

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Fareham College

April 1997

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education every four years. The inspectorate also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum and gives advice to 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 1996, some 329 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 329 colleges are shown in the following table.

College grade profiles 1993-96

Activity	Inspection grades				
	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	59%	29%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	14%	50%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	12%	54%	30%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 40/97

FAREHAM COLLEGE SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected March 1996-January 1997

Summary

Fareham College offers a wide range of courses. These are flexibly arranged in order to be fully accessible to students. The college is responsive to the needs of the local community. Liaison with schools, parents and higher education institutions is very strong. There are good links with the TEC and some local employers. The college has a well-informed and active governing body. Procedures for strategic planning and review are good. The system of tutorial guidance is excellent. Arrangements for the provision of learning support and key skills are well organised. The quality of teaching is well above average. In many areas, students' achievements are high. The quality assurance system focuses effectively on the students' experience. Staff have brought about improvement to provision through an orderly process of review and action planning. The self-assessment report is rigorous and accurate. Staff development is effective. The college has achieved the Investor in People award. Staff are well qualified. Specialist equipment in hairdressing and beauty therapy conforms to the best commercial standards. Accommodation is generally good. The college should improve its market research, its use of the market information it holds, its low space utilisation, and its management information system. It should also ensure that it meets its growth targets and quickly resolves the uncertainties stemming from the interim nature of its management structure.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science and mathematics	2	Health and community care	2
Engineering	2	Hairdressing and beauty	1
Business studies	2	Art and design, including media and performing arts	2
Hotel and catering (including leisure and tourism and sport studies)	3	English and modern languages	1
		Social sciences	3

INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of Fareham College, Hampshire took place in three phases. Enrolment and induction were inspected in September 1996. Curriculum areas were inspected in March and November 1996. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected in January 1997. Sixteen inspectors spent 64 days in the college. They inspected 173 classes, examined students' practical and written work and met with college staff, managers, governors, parents, students, head teachers of local schools, employers, a representative of Hampshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and members of community groups. Inspectors examined a range of college documents including policy statements, minutes of meetings, and performance data such as students' examination results.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Fareham College was founded in 1984 from the amalgamation of Price's Sixth Form College and Fareham Technical College. Price's Sixth Form College was founded as a charity school in 1721 and Fareham Technical College was established in 1970. The main campus is in Fareham. There are centres for adult education in Fareham, Gosport and Petersfield, and 12 small centres further afield. In 1995-96, the college had 1,759 full-time and 11,362 part-time student enrolments. Student numbers by age, by level of study, and by mode of attendance and curriculum areas are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. At the time of the inspection, 1,596 students were studying full time at the college, there were 8,129 on vocational courses and 3,228 enrolments for leisure and recreation courses.

3 Fareham has strong historical links with the Royal Navy. Following the decline of employment in defence industries, the local economy faces significant challenges. Unemployment in Fareham and Gosport is the second highest in the county. It stood at 7.2 per cent in April 1996. People unemployed for more than six months account for 56 per cent of those on the unemployment register. Local employers said that employment in the area is likely to rise slowly until the year 2000. Companies are now reporting a skills gap in their workforce, particularly in relation to information technology, and managerial and supervisory posts.

4 At the time of the inspection, the college employed 134 permanent teachers, 402 part-time teachers and 103 full-time or fractional full-time administrative and support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. The college is organised in four main teaching divisions and three cross-college support units.

5 The college works with 14 local schools in Fareham, Gosport and the surrounding area. Three of these schools are grant maintained, one has a sixth form and another is seeking permission to run a sixth form from September 1997. There are two independent schools, and a special school

which provides for students with moderate learning difficulties. There are three further education colleges within a five-mile radius, two of which are sixth form colleges and one a general further education college.

6 The college states its mission in the following way: 'our purpose is the promotion of learning for the whole of our local community. We shall achieve this by:

- placing the individual student at the heart of everything we do
- making effective provision in the most economical way
- securing continual improvement in our performance'.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 Senior managers are aware of the government's aims for further education. The college's strategic plan reflects these aims and relates to the national targets for education and training. A series of papers has recently been presented to the management committee outlining the implications of such reports as the Dearing review of 16 to 19 qualifications, culminating in a paper projecting the curriculum that the college will need in the next century. College programmes have been modularised wherever possible, making them both flexible and accessible. Through 'flexi-study' arrangements, nearly 400 students are enabled to undertake a range of subjects or courses at a time to suit their convenience. Students on access courses speak positively of adaptations to the timetable which help them to meet their domestic responsibilities.

8 The college offers a wide variety of programmes, ranging from those at foundation level through to higher education courses, both full time and part time. The curriculum includes 33 subjects at general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), 13 GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects, and 18 subjects at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) level. Most students are able to pursue GCE A level subjects of their choice. Some are able to take subjects in addition to those they originally planned to study. General national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) are available at all three levels: foundation, intermediate and advanced. A college-wide foundation programme offers students an opportunity to sample three vocational areas: health and social care, business studies, and leisure and tourism. Advanced and intermediate GNVQs are offered in nine programme areas including art and design, business, engineering, health and social care, hospitality and catering, information technology, leisure and tourism, media, and performing arts. Courses leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at both levels 2 and 3 are provided in business administration, hairdressing and beauty therapy, care, childcare, and playwork. Courses leading to NVQ level 2 only are available in hospitality and catering, and repair and servicing of road vehicles. Courses leading to NVQ level 4 are available in care management, childcare and management. Full-time national certificate and diploma courses approved by the Edexcel Foundation (formerly the

Business and Technology Education Council) are offered in childhood studies, nursery nursing, childcare and education, sport science and sport studies.

9 Individually-planned programmes are offered for students with moderate learning difficulties, who need a carefully-controlled experience of college life prior to undertaking a course. Students are able to choose units from a wide range of subjects and they receive careers guidance and work placement. Through its 'outreach' work the college is seeking to attract students who would not otherwise participate in further education. These include students with learning difficulties who are either adults or those living in special accommodation. An extensive programme for adults needing help with basic skills attracts large numbers and is taught individually or in small groups.

10 A wide range of adult education courses is offered at three main centres and 12 subsidiary locations in the community. Courses include counselling programmes from introductory level to a course leading to accreditation by the British Association of Counselling. There is a wide range of foreign language programmes and there are arts and crafts courses; courses in sign language; classes catering for special interests such as bridge, creative writing and local history; and GCSE subjects such as psychology and mathematics. There is a one-year access to higher education course in humanities, in which students select four subjects from a choice of 12. The college also runs access courses in sport, art and design, business studies, and information technology.

11 The college has developed productive links with higher education institutions. The principal has recently been invited to become a member of the board of governors of the University of Portsmouth. The college has an agreement with Southampton Institute of Higher Education to encourage students, who might not normally consider entering higher education, to take up places at the institute. Through this arrangement two places are available for students from the college on each higher education course offered by the institute. A pre-degree foundation course in art and design has been developed in partnership with Winchester School of Art. The college teaches the first year of a four-year science degree offered by Portsmouth University.

12 Liaison with local schools is a particular strength. College managers are attached to one or two schools to ensure that contact between the college and schools is extensive and consistent. They attend a wide range of careers events organised by the schools and the careers service and inform pupils of opportunities available to them at the college. Schools report favourably on the quality and fairness of the college's advice to their pupils. The college supports a mentoring scheme in one school for pupils who are believed to be unlikely to achieve their full potential in the GCSE examinations. As part of this scheme, college staff interview pupils and produce action plans to help them focus their efforts on gaining the qualifications they will need in order to realise their personal ambitions.

The college has also assisted in the development of GNVQ intermediate courses in a school which has recently opened a sixth form. College staff have helped the school to plan GNVQ courses and they have given advice on teaching techniques which are suitable for GNVQ work. School and college staff are brought together by their joint working in curriculum development groups for national curriculum subjects. Such co-operation between the college and schools is further developed through staff exchanges over an extended period. The principal of the college visits schools regularly and meets head teachers.

13 Relationships with the Hampshire TEC are good. The college has made successful bids for funding from the TEC's competitiveness and development funds. The Hampshire Information Technology 2000 consortium brings together 10 colleges, of which Fareham is one, in a major initiative to develop and provide training for NVQs through multi-media and telematic techniques. The college is also being helped by the TEC to promote NVQ assessment and accreditation services for small and medium-sized firms, using computer-based assessment techniques, and to provide training in the workplace in a range of subjects at NVQ levels 3, 4 and 5. Of particular note is a collaborative scheme with a private training agency to provide training for NVQs through the modern apprenticeship scheme.

14 Employers speak highly of the college's responsiveness to their requests. This responsiveness is exemplified by the development of training leading to NVQs in customer care for employees of the National Westminster Bank; the joint planning and delivery with local providers of training leading to NVQs in care and childcare; and promotion of a course for the health and leisure industry which is one of only two of its kind in the country. The college is working in partnership with the University of Portsmouth and Vosper Thorneycroft to provide courses at Royal Naval training establishments. The principal is a member of Hampshire Education and Business Partnership, and the Southampton and Fareham chambers of commerce.

15 Most contacts between the college and employers stem from the arrangements college staff make for students to have work placements in local firms. There is also substantial contact with employers over their employees who attend courses at the college. The college has yet to develop fully consultancy services for employers and the provision of training on employers' premises. It does not make sufficient use of the market information it has on the needs of employers. A central market database is being formed, but market research is not well developed. Publicity materials are generally of a high standard. An attractive and lively prospectus for 16 to 19 year olds has been designed in consultation with students. A different kind of prospectus has been adopted for adults but this does not take their needs and aspirations fully into account. Regular newsletters to schools and the community ensure that new courses are widely announced. The college is considering whether its substantial

expenditure on publicity and school liaison is producing commensurate returns.

16 The range of childcare facilities available to students is wide. It includes two nurseries on the main site, a creche at the adult education centre in Fareham, a play scheme during the school holidays and 'after-school clubs' at two local primary schools. Last year, for the first time, the college broke even financially over its provision of childcare facilities. However, only a quarter of the places in the college's nursery are taken by the children of students. At present, the college does not allow local parents who are not students, to send their children to the nursery, even though they have asked to do so.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

17 At the time of the inspection, there were 19 members of the corporation board: nine business members, a member nominated by the local TEC, four co-opted members, two staff members, a student member, a member nominated by Price's Charitable Trust and the principal. There was one vacancy. Members have a broad range of business and community experience including experience in engineering, finance, manufacturing and the law. Co-opted members include a local head teacher, a solicitor from the borough council and a teacher from higher education. There are seven women members and one member is from a minority ethnic group. The board has advertised to attract new members. It has adopted a rigorous selection process. The average attendance at corporation board meetings between 1994 and 1996 was 81 per cent. Attendance at subsidiary committee meetings averaged 89 per cent. Although staff are entitled to attend corporation board meetings as observers, none of them has yet done so.

18 There is an appropriate range of corporation committees covering finance, audit, employment policy, remuneration, student matters, and corporate strategy. There is also a membership search committee which recruits new governors. All committees have clear terms of reference and there is a well-planned calendar for their meetings. Members receive useful papers summarising relevant background information, identifying key issues and suggesting actions that are required. The executive director (finance, resources and business services) who acts as the clerk to the corporation has a clear job description for this role. The quality of clerkship is high. The corporation has adopted a code of conduct and has established a register of members' interests.

19 Members of the board have a clear view of their role in providing strategic oversight of the college. In 1994-95, the corporation board reviewed aspects of its own work and the range of expertise among its members. One significant outcome of the review was a commitment to continuous evaluation of the work of governors and of the college. The board uses the Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC's) inspection framework, *Assessing Achievement*, to guide this evaluation. A students'

committee comprising student and staff governors and other members of college staff and students reviews different aspects of the college's work including students' achievements. Its membership does not include independent members from business or other backgrounds. Good training opportunities are provided for governors. Induction programmes are arranged for new members. All governors complete a personal training plan and have access to the college's staff-development programme. There is a comprehensive handbook for governors. Training opportunities for governors are similar in scope to those provided for the college's employees.

20 Strategic planning involves both governors and staff. A planning framework has been approved by the corporation and its corporate strategy committee has specific responsibility for strategic planning. Last year, three seminars were devoted to the reviewing of specific elements of the emerging plan. The strategic plan is clearly linked to the college's financial plan. Operational plans produced by teaching divisions and cross-college units relate clearly to the strategic plan. Teachers are involved in setting targets for enrolments. All staff participate in setting the objectives for operational plans. It is the practice of staff to work in an orderly way through setting objectives, devising action plans to achieve them and reviewing subsequent performance against them. Governors and senior managers set an example through the orderly conduct of their duties.

21 The college achieved approximately 94 per cent of its growth targets in 1994-95 and in 1995-96; it expects to achieve its target in full this year. The college has recognised a need to make financial savings and to improve its management information system. It has reduced spending on staffing over the past two years but its staffing costs are still high and accounted for 73 per cent of expenditure in 1995-96. At the time of inspection, a third of teachers had not signed new contracts. Following the retirement of a senior post-holder in the summer of 1996, an interim management structure was introduced. A new management structure is being planned for introduction in September 1997. It is not yet clear how the curriculum and quality assurance will be managed as a result of this structure.

22 The principal and the executive director (finance, resources and business services) form the college executive. This meets regularly. The executive and the heads of the teaching divisions and of the cross-college units for college development, adult education and external liaison, form the management committee. This meets monthly. All meetings are minuted. Required actions are clearly identified and followed up. Information from, and decisions of, the management committee are cascaded through the teaching divisions and the cross-college units. Courses and subjects are well managed. Each division has three curriculum team managers. They have overall responsibility for groups of courses or subjects which are led by programme leaders. There is a 'student care manager' in each division with responsibility for student

welfare and tutorial programmes. Lines of communication and accountability are clear, and all staff have up-to-date job descriptions. College meetings are managed effectively and internal communication is good.

23 The college has difficulty in producing accurate, reliable and timely management information on students. A review of the college's management information system is taking place. To cope with the inadequacies of the current arrangements, managers have developed their own systems to provide them with information. Some of these are paper based and others are computer based. Budget allocations are clear and understood by most. Budgets for part-time teaching staff and non-pay items, including capital, are devolved to teaching divisions using a formula, and to non-teaching areas using a bidding system. Budget holders receive appropriate and accurate monthly financial reports. Unit costing is being developed to improve financial control. The college's average level of funding for 1996-97 is £17.95 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £17.97 per unit. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996, are shown in figures 5 and 6.

24 There are policies for equal opportunities, human resource development, health and safety and the environment. The policies are clearly written and fully understood by staff. Accountability for their implementation lies with senior managers. Staff demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities in their work and the concept of equal opportunities is promoted through much of the college's curriculum. The equal opportunities policy is regularly and thoroughly monitored. Prompt action is taken when problems arise which relate to equal opportunities issues.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

25 The college's strong commitment to the care and welfare of students is reflected in its well-developed policies and procedures for students' recruitment, guidance and support. The procedures are closely monitored and they are reviewed regularly. Objectives are set annually for the further improvement of procedures.

26 Recruitment is co-ordinated by the external liaison unit. It organises a comprehensive programme of events that includes open evenings, advice days, 'taster' events, parents' evenings, induction for potential students, and liaison with partner schools. The college has a co-operative relationship with its partner schools. It informs the schools of the achievements of their former pupils. School pupils often visit the college to attend exhibitions, plays or other events. For example, for the past two years there has been a very successful 'history day' organised by the humanities division for about 150 pupils from local schools. The topic at both these occasions has been the Second World War. Local residents who lived in wartime Portsmouth or Southampton and former servicemen

described their experiences and at the end of the day, the pupils, assisted by college staff and students, mounted a display about the war.

27 The college has a well-organised central admissions process for full-time courses. Applicants usually receive a reply within 24 hours and an invitation to attend for interview within five working days. All interviews are carried out by senior staff who have undertaken an annual training programme to bring them up to date on college policies. They work to clear guidelines. Following an interview, applicants are normally offered a place. At interview they complete an initial action plan. There is regular contact between divisions and their future students from the time of the initial interview until enrolment. The college sends them good luck cards before they begin their GCSE examinations. There is an induction day each July. In September 1996, students attended an enrolment interview to confirm their course and study options in the light of their examination results. Admissions interviews for students with disabilities are attended by the development education manager who ensures that any support which the students need can be arranged before they join the college.

28 Enrolment of full-time and part-time students is conducted efficiently. The induction programme for full-time students is well planned and it helps students to adjust to life at college. It culminates in a one-to-one meeting between students and their tutors at which students can raise any issues which concern them. The college has well-developed procedures for students who wish to change course. Most changes take place during the first four weeks of a course. Additional learning support is provided for those students who transfer to, or who join a programme, late.

29 The tutorial system is tailored to the needs of individual students. At enrolment, all full-time students are allocated to a personal tutor. Individual students meet frequently with their tutors to review personal and academic matters and to draw up mandatory action plans. Each review meeting between individual students and their tutor has a different focus, depending on when it takes place. For example, the topic of such meetings might be the students' ability to cope with college life, or the students' general progress or careers advice. There are also group tutorials which focus on issues such as health education, higher education, and preparation of records of achievement. All full-time students are issued with a file in which to keep records of their review meetings with their tutors and of their actions plans, and these records form the basis for their record of achievement. The student care manager in each division oversees the operation of the tutorial system. There is an effective procedure which ensures that lecturers send 'concern notes' to personal tutors when, for example, students have been absent or have failed to submit course work. Parents of students aged 16 to 19, are invited to a number of meetings during the year and they are contacted whenever it is appropriate to discuss specific issues relating to their child's progress. The college has

gradually and successfully extended the system of individual reviews and action planning to meet the needs of part-time students.

30 The central curriculum support service provides students with additional support for their learning. All full-time students take numeracy and literacy tests during induction. The results of these tests are sent to tutors. Students who are identified as being in need of additional assistance with their learning are asked to attend sessions run by the central curriculum support service. This assistance is provided either through workshops or through individual tuition. The curriculum support service offers an assessment and support service for dyslexic students and students with physical disabilities. There is close liaison between the curriculum support service and tutors. The support service sends results of regular reviews of students' progress to tutors. It also notifies tutors when students are absent from support sessions. Students may refer themselves, or be referred, for assistance at any time during their courses. The level of students' attainment in information technology skills is also assessed. Students who are identified as being in need of help with information technology are expected to attend the key skills workshop.

31 The college offers students accreditation of their prior learning. For example, prior learning may be accredited within a number of NVQ programmes such as those in administration, beauty therapy, hairdressing and childcare. Students who are able to demonstrate successfully that they have already acquired appropriate skills and experience may accelerate their progress through their course. The number of students who use this accreditation process is small.

32 The college provides an excellent careers information and advice service. The full-time manager of this service is supported by two careers officers from Vosper Thorneycroft Southern Careers who work in the college for a total of 4.5 days a week. The careers office is conveniently located in the curriculum resource centre. Careers advice is given at tutorials and students also have ready access to a comprehensive range of relevant publications and computer programmes. There are careers events every year which cover both higher education and employment.

33 A personal counselling service is available to students at the main site. The service is provided by an outside agency. Appointments can normally be arranged within two days, or within less time in case of emergency. The agency provides the college with an annual report which gives a summary of the problems counsellors have had to deal with. The summary includes information on the gender, age, and ethnicity of the students concerned and states which courses they are on. Students can obtain information and help on a range of financial and welfare issues from the student services manager who also allocates money from the access and welfare funds.

34 The students' union has been revitalised in the last year, by the appointment of a student liaison officer and the election of new officers. The officers are playing an increasing role in representing students'

interests and in organising recreational events. There has been a good response to the optional activities offered to students this year. These options include a number of sports, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, Young Enterprise, Community Action, and a variety of part-time courses, most of which lead to national qualifications.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

35 Of the 173 sessions inspected, 72 per cent had strengths which outweighed weaknesses and 2 per cent had weaknesses which outweighed strengths. These percentages compare with averages of 63 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, for all colleges inspected in 1995-96, according to figures published in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. The standard of teaching and learning on English, modern languages, hairdressing and beauty therapy courses was particularly high. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was 77 per cent. The highest attendance was in art and design at 84 per cent, and the lowest in business studies at 72 per cent. The average number of students in the classes observed was 10.8. The following table summarises the grades given to the classes inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		14	18	17	1	0	50
GCSE		1	2	4	0	0	7
GNVQ		6	18	11	0	0	35
NVQ		13	10	6	1	0	30
Other		15	27	8	1	0	51
Total		49	75	46	3	0	173

36 Most schemes of work for courses, although not written to a common format have clear aims and are well planned. The best schemes have been produced by curriculum teams which have worked together. They give an overview of the whole programme and contain clear information on the content of each lesson, and the teaching method and resources to be used. The assessment and assignment timetables are carefully planned to ensure that students have an even spread of work throughout the year. In some curriculum areas, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, English and business studies, schemes of work are incorporated into course handbooks which also contain forms for the recording of students' progress and action plans. Teaching teams on health and social care courses devise programmes carefully to ensure there is a clear relationship between the work students do in college and that which they carry out on work placements. The schemes of work for some GCE A level science and social science subjects are little more than lists of topics to be covered during the year. Some lessons in these subjects were poorly organised.

37 Most teachers prepared lessons thoroughly. In the best lessons: aims and objectives were stated clearly at the start and students were aware that the lesson was part of a coherent programme of study; reference was made to previous work; students' knowledge and understanding were checked; and students were given precise directions for future work. In some engineering lessons, the teachers strengthened the students' learning by successfully integrating theoretical and practical work. For example, in one lesson, the teacher worked through a series of theoretical concepts with students before taking them to the laboratory to conduct the associated practical experiments. The teaching and learning on counselling courses are of high quality. In one lesson, students were successfully introduced to a difficult new perspective on their work; complex concepts were explored through a practical exercise; and subsequently each student reported back to the whole class on his or her perceptions of the exercise.

38 Many teachers were imaginative in finding ways to maintain their students' interest. They used techniques such as group work, paired work, question and answer sessions involving every student, and plenary discussion. Work was conducted at a lively pace and teachers had high expectations of students. In a successful mathematics lesson, which the students enjoyed, the teacher helped students to devise a formula to calculate the speed at which a tennis player must serve for the ball to go over the net and land in the service area. Essential data such as the size of the court were provided, but students had to calculate other factors such as the height of the server, the elasticity of the ball and the effects of wind resistance. Skilful classroom management by the teacher ensured that all students learned effectively and fully from the lesson. In modern languages, teachers used stimulating role-play in the foreign language being taught. Students responded enthusiastically to the demands which were placed upon them in lessons. Students on art and design courses experienced a wide variety of learning styles and methods. They were given high levels of technical support and were encouraged to experiment and to work boldly.

39 A minority of classes was poorly planned. In one lesson, the teacher set students a revision test which included questions on work that had not been covered. The teacher had failed to prepare the answers and was unsure of some of them. In some poorly-planned social science classes, no account was taken of the different needs and abilities of students in the group. In some lessons, there was too little variety in the learning activities and in the use of resources and students' powers of concentration waned. Teachers failed to stimulate their students or to help them to work effectively on their own. For example, in one lesson the teacher spoke for half an hour without inviting any contribution from students. Subsequently, many of the students were unable to identify the key issues being covered in the lesson. In some humanities sessions, teachers allowed students to struggle unproductively with tasks and failed to provide them

with a clear explanation on how these might be carried out more effectively. In other classes, teachers allowed the pace of work to be dictated by the slowest student. As a result, the more able students who finished tasks quickly were left with nothing to do.

40 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities successfully join mainstream courses in most curriculum areas. Students with sight and hearing impairments, physical disabilities and dyslexia are well supported. Adults study successfully in classes which consist mainly of full-time students aged 16 to 19. Teachers are aware of the different needs of adult students and respond to them appropriately. Adult students on art and design, media and science courses commented favourably on the additional support they received from teachers.

41 In most curriculum areas, assignments are set regularly and marked promptly. In the best assessment practice, teachers gave detailed guidance on how students could improve their work. Most teachers kept records of students' achievements and informed students regularly of their progress. The assessment of practical skills, especially in engineering, catering and hairdressing, was good. In most vocational areas, the assignments devised by course teams include the development and assessment of key skills.

42 Practical work is well organised and teachers and students pay proper attention to health and safety issues. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, teachers ensure that their students work to high professional standards. Students are provided with detailed workbooks which help them to develop their practical skills in a systematic way. A shortage of customers in the salons, however, sometimes limits the opportunities for students to acquire the skills and confidence they need in order to be effective under realistic working conditions. In leisure and tourism courses, teachers make sure that theoretical work is properly integrated with the learning of practical skills. In catering, there are insufficient customers in the training restaurant to enable students to develop a full range of competences on courses leading to NVQs in cookery and food service.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

43 Students enjoy their studies. They are enthusiastic about their work and about life at the college. Their written and practical work shows a high degree of care and effort. Most students acquire substantial knowledge and understanding of the subjects they study. They also develop good study, communication and interpersonal skills which will help them in their further studies and at work. It is a college priority that all students should acquire proficiency in literacy, numeracy and information technology skills.

44 In 1996, 151 of the 213 students who started a course of three GCE A level subjects in September 1994 took their examinations. Of these students, 114 gained passes in all three subjects, 30 students obtained passes in two subjects, and five passed in one subject. The college is in the

top third of colleges in the further education sector for the performance of its students in GCE A level examinations, according to data published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). In 1996, the average points score for each student was 4.8 (where grade A=10 points, E=2), a slight fall from the previous year.

45 The following table shows the number of 16 to 19 year old students at the college who entered for GCE A level examinations, 1993 to 1995, together with their pass rates, and the average pass rate for general further education colleges nationally. Results were below the national average in very few subjects.

GCE A level results for students aged 16 to 19; college pass rates compared with average pass rates for general further education colleges

	1994	1995	1996
Number of students entered	439	801	524
Number of subjects in which students were entered	32	35	32
Average pass rate	83%	89%	89%
National average for general further education colleges	72%	72%	74%
Number of subjects above the national average	19	29	22
Number of subjects below the national average	12	1	2

46 The following table shows the number of students at the college aged 19 and over, who entered for GCE A level examinations 1993 to 1995. It also gives the pass rates achieved by those students at grades A to E, and the averages pass rates for general further education colleges nationally. The levels of achievement of the college's mature students are good. In most subjects, pass rates were above the national average for students aged over 19 and over in general further education colleges.

GCE A level results for students 19 years of age and over; college pass rates compared with average pass rates for general further education colleges

	1994	1995	1996
Number of students entered	292	259	327
Number of subjects in which students were entered	33	25	30
Average pass rate	72%	66%	72%
National average for general further education colleges	62%	63%	64%
Number of subjects above the national average	22	14	19
Number of subjects below the national average	4	9	5

47 The college subscribes to an independent, external service which provides an analysis of the value added to students' achievements by their study at the college, by comparing their actual grades at GCE A level with those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. By this measure, students achieved significantly above expectation in English language, French, photography and accounting and above expectation in four other subjects. Many students did not achieve the grades predicted for them in mathematics, computer studies, and theatre studies. In 1996, students achieved 100 per cent pass rates (grades A to E) in a number of subjects including English language, English literature and physics. Students have done consistently well in English language and English literature for the last three years. Results in physics in 1996 were much better than those achieved in 1995. Results have been consistently poor in sociology and students' retention rates have been low in both sociology and psychology.

48 In 1996, students were examined in 11 GCE AS subjects. The numbers taking each subject were low. Only four subjects were taken by more than 10 students. The highest pass rate was in mathematics at 54 per cent, and the lowest was in human biology at 26 per cent. The college does not offer a GCSE repeat course. Students can, however, retake particular GCSE subjects in order to improve their examination grades, or they can take GCSE subjects as part of their GCE A level or vocational programme. In 1996, 20 GCSE subjects were studied, mostly by students aged over 19, and the highest numbers of enrolments were in English and mathematics. Forty per cent and 75 per cent of students, respectively, achieved A to C grades in mathematics, and English.

49 In 1995, 88 per cent of students in their final year of study on vocational courses achieved the qualification for which they were aiming. This placed the college in the top third of colleges in the further education

sector, according to the performance tables for vocational qualifications published by the DfEE. In 1996, incorrect data were supplied to the DfEE. Revised figures show that 80 per cent of students on advanced courses and 56 per cent of students on intermediate courses, achieved the qualification they sought. This would place the college in the top third of colleges in respect of its advanced course results, and in the middle third of colleges in respect of its intermediate course results, according to the tables published by the DfEE.

50 Good results have been achieved by students on both one-year and two-year vocational courses. The following table provides examples of courses on which students' success rates have been good.

Vocational courses with high success rates* 1994-96

	1994	1995	1996
	%	%	%
BTEC national diploma media	83	85	83
BTEC national diploma performing arts	70	75	70
British Association of Counselling	94	-	88
BTEC higher national certificate aero (mechanical)	78	78	76
Beauty therapy NVQ level 2	91	59	82
Association of Accounting Technicians NVQ level 3	89	78	77
Institute of Legal Executives part 2	100	90	75
RSA Examinations Board certificate in counselling	93	85	90
Hairdressing NVQ level 2	86	82	74

**success rate = percentage of those enrolled on 1 November of year one of the course who achieved the qualification.*

51 The following table shows the courses on which students have not achieved well over the last three years. The college no longer offers a GNVQ foundation course in business or health and social care. Instead, it offers a GNVQ foundation programme that provides students with the opportunity to sample work in three vocational areas before choosing a course at intermediate level in one of the areas.

Vocational courses with low success rates* 1994-96

	1994	1995	1996
	%	%	%
National certificate in computing	22	35	19
BTEC higher national certificate aero (avionics)	44	38	50
GNVQ foundation business	-	53	38
GNVQ foundation in health and social care	-	58	10

**success rate = percentage of those enrolled on 1 November of year one of the course who achieved the qualification.*

52 In 1993, the college began to replace its two-year BTEC national diploma courses with courses leading to GNVQ at advanced level. The following table shows that, in four out of five vocational areas, students' achievements on the GNVQ course were significantly lower than those of the students who completed the BTEC qualification in the previous year. Data show, however, that students' performance on GNVQ courses subsequently improved.

Success rates* on advanced vocational courses (national diplomas and advanced GNVQs)

	1994	1995	1996
	%	%	%
Engineering	59	79	29 ¹
Computer studies	41	23	16 ¹
Business studies	80	78 ¹	67
Leisure and tourism	53	31 ¹	49
Health and social care	62	40 ¹	64

**success rate = percentage of those enrolled on 1 November of year one of the course who achieved the qualification.*

¹results of first cohort to take GNVQ at advanced level.

53 In addition to their academic studies, students do well in a range of sporting and cultural pursuits. In 1996, the college football team was Hampshire County Schools under-19 county champion and it is currently unbeaten in this year's competition. The netball team were also area champions and national finalists. College squash, hockey, and basketball teams have performed well in county and national tournaments in each of the last three years, and individual students have also gained representative honours at regional and national level. The student theatre company gives regular public performances and one production each year takes place in the Ashcroft Centre in Fareham. There is a range of

workshops in acting techniques, dance, rock, jazz, classical and computer-generated music and instrumental tuition available to students. These classes lead to small-scale performances throughout the year at events such as at the Fareham Festival and the Winchester Hat Fair.

54 The college monitors the destinations of its students. This year, staff contacted 94 per cent of the full-time students who left during 1996. This represents a higher proportion of students than that contacted in previous years. The destinations of students who completed full-time courses in each of the last three years are shown in the following table.

Students' destinations, 1993-94 to 1995-96

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Total number of students completing their course	1,007	974	886
Total number of students responding to enquiries on their destinations	836	745	827
To higher education	18%	30%	30%
To further education	26%	21%	24%
To employment	27%	18%	31%
Other	12%	7%	9%
Not known	17%	24%	6%

QUALITY ASSURANCE

55 The college's framework for quality assurance is based on the concept of total quality management. The quality assurance system is in its third year of operation and development. It aims to reflect the college's mission and secure continuous improvement in the performance of both students and staff. It encompasses every aspect of the college's work. The framework is understood by all staff. They subject most of their work to an orderly process of review and action planning. The progress and performance of individual students are the central concerns of staff.

56 The framework for quality assurance has three elements at three different levels. Firstly, quality control is achieved through the regular reviews which tutors have with students. These reviews are conducted through meetings between individual students and their tutor, at which the students' learning needs are identified, progress towards the students' performance targets is monitored and students evaluate the quality of their experience at college. Secondly, quality assurance is carried out at the next level by managers who ensure that the procedures for quality control are followed and that students' needs are being met. At the course level, quality assurance is achieved through formal meetings between curriculum team managers and managers responsible for the care of students. At these meetings, which are called joint reviews, the progress

of students is summarised. Thirdly, the outcomes of the quality control and quality assurance processes lead to action plans for the improvement of quality across the college. Heads of division carry out a review of the work of their respective division and the outcomes of this are taken into account in the formulation of the college's operational and strategic plans. The planning and implementation of the improvement of quality involve the management team, the academic board and the college's executive. The academic board has been reconstituted recently.

57 The reviews which individual students carry out with their tutors help staff to identify good practice and concerns which need to be addressed. As a result of these reviews improvements have taken place. These include the production of learning materials for mathematics which students study on their own and at their own pace, and more disciplined working for history students through the introduction of tighter deadlines for the completion of research tasks. The accumulated information obtained from the students' reviews helps managers to identify the improvements to courses which are needed and it assists them in their planning of the staff-development programme.

58 Course teams discuss the outcomes of individual students' action plans. Reports from external verifiers, moderators and other external bodies are brought into reviews of courses. The course teams discuss and record recommendations for action. The outcomes of the recommendations are checked at the next meeting. This process has produced tangible results. For example, the external verifier expressed concerns about some GNVQ assessment practice. Staff took action to address these concerns and the next verifier's report confirmed that there had been improvement in assessment methods. The college introduced a system of internal verification to ensure consistent standards on courses leading to GNVQs and NVQs and now intends to implement this internal verification system across all programmes in the college including GCE A level.

59 Staff development is generally well planned. Most staff-development training takes place in the college and is well publicised internally. Over 80 per cent of staff have participated in staff development, including 11 middle and senior managers who have obtained NVQ levels 4 or 5 in management. The college spends approximately 1 per cent of its budget on staff development. It has recently gained the Investor in People award. A staff-appraisal scheme includes observation of teachers in the classroom and observation of non-teaching staff in their work. The appraisal system operates on a two-year cycle for teachers and annually for support staff. The teachers' appraisal system is not systematically linked with the frequent reviews of teaching and learning practices which are the basis of the quality assurance process.

60 The college's charter is written in very clear language and is based on advice from students and staff. Students and parents are aware of its existence. The charter contains a number of quantified service standards.

61 The college's self-assessment report evolved from earlier reviews of its annual plans. It represents a consensus among college staff and governors on how far the college has achieved its strategic and operational objectives from 1993 to 1996. The college intends to use the report as the basis for new strategic and operational plans and reviews for 1997 to 2000. The report, based on Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, is written in two sections. The first outlines the context of each area of the college's work; the second identifies strengths and weaknesses, gives the evidence for these judgements, specifies action to be taken and by whom it should be implemented. The college was candid in identifying its weakness and its judgements coincided with those of inspectors. Both the process of self-assessment and the self-assessment report are sound and reflect credit on the college.

RESOURCES

Staffing

62 Teachers are well qualified and appropriately experienced for the work that they do. Eighty-five per cent of full-time teachers have a first degree or an equivalent professional qualification, and 92 per cent have a teaching qualification. Fifty-nine per cent of all teachers have obtained training and development lead body assessor and verifier qualifications, and another 10 per cent are working towards them. The commercial or industrial experience of a few teachers is dated, but most vocational areas arrange for staff to spend time in industry to update their vocational skills. In a number of areas, particularly media studies, performing arts, hair and beauty, health and social care, and art and design, part-time teachers who practise commercially bring valuable experience of current practice to the college.

63 Teachers are supported by enthusiastic and appropriately-qualified technical and administrative staff. The college has recently introduced a new support role of 'facilitator'. Facilitators assist students with their learning in workshops and laboratories in science, art and design, information technology, catering, technology and hair and beauty. Administrative staff in property services, finance, personnel, health and safety, catering and administration have appropriate professional qualifications. Fifty-one per cent of full-time teachers and 65 per cent of support staff are female, and 72 per cent of part-time teachers and 97 per cent of part-time support staff are female. A third of the senior management team are women and 71 per cent of holders of promoted posts below this level are also women.

64 The college has a comprehensive range of personnel policies and procedures. A professionally-qualified personnel manager assisted by an appropriately qualified team, is responsible for personnel, the payroll, staff training and development, occupational health, health and safety, and childcare services. The college also has a contract with Hampshire

County Council to provide additional advice on personnel matters when this is required. Only the payroll records are computerised and important staffing information has to be prepared manually. As a result, some valuable management information is not produced routinely to assist managers in deciding policy and in making decisions. The deployment of teachers is carefully monitored. This year, staff to student ratios are being calculated to provide a measure of efficiency and in order to help college managers monitor, and set targets for improving, the deployment of staff. Staff costs have been reduced over the past two years. In 1995-96, staff costs accounted for about 73 per cent of the college's expenditure.

Equipment/learning resources

65 The college is well equipped with a wide range of general teaching aids including whiteboards, overhead projectors and video replay equipment. All curriculum areas are well furnished and there are adequate textbooks and plentiful supplies of well-produced handouts, leaflets, sound and video tapes. In some curriculum areas, specialist equipment is of a high standard and in most areas it is adequate for the courses offered. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, equipment is equal to the best used in commercial practice. In art and design, there is a good range of equipment including dedicated industrial-standard computers. There are two well-equipped language laboratories with satellite television. In science, the general equipment is good and materials are easily available. Facilities for geology and geography are very good; resources for these subjects include specimen collections.

66 There is an appropriate range of equipment to support teaching in electronic, mechanical, production, motor vehicle and aeronautical engineering. Most of the equipment is old but it is suitable for the purpose of helping students to develop the necessary skills and understanding. In business studies, the computing equipment is sufficient when supplemented by the equipment available in the college's learning resource centre. Teachers in secretarial studies and business administration, however, do not make sufficient use of this computing equipment and still teach keyboard skills and audio transcription on typewriters. In media studies, the sound recording facilities are basic. Students are sometimes able to use an external professional recording studio but cannot do so on a regular basis. There is only one video editing suite available for over 100 media students. These shortcomings in resources cause students severe difficulties with their project work. Music technology students have access to only one computer-based music workstation, and they have no recording studio. Catering and sports studies are adequately equipped, although some sports equipment is worn and in need of replacement.

67 The library is part of the learning resources centre that also houses careers, the information technology centre and facilities for the provision of learning support. The centre is light and comfortable and it provides a pleasant environment in which students can work. The library has

approximately 22,000 books and subscribes to 75 periodicals and four daily newspapers. It has a collection of more than 300 audio and video tapes, 18 compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases, 237 learning packs and a wide range of other materials. The bookstock is satisfactory in most areas but it is too limited in art, business administration, hair and beauty and mathematics. There are 136 study places and a ratio of one study space for 15.3 full-time equivalent students. There are enough study spaces to meet current demand. The library is managed by a qualified librarian who works effectively with staff in curriculum areas. Good use is made of performance indicators and library records to monitor the use of the library service. The catalogue and book issue software is not sufficiently versatile, however, to provide some key management information.

68 The college information technology centre is located in the learning resources area. The quality of computer equipment throughout the college is high. There is a ratio of one high grade machine to nine full-time equivalent students. The provision of information technology equipment across the college is well organised. A well-defined curriculum information technology policy relates to, and supports, the college's key skills policy. There are insufficient qualified technicians to support the college's provision of information technology facilities.

Accommodation

69 The college is located on a single site close to the centre of Fareham. It has 13 buildings, which formerly belonged to the old technical college and which were built in the 1950s and 1960s. A new central administrative and social facilities block was added to link an adjacent school with the technical college buildings when the new college was formed in 1984. This is an attractive building. It houses the college's reception area, administration offices, restaurants, a drama studio, and a large learning resources centre.

70 Most teaching takes place in pleasant rooms which are carpeted, well furnished and well lit. Accommodation is clean and well maintained. Most curriculum areas have their own suites of rooms with associated resource and display areas. Some rooms are too small for the classes which use them and their size limits the range of teaching activities that can take place in them. In many subject areas there are attractive wall displays of students' work and achievements. The adult education annexe at Wickam Road needs major refurbishment, but teaching spaces there are pleasant, well heated and reasonably well furnished.

71 The college has some very good specialist accommodation. For example, its hair and beauty salons, sauna and steamroom, dispensary and reception area are better than would be found in most commercial hair and beauty centres. The studio theatre has excellent rehearsal facilities for performing arts and the college has regular use of the Ashcroft Arts Centre in Fareham town centre. In engineering, some of the rooms

used for electronics, microprocessing and computer-aided design provide a stimulating learning environment, but other electronics and engineering laboratories are drab and uninviting. The motor vehicle, welding and design technology workshops are cramped. Many rooms in this area are in need of redecoration. The college has two nurseries on the main campus and a creche at Wickam Road. It also operates an after-school club for the children of staff and students during term time. Social facilities for students are good. These include a student restaurant and cafe, a student cafe run by the catering department, and two student common rooms.

72 The college accommodation strategy is being rewritten following a revision of projected student numbers. It is planned that students will be accommodated in the present buildings for the foreseeable future. The new strategy concentrates on gradual refurbishment of accommodation. The college estate and its buildings are effectively managed by a skilled premises team. The majority of the college's buildings formerly had flat roofs, and several of these have been replaced with imaginatively-designed pitched roofs. Water penetration remains a problem in a number of buildings with felt roofs. Heating controls do not work effectively in some, and some rooms are subject to uncomfortable variations in temperature. Room occupancy was assessed in two accommodation surveys in 1994 and 1995. It is low, at 56 per cent. There is no central overview of the use of rooms. About half of the college's accommodation is easily accessible to wheelchair users. Only the main administration building has a lift to the first floor. As funds become available, the college is improving the accessibility of the remainder of its buildings to students with physical disabilities.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

73 The particular strengths of the college are:

- its close liaison with local schools, parents, higher education and the TEC
- its responsiveness to requests for training from industry
- the high quality of governance, including clerking
- good support and guidance for students through the tutorial system
- its arrangements for students in need of learning support, including help with key skills
- its quality assurance procedures and their focus on the students' experience
- the high quality of the self-assessment report and its relevance to the college's strategic planning process
- excellent planning and good teaching in many curriculum areas
- excellent examination results in English, modern languages, counselling and hair and beauty courses.

74 In order to improve further the quality of provision, the college should address:

- the limited development of its market research
- its failure to meet growth targets
- the unresolved management structure
- the limitations of its management information system
- the poor use of space.

FIGURES

-
- 1 Percentage student numbers by age (as at July 1996)

 - 2 Percentage student numbers by level of study (as at July 1996)

 - 3 Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1996)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at July 1996)

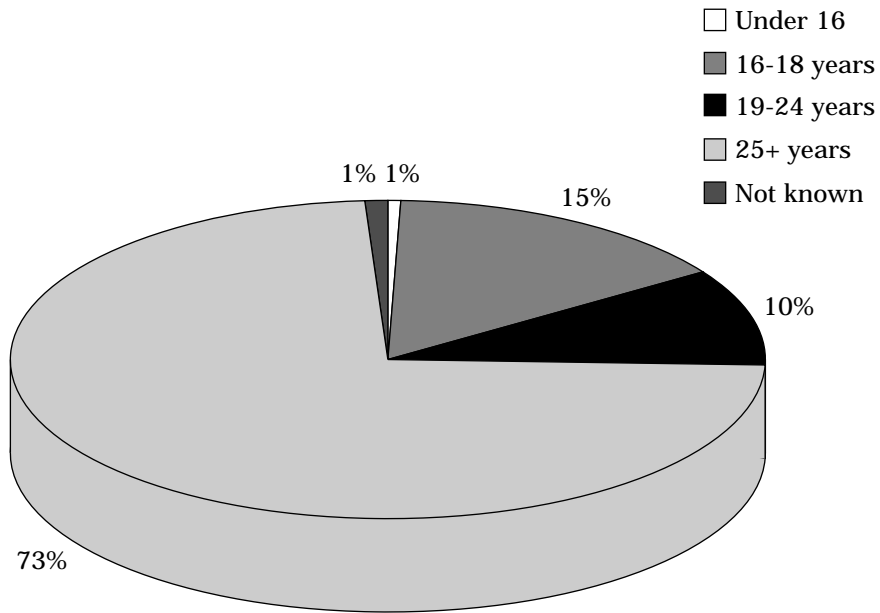
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1996)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

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

Figure 1

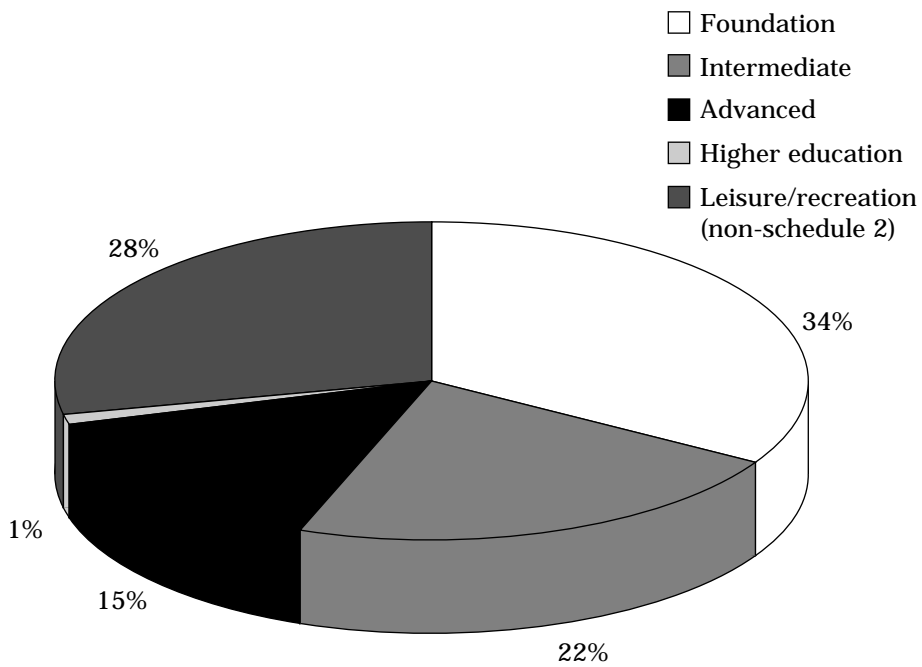
Fareham College: percentage student numbers by age (as at July 1996)



Student numbers: 13,121

Figure 2

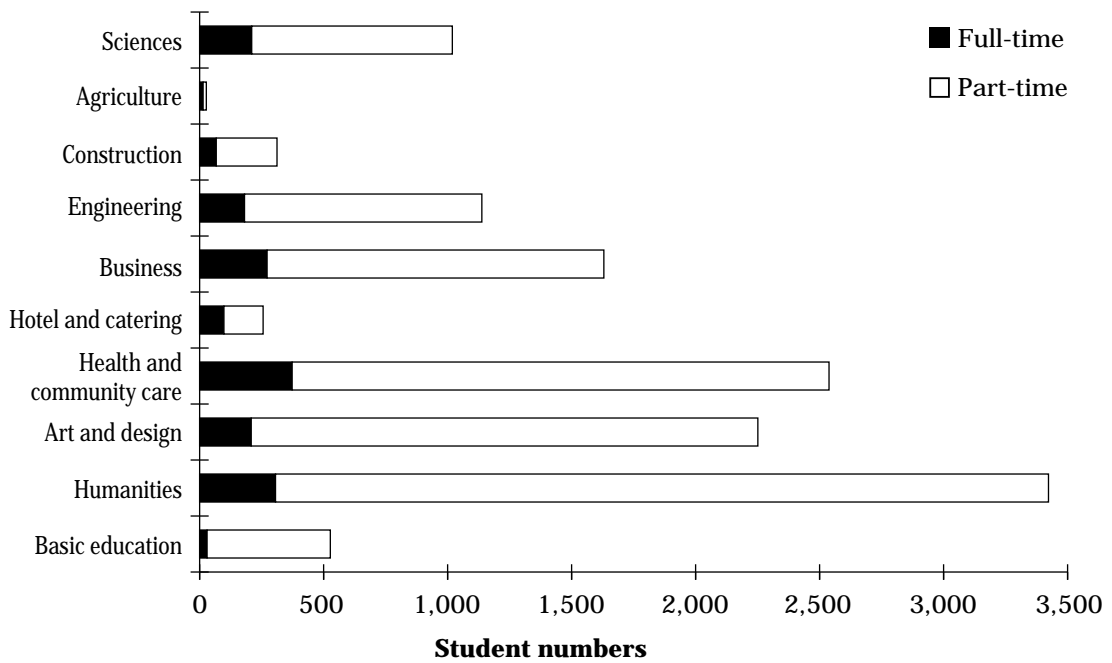
Fareham College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at July 1996)



Student numbers: 13,121

Figure 3

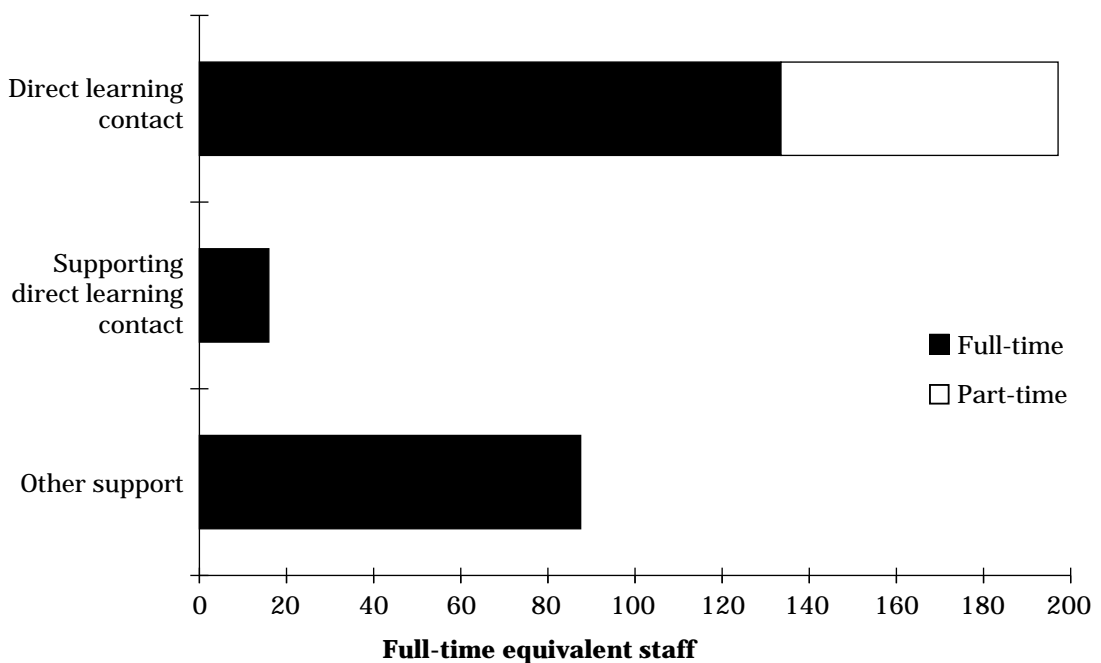
Fareham College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1996)



Student numbers: 13,121

Figure 4

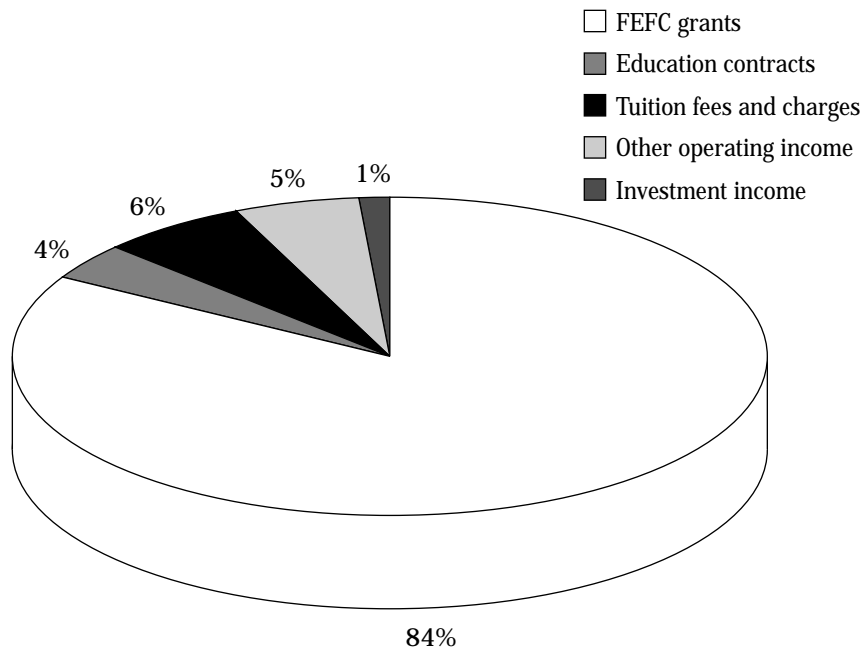
Fareham College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at July 1996)



Full-time equivalent staff: 301

Figure 5

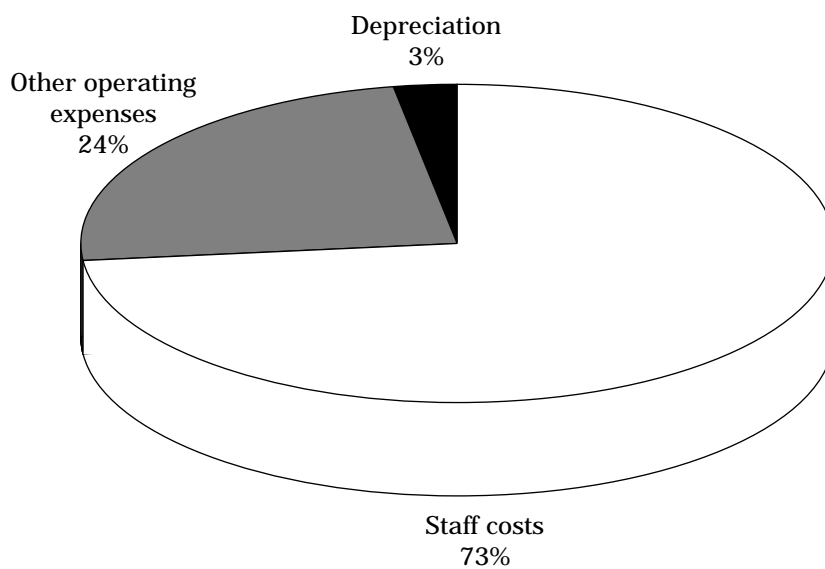
Fareham College: income (for 12 months to July 1996)



Income: £8,647,000

Figure 6

Fareham College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)



Expenditure: £8,584,000

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