level 2 in NVQ fabrication and welding.

69 The college is strongly committed to measuring the value it adds to students' learning. It has measured the difference between students' GCSE scores at entry and their GCE A level scores at exit, and grade gains at GCSE by students resitting the examination. Value added analyses for the 1992-94 and 1993-95 cohorts have been carried out. These give a good overall picture of grade gains but are not able to discriminate between subjects. College information indicates that about 60 per cent of students on the two-year full-time GCE A level courses achieved higher than expected grades on the basis of GCSE scores at entry. The college has used value added analysis to inform policy. For example, analysis of grades achieved at GCSE was a significant element in reviewing entry criteria for students resitting GCSE courses.



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70 Information on the destinations of full-time students for 1994-95 is insufficient. The college has information on only 56 per cent of students. Of these, 22 per cent progressed to higher education, 57 per cent to other further education, 14 per cent to employment and 7 per cent to other undefined destinations. The college needs to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of its information in this area.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

71 The present college charter has been produced following a review of the original charter developed in 1993-94. It contains a preface in two minority ethnic languages and there is a full version in Urdu. It sets out students' entitlement as specified in the national charter for further education. There is a small section showing what the college expects of its students. All students receive a copy of the charter. Although the student charter has references which can be interpreted as being relevant to employers and the community, there are no specific sections for these groups. There is no identification of college individuals or groups to assist community representatives and employers when making contact with the college.

72 The college places quality assurance high in its corporate objectives. The first objective commits the college continually to improve the quality of its service to clients. There are extensive quality compliance definitions and procedures which cover both curriculum and aspects of cross-college provision. Much emphasis is placed on the active involvement of all staff in implementing the quality system. The practices and procedures for implementing policy are defined and documented in a quality manual. Adherence to the systems and procedures contained within the manual is mandatory for all college personnel. Policy is managed by an assistant principal with responsibility for quality assurance, a full-time manager and support staff. The strategic planning and quality committee has the responsibility for setting quality standards within the college.

73 The college received ISO 9002 certification before incorporation and the prison education provision gained ISO 9002 certification in December 1995. In addition, the college received Investors in People accreditation in August 1994 and the adult literacy kitemark. Flexibility in compliance procedures is achieved in curriculum areas by enabling course teams to define their own requirements. One example is the prison service educational provision where staff have defined their own student perception survey.

74 In each of the last four years, three surveys of students' perceptions of their courses and one survey of employers' perceptions of the college have been undertaken. Extensive use is made of information technology to process this information. The results of the students' surveys are analysed by course and are well presented to course teams in graphical form to aid interpretation. The surveys themselves contain only generalised cross-college perceptions and basic information on the course

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content and delivery. The lack of course specific information limits the value of the analysis. The surveys of employers' views have improved and are providing some useful information. However, they still do not fully cover aspects identified in the further education charter. Not all teams were able to complete the 1995 end of year surveys.

75 All course teams are required to produce monitoring and evaluation review reports as part of the compliance procedures associated with quality assurance. There is a checklist to ensure that courses include items such as a course review, retention information, achievements, progression and destinations, minutes of students comments and minutes of reviews. Often the completion of the monitoring and evaluation review documents is inadequate. A significant number do not contain many of the items identified in the checklist. Some reports clearly provide information required to improve the quality of provision; these could be used within the college as exemplars. However, many simply state the required college performance measures without accompanying analysis and proposed actions. Instances occur where, for example, retention rates as low as 25 per cent receive no discussion in the minutes of the meetings which considered the course review. Few of the reports contain students' comments. It is difficult to track through the review and reporting process to confirm that weaknesses are being addressed. Targets are not set or reviewed at course levels for achievement, retention and the students' perception of course measures. More systematic analyses of performance indicators are being undertaken at divisional and senior levels. For example, there are signs that the efforts this academic year to improve student retention are beginning to have an effect. There is also evidence that the college had acted rapidly to improve the delivery of several courses as a result of the specialist inspections. This included the development of specific action plans to enhance the quality of teaching, to improve students' achievements and to provide suitable staff development. In particular, the criticisms of aspects of the college's franchised work had been taken to heart and a substantial programme undertaken to address them.

76 There are checklists to determine the suitability of the teaching staff and the accommodation for the extensive community franchising provision. The use of these checklists and that of regular college staff visits have resulted in the termination of several contracts. Some staff-development opportunities have been offered to community teaching staff. College staff on visits help to monitor student attendance which is linked to course payments. It is a requirement of the quality system that the community education programme complies with the college's quality standards. However, the procedures have yet to be adapted and integrated with the work of franchisees.

77 Quality assurance for aspects of cross-college provision is good. Improvements in several cross-college areas can be linked directly to the quality process and to the results of surveys of students' perception of

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their courses. These have included significant improvements in car parking and some refectories, as well as current efforts to improve communal areas for students. The college has effective procedures for the monitoring of complaints.

78 The measurement of the college's performance against corporate objectives has yet to be fully established. The college has yet to use the six performance indicators established by the FEFC. Observations of individual staff teaching have been undertaken in the 1994-95 academic year. There are no systematic inspection procedures at course level.

79 The human resources section is responsible for staff development, staff appraisal and induction. It aims to integrate the process of continuous professional development and appraisal. A professional development centre opened in June 1995 will co-ordinate this work. The same appraisal training is given to appraisers and appraisees. Most full-time and some part-time teaching staff have completed the training and most full-time staff have received an appraisal interview. Training needs are obtained from the appraisal interview information and linked to course, division and college strategic requirements.

80 The college places a high priority on staff development. In the 1994-95 financial year, 23,145 training hours were recorded at 1,093 events. More than 2.9 per cent of the overall college budget was allocated to supporting staff development. Many staff-development activities are delivered in college through the professional development centre which advertises its courses well in a monthly bulletin. The centre is used by staff and some members of the corporation. Recent courses have been mainly associated with information technology and with the use of the Internet. Staff undertaking external staff-development activities are required to disseminate the information gained in activities through reports and presentations.

81 There is a good staff-induction programme available to all new staff. An initial appraisal, a mentor system and the use of open learning packs enable teaching and support staff to tailor their induction requirements. A final, one-day induction session is held some months later with senior management. Staff surveys indicate that this is an effective process.

82 The college has produced a self-assessment report based upon the headings set out in Council Circular 93/28, Assessing Achievement. Strengths and weaknesses are identified in all areas. There are some references to supporting documents to qualify the judgments. Although no grades are awarded for each section, sufficient strengths and weaknesses are identified to give an indication of a grade. Many strengths were identified in common with the inspection findings but several significant weaknesses were not.

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## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

83 Most of the teaching staff at the college are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach the courses offered. Most have suitable industrial and commercial experience. Sixty-five per cent are qualified to first degree level and 74 per cent of teachers have a teaching qualification. Of the teaching staff, 22 per cent have higher degrees and a further 16 per cent have a relevant trade or professional qualification. Training and Development Lead Body assessor awards are held by 102 staff, while 22 have internal verifier awards and 14 have accreditation of prior learning awards. This represents 38 per cent of the teaching staff. Many of the teachers for the community franchise work are not suitably qualified or experienced. In health and community care, teachers do not have recent industrial experience.

84 There are thorough review methods for the replacement of staff. An assessment by college managers is made of the need for a particular skill before a member of staff is replaced. An important factor in the process is the results of an audit of the skills possessed by college staff which shows where an existing member of staff may have the required expertise but is under utilised. The college aims, in future years, to reduce the cost of staffing from the current level of 71 per cent of expenditure.

85 There is an adequate number of qualified technical and administrative staff to support the teaching in most areas. A pilot scheme to provide an administrator to support a faculty head has yet to be fully evaluated. There are professionally-qualified staff for the personnel, finance, estates, counselling and careers section.

86 There are clear objectives for the personnel section which include an action plan, timescales and appropriate review and reporting procedures. The personnel section provides regular reports to the personnel committee of the corporation. Most personnel policies and procedures are documented and in place, including those for equal opportunities, disciplinary and grievance procedures, the recruitment and selection of staff and sickness absence. The college is also developing a maternity policy to meet changing conditions of service and legislation. A new system is being introduced. Ninety-nine per cent of full-time teaching staff have new employment contracts. Seven per cent of full-time teaching staff are from minority ethnic groups as compared with 27 per cent of students. Forty-three per cent of lecturers and 25 per cent of senior staff are women.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

87 Procedures for the purchase and replacement of equipment are thorough. Staff are consulted and senior managers analyse each proposal based on student numbers, changes in curriculum and budgetary considerations. Most of the classrooms within the college have sufficient

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teaching aids. Overhead projectors and boards are available in most areas. Further whiteboards have been installed in response to criticisms from specialist inspections. Furniture is generally of good standard. The range and quality of specialist teaching equipment is sufficient overall. In some areas, it is particularly good, for example, the equipment in photography, the industrial standard information technology hardware in art and design, the salon equipment in hair and beauty and the computer numerically controlled machines in engineering.

88 The range and standard of equipment for the centres used for community franchise work is inappropriate. Materials and books are limited in range and most are unsuitable for adult learners. Textile machinery is old and insufficient in amount. Access to computing facilities is limited and teachers are unsure where to obtain equipment. The college has now started to address these issues.

89 The college has a clear information technology policy which sets realistic aims both for teaching and administrative support. The ratio of students to machines across the college is 12:1. There is a significant number of machines available for teaching and support staff. There are 310 suitable computers available for students' use. All run industrial-standard, windows-based software. Many of these machines are based in a well-equipped learning resource centre for students at the Broadway site. Most of the 104 workstations are networked. The centre is open seven days a week and opening hours are extensive. The facility is popular with students. However, the number of classes timetabled to use the Broadway learning resource centre restricts access for students at times of their own choosing. The information technology development of some vocational students is being impeded because there are few open access machines at the Mons Hill and the Wolverhampton Street sites. The use of compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database and the Internet has yet to make a significant impact on the curriculum.

90 There is a well-equipped college study support centre. Each curriculum area is supported by learning centres which are supplied with many high-quality learning materials. This is particularly so in motor vehicles and construction. A recent notable initiative has been the establishment of a well-resourced professional development centre for staff. A smaller learning resource centre than that at the Broadway site is available for students at Mons Hill.

91 Both college libraries provide attractive environments and their space is well managed. At the Broadway site there are areas set aside for silent study and group work. Library documentation is thorough and relevant. Liaison with curriculum teams is effective. The library is well organised and has adequate staffing. The librarian is a member of the college senior staff. The library staff are well qualified and experienced. Eight of the 18 staff have professional qualifications. Comprehensive records are kept of library usage but there is no analysis of these data to inform library

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policy. The total library bookstock is just over 37,000. For the number of students at the college this is low, although the college does provide text books for students within faculties. A budget figure for 1995-96 of £31,000 for bookstock, periodicals and other publications for the library was increased to £60,000. The faculties spent £42,500 on textbooks, but this additional stock is not catalogued. The college is consequently not fully aware of the location of all its learning resources. Many library books are dated, particularly in science, health and community care and computing. Some students were not aware of the policy for transferring books between the libraries at the Broadway site and Mons Hill.

### **Accommodation**

92 All the college sites are within a five-mile radius of the main town site. Most of the courses are provided on the two main sites of Broadway and Mons Hill. The buildings are a mixture of traditional and modern construction, ranging in age from the beginning of the 1900s to 1993. The external condition of the buildings is generally good. In the last five years the college has spent some £10 million on new buildings and a further £1.6 million on refurbishment work. As a result of this investment it has some outstanding accommodation built to a high standard. This includes specialist accommodation in the form of the Harty buildings, a recently built three-storey block, a conference centre, a resource based learning centre at Broadway and the hairdressing salon at Mons Hill.

93 The layout and size of most classrooms and workshops are suitable for the classes they accommodate. There are some inappropriate rooms, for example, the studio for performing arts, which limit teaching styles or impede learning. There are good and distinctive kiln and glassware manufacturing facilities at the Brierley Hill site which provide students with an industrial environment. Most staffrooms are good but some are overcrowded. Storage facilities in most areas of the college are inadequate. Many areas are carpeted and well decorated. Significant improvements have been made to the quality of decoration, especially in corridors and in amenities areas on the main site. Some areas of the college still require refurbishment. Student refectories on the main sites are of a good standard but the others are poor and are often criticised by students. Communal areas and sport facilities on all sites are limited, although some improvements have been made. The well-designed entrance foyers and reception areas are welcoming. Students' work, particularly of art, is prominently displayed throughout the main sites. Useful lists of staff are displayed, indicating teachers connected to a curriculum area and to a particular set of classrooms. However, there are still some teaching areas which lack stimulating wall displays.

94 There is some poor accommodation at the Wolverhampton Street site. The college recognises that the teaching block is neither providing an environment favourable to learning nor adequate facilities for the students. The corporation has approved a development plan to improve the site

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which will create a new building for teaching, linked to the existing, modern motor vehicle workshops.

95 The college has carried out a comprehensive space utilisation exercise and has made improvements to the layout of rooms and workshops to improve its use of buildings and meet increased student numbers. The college recognises that improvements in space utilisation are necessary if it is to obtain optimum use of its buildings.

96 The college has been awarded the restricted mobility symbol for helping those with disabilities to move more freely throughout the college. Wheelchair access to most of the sites is generally good. Recently, additional lifts have been installed on the two main sites and ramped entrances and pathways have improved accessibility.

97 In general, the buildings are well cared for and the college cleaning and caretaking services are good. There is pleasant and carefully tended external landscaping and attractive forecourts are especially good at the Broadway site. Car parking and external lighting is good at the main sites; both have improved over recent years in response to considerable student dissatisfaction. Generally, signposting throughout the college is sufficient and location maps are useful guidance aids. Road signs to the college are satisfactory.

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

98 The strengths of the college are:

- a well-researched strategic plan addressed to local needs
- broad and flexible course provision
- good links with the community, employers, schools, the TEC and universities
- a highly-effective corporation which gives strategic direction
- effective tutorial and guidance systems
- the well-developed system of unit costs
- effective quality assurance in cross-college areas.

99 If the college is to succeed in achieving its aims it should:

- improve quality assurance further at course level
- seek to improve students' attendance
- continue the recent initiative to improve students' retention rates
- obtain more information on the destinations of students
- improve examination success in some areas
- continue to improve aspects of the community franchise programme, including staff qualifications and equipment.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

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  - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)

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  - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)

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  - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)

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  - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

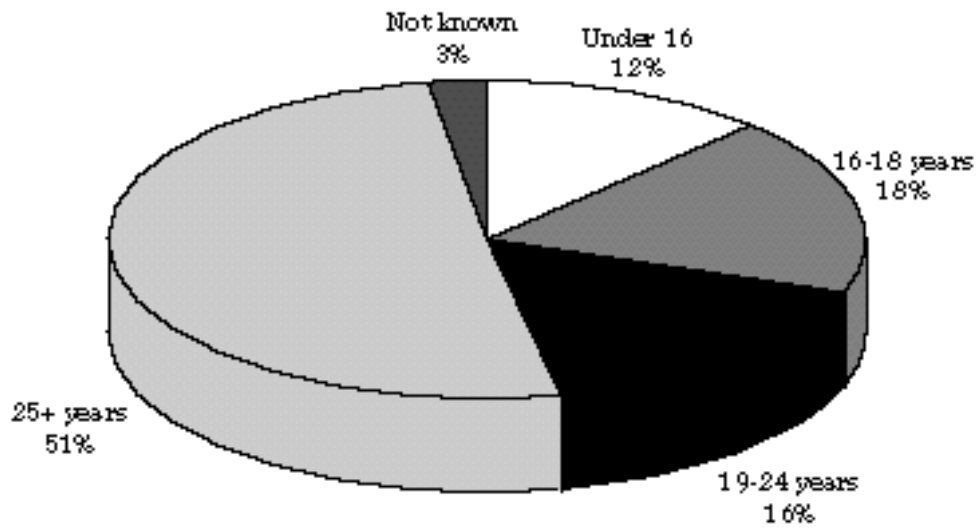
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**Figure 1**

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**Dudley College of Technology: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)**



Enrolments: 18,540

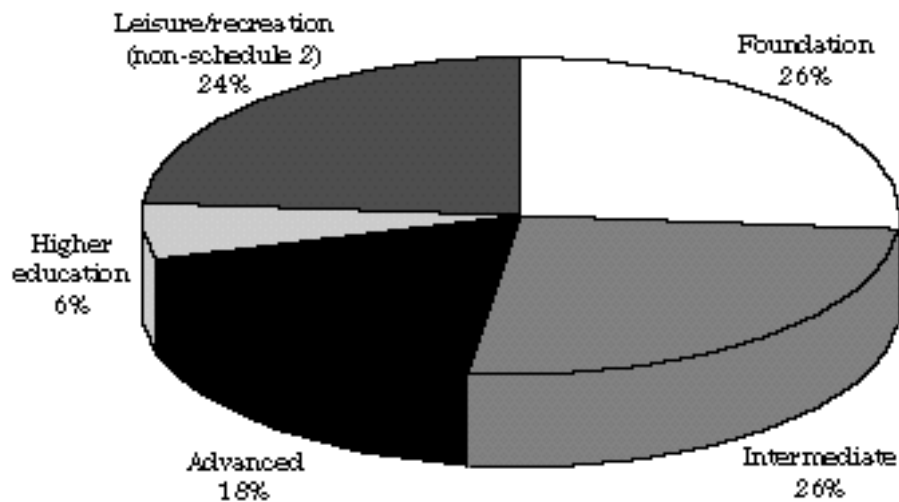
**Note:** a further 4,118 students are enrolled through the prison education contract.

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**Figure 2**

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**Dudley College of Technology: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)**

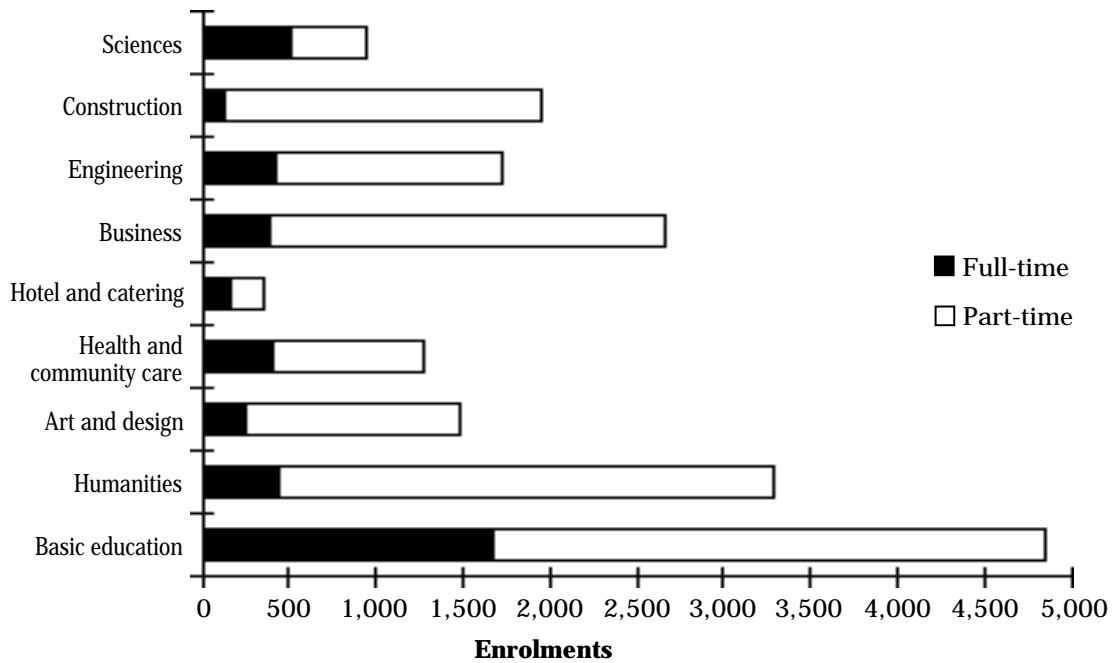


Enrolments: 18,540

**Note:** a further 4,118 students are enrolled through the prison education contract.

**Figure 3**

**Dudley College of Technology: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)**

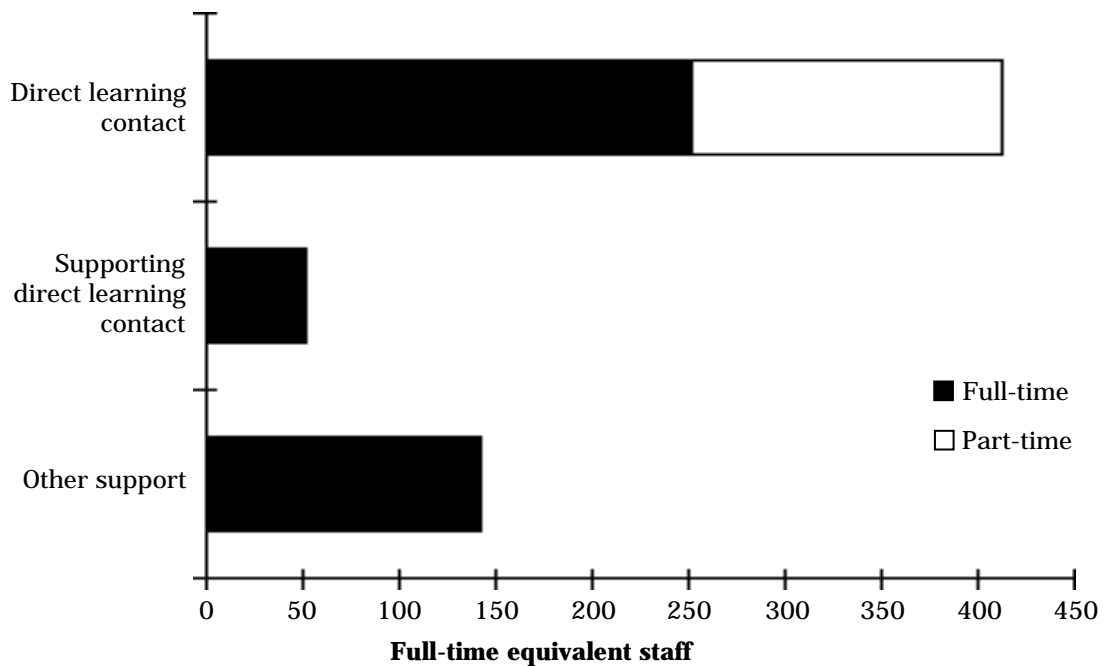


Enrolments: 18,540

*Note:* a further 4,118 students are enrolled through the prison education contract.

**Figure 4**

**Dudley College of Technology: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)**



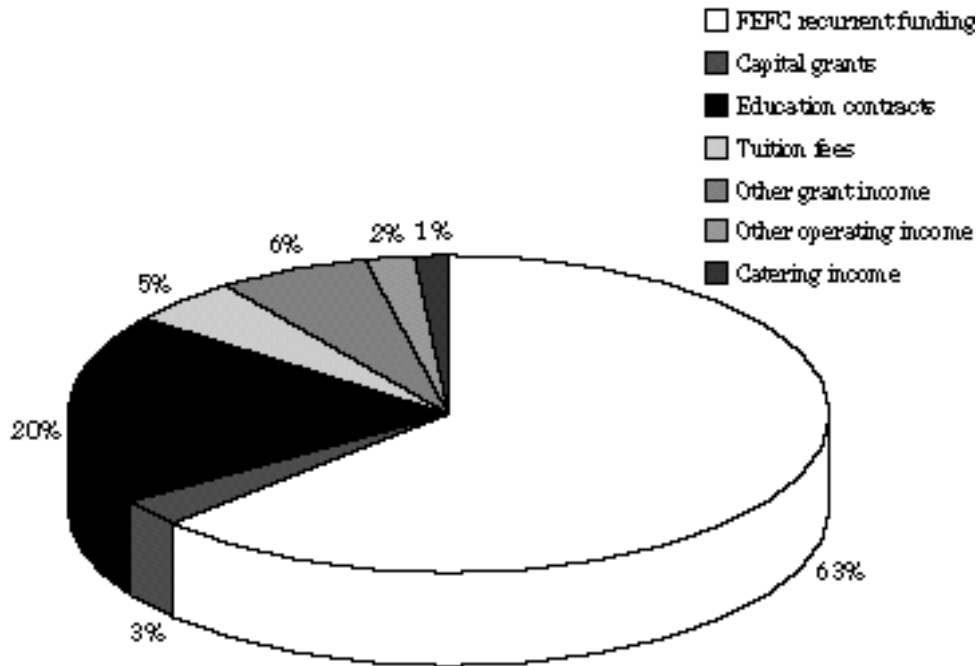
Full-time equivalent staff: 609

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**Figure 5**

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**Dudley College of Technology: income (for 12 months to July 1995)**

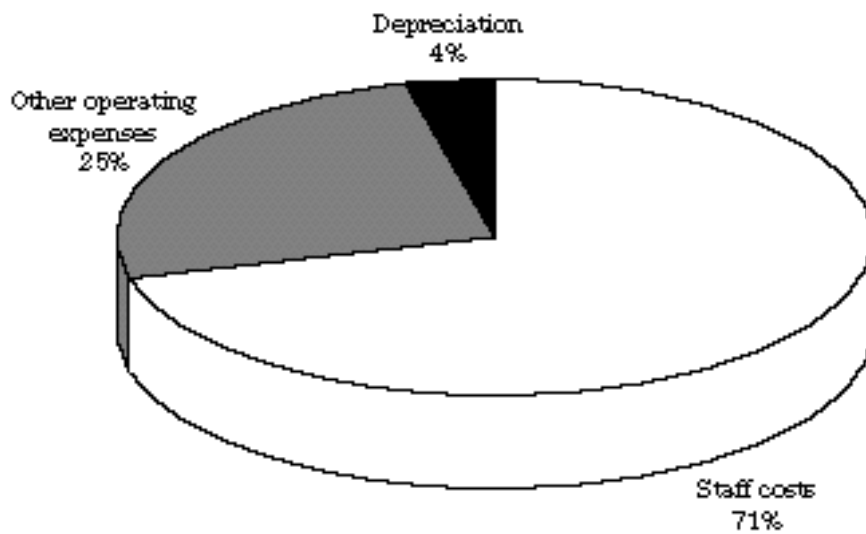


Income: £17,082,000

**Figure 6**

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**Dudley College of Technology: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)**



Expenditure: £17,489,000

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