Gateshead College

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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

	Inspection grades				
Activity	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	60%	28%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	13%	51%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	11%	56%	29%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 20/96

GATESHEAD COLLEGE
NORTHERN REGION
Inspected August-November 1995

Summary

Gateshead College provides training and further and higher education within the conurbation of Greater Tyneside. The board of the corporation gives strategic direction to the college and is supportive of its managers. The college offers a wide range of provision including GCSE and GCE A level subjects and vocational courses by a variety of modes of delivery. It is responsive to the needs of the community. Students receive effective guidance and support, prior to and during their time at the college. The care and help given to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of high quality. Staff and students relate well to each other in an environment conducive to learning. Teaching and support staff are well qualified and committed to their work with the students. Equipment levels are generally satisfactory, as is the accommodation in those areas of the college that have been refurbished. The college is organised on a matrix structure. It is understood by staff but the roles and duties of some managers are not well defined. A comprehensive schedule of meetings and reports ensures that managers are well informed. However, the information provided by the computerised management information system is inadequate. Some of the teaching lacks interest and does not encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. The pass rate of students on some courses is disappointing. The framework provided for quality assurance is comprehensive but it is at an early stage of implementation.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision		Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision		2
Governance and management		2
Students' recruitment, guidance and support		2
Quality assurance		3
Resources:	staffing	2
	equipment/learning resources	2
	accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	2	Art and design	3
Mathematics and computing	3	English/languages	3
Engineering	3	Other humanities	3
Business studies	2	Basic education	2
Care	2		

INTRODUCTION

1   Gateshead College was inspected during the autumn term of 1995. Eighteen inspectors visited the college for a total of 86 days. The enrolment and induction of students were observed at the end of August and the beginning of September. Specialist subject inspections took place over several weeks mainly between 29 September and the end of the cross-college inspection on 17 November 1995. The inspection was disrupted because of industrial action taken by teachers. Visits were rescheduled, but this was not possible for hairdressing and beauty therapy, and these areas were therefore not inspected.

2   Inspectors visited 201 classes and examined students' written and practical work. They held discussions with members of the board of the corporation, senior and middle managers, teachers, students, parents and staff responsible for support services. Meetings were held with representatives from community associations, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, local training and enterprise councils (TECs), schools, careers services, industry and commerce and higher education. A range of documentation, including the strategic plan, operational statements and the self-assessment report, was considered.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3   Gateshead College is a major provider of education and training located immediately south of the River Tyne and within the conurbation of Greater Tyneside. The college was originally established as a technical institute in the late 1940s, primarily offering technical training to the local engineering industry. It became Gateshead Technical College in 1953 and was re-established in 1990 as a tertiary college. Since then, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council has withdrawn its commitment to a tertiary system, and the college now operates as a general further education college.

4   The college has a site at Washington and two major centres in the east of Gateshead, one at Durham Road, and the other at Broadway. The administrative services of the college are based at Durham Road, together with the specialist curriculum facilities and teaching teams for communications, engineering, humanities, information technology, management studies, mathematics, motor vehicle, personal services and technology. Teams and specialist facilities for the creative and performing arts, science and business services are based at Broadway. The college is currently improving its facilities by establishing a telematics and management centre funded through a successful bid to the competitiveness fund. The college also operates through a number of outreach activities and franchise partnerships.

5   The college serves both its immediate local community, a borough with a population of 200,000, and the surrounding rural areas. It benefits from good road and rail networks. In April 1995 the borough had an unemployment rate of 10.5 per cent, the lowest in Tyne and Wear but still higher than the national average of 8.2 per cent. Long-term unemployment

continues to be a problem; 40 per cent of unemployed people have been out of work for over a year. Twenty-six per cent of 18-24 year olds are unemployed. The industrial base of the borough has reduced dramatically over the last 20 years and the major employment categories are now distribution, and public and personal services. The Metro Centre retail complex, one of the largest in Europe, and the international sports stadium are examples of recent developments that have contributed to this change.

6   Secondary education is provided by four 11-16 schools, eight 11-18 schools, six special schools, and a city technology college. Gateshead College recruits from all these schools and from over 20 others in neighbouring authorities. Within a 10-mile radius of the college, there are four universities, four large further education colleges and a number of 11-18 schools. The borough is also an international centre for Talmudical education. The local progression rate into post-16 full-time education in schools and colleges is 54 per cent. In addition, 15 per cent of 16 year olds progress to youth training.

7   As at 6 November 1995 the college had enrolled 11,118 students. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. In 1994-95 the college had 14,250 course enrolments and exceeded its unit target by 6 per cent. Of the students enrolled, approximately 10 per cent were full time and 6 per cent were following higher education courses. About 2.5 per cent of the student population were from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with 0.01 per cent in the local population. At November 1995, the college employed 216 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 188 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

8   After extensive market research, in 1994 the college opened the Washington Business College in Washington, a new town, five miles from Gateshead. This college is located in a town centre office block and runs as an autonomous division of the college. Its main focus is the design and delivery of individual learning and support programmes. It has exceeded its enrolment targets in both its first and second year of operation and now has 1,452 enrolments. In 1996, the college is to open a fourth campus jointly with the University of Sunderland. This venture, Learning World, will operate as a separate company. It will be located at the Metro Centre and will provide education and training for the local community, Metro Centre customers and staff.

9   The college has a matrix structure that reflects its main areas of business and function. The senior management team comprises the principal, three deputy principals and the director of finance. It has line management responsibilities for nine operational managers. Teaching staff are located in 12 subject teams and all are also members of course teams. The college also operates a training consultancy that provides direct services to business within the public and private sectors.

10   The college's mission is to provide lifelong learning opportunities through sustained growth and continuous improvement. It is committed to the provision of local learning opportunities that provide access to study at all levels up to degree level.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

11   Since 1990, the college has made significant progress in broadening and expanding learning, training and assessment opportunities for local people and employers. Subjects are now offered in all major programme areas except agriculture and construction. Its portfolio of courses includes 30 General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) subjects, 34 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects, nine General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) and 19 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes at various levels. Modularisation of the curriculum is expanding. For example, in the sciences only one subject has not yet moved to this type of syllabus. The college offers seven separate higher education degree programmes. Routes are now available within the college that enable students to progress from foundation level to degree level in many areas. As yet, it is too early to assess their effectiveness. The rapid growth in provision has meant that not all planned courses have recruited and, occasionally, it has resulted in inadequate preparation. For example, some GNVQ courses were introduced without sufficient planning of teaching and assessment strategies. Few open and distance-learning opportunities are provided for those unable to attend college.

12   The college responds rapidly to community and business needs, developing provision in negotiation with its clients. Gateshead Training Consultancy, a 'services to business' unit, was established in 1991. It is developing a range of contacts with employers and delivering training, consultancy and assessment services to them. The unit exceeded its income target for 1994-95. While some teaching teams have developed strong working relationships with employers, a few have little contact with them. Managers recognise the need to develop a college-wide strategy which builds on the extensive employer links already in place.

13   Although competition for school leavers locally is fierce, the college has a good relationship with the local authority and is improving its links with schools. Its main liaison activity is with three partner schools, but three other schools are now seeking to develop stronger ties. In addition, the college has a strategy for developing its work with a further 26 schools, half in Gateshead and the remainder in County Durham and elsewhere in Tyneside. The marketing team, in partnership with teaching team representatives, is responsible for links with schools. However, at present these links are largely related to recruitment and marketing; few effective curriculum links have been established. The college works with other colleges and universities through a range of initiatives. These include membership, with six other further education colleges of an education

partnership, validated by Sheffield University. The college also runs courses franchised from Sunderland University, the University of Northumbria and the Tees-Wear Access Consortium.

14   Liaison between Tyneside TEC and the college operates successfully at many levels. An annual partnership agreement with the TEC outlines the procedures for delivering training contracts, projects and other arrangements. Tyneside TEC welcomes the college's support for small to medium-sized enterprises. The college has also established good links with the City of Sunderland TEC through the development of the Washington Business College and with Durham TEC through other initiatives.

15   There is a college marketing plan and a central marketing team with enthusiastic staff. The marketing manager has recent commercial experience and manages an appropriate delegated budget. While staff report that improvements have been made to the marketing of courses, individual teams and members of staff are insufficiently involved. For example, media studies and performing arts staff would prefer to play a greater part in the external marketing of their courses.

16   The college is committed to widening participation from groups not previously attracted to further education. It has developed a number of foundation programmes for adults. For example, over 100 students are enrolled on the Partners in Learning programme. Each student is provided with a support partner, recruited either from the local community or from other college courses. Students and their partners work together in classes; the students gain practical qualifications while the partners work towards qualifications in community care and learning support accredited by the Tyneside Open College Federation. A further example is the extensive gateway to learning programme that offers a first step back to education for those adults who left school with no qualifications. It is made up of 28 individual programmes accredited through Tyneside Open College Federation at three different levels. Carefully chosen titles are used to attract interest, for example, a psychology option called 'how people tick'.

17   Community interests are represented on a college strategy group. The college has undertaken an extensive audit of community needs to inform future developments. Staff of the college have worked hard to meet the needs of the local minority ethnic communities. For example, courses in Asian hairdressing, dressmaking and fashion clothing in ethnic styles have been introduced. The college also offers language teaching in Urdu and Punjabi. Business skills for the North Tyneside Chinese community are offered in partnership with Tynemouth College. Courses are delivered in nearly 20 centres, including churches, libraries, offices and other community centres, both locally and further afield. A wide range of community groups use college accommodation through lettings of specialist facilities. For example, a community association occupies accommodation leased to the Gateshead Community Education Service, though this arrangement is not without its tensions.

18   The college caters for an increasing number of students who have moderate and severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also for some with emotional and behavioural problems. The college has won the 1995-96 national 'Beacon Post Office Award for Special Needs' for its work with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It has a growing reputation for the high quality of its support to deaf students and it now attracts students from outside the borough. A course for students with severe learning difficulties has been established and one for students with mental health problems is being developed. The college is also working with the local education authority to provide learning opportunities for pupils excluded from schools.

19   In 1993, a co-ordinated approach to European links was agreed within the college but this has not been fully implemented. A number of developments encouraging links with Europe and further afield have been introduced, but there is little consideration of European matters in the curriculum as a whole. The college is working successfully with Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council and Tyneside TEC to provide opportunities for students to gain work experience in Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy and North America. There is no college strategy for ensuring that staff involved in these projects learn from each other.

20   An action plan has recently been established to help to implement the college's equal opportunities policy. There are few structures currently in place to ensure that staff help to reduce discriminatory practices. A few stereotypical attitudes and practices are still evident in some curriculum areas. For example, a gender bias was observed in a session where theoretical questions were addressed to the females whilst more practical matters were addressed to the males.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

21   The board of the corporation has 18 members, including the principal. They bring to the college an appropriate range of expertise from professional, business and industrial backgrounds. Members are also drawn from schools, universities, minority ethnic communities, voluntary organisations, and college staff. There is a vacancy for a student representative. Seven members of the board are women. There is a balance of experienced and new members; eight members have joined the board since the college became a corporation in 1993. The board is very supportive of the college and its senior management team who all attend board meetings. The clerk to the governors is also the director of finance and administration for the college.

22   Board meetings are well structured and the papers received are businesslike. The board regularly receives data on the performance of the college. Members of the board see their role as determining strategies that enable the college to meet the needs of the community whilst remaining financially sound. There are three committees of the board:

finance and employment, remuneration and audit. The finance and employment committee meets regularly and the board usually accepts the recommendations of this small group. Task groups are established by the board to deal with specific issues. A governors' development group has produced a code of practice for board members. Governors are insufficiently involved in the development of the strategic plan. Their contact with the college is limited and so some have a poor awareness of the curriculum context in which it operates. The induction and training of board members is insufficient. There is no system for governors to monitor their own performance. The governors' development group is addressing these issues.

23 The college's matrix structure has undergone a number of adjustments since its introduction in 1990. Although the structure is complex, staff generally understand it and can work within it. At management level, it separates strategic roles from operational ones, and this allows the college to respond rapidly to initiatives, particularly where these are management led, for example, the establishment of the Washington Business College. At curriculum level, it separates the design and management of the curriculum for particular types of students; full time, part time and in employment, from its delivery by teaching staff. Elements of the structure work well, such as those for finance and administration services, but curriculum management is less satisfactory. At this level accountability and leadership duties are sometimes ill defined. Teaching staff or course leaders need to relate to a number of different managers for a particular course or teaching group. For example, there are different managers for part-time and full-time students, for staffing and resources. In some areas, the emphasis on types of student has been at the expense of subject development. There are varying perceptions of the effectiveness of the structure; senior managers see it as empowering and encouraging a corporate approach, while some teaching staff see it as time-consuming and leading to a duplication of effort.

24 Within the various parts of the structure, staff work well together. The senior management team has a strong and positive 'can-do' philosophy. Senior staff understand each other's roles and responsibilities. Most teaching staff relate well to their teaching team with whom they share a staff room and meet regularly. They are also necessarily in frequent contact with middle managers. Staff report that they would welcome more contact with members of the senior management team. At the time of inspection it was hard to determine how much this viewpoint had been affected by the industrial dispute.

25 The strategic plan was revised in line with Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) requirements in July, and its operating statement for 1995-96 was finalised at the end of September. The operating statement identifies a series of actions and responsible personnel, but no timescales or resource needs are specified and some statements lack

precision. A positive feature is the well-established and comprehensive system of reports on progress towards strategic and operational objectives. The recent introduction of an annual schedule for curriculum planning and for identifying associated resource needs is designed to ensure that deadlines and targets are met. Links between the operating statement and development plans at team level are currently inadequate.

26   A regular system of meetings aids communication across the college. On Mondays, a meeting for operational senior managers is followed by meetings for themselves and their teams. On Fridays, meetings for teaching teams alternate with course team meetings. Twice a term, the senior management team and 31 middle managers meet together to review progress against operational objectives. They also receive and discuss management reports which keep them aware of all developments. Not all middle managers communicate this information to their teams. The channels of communication from the teams to senior management do not always operate effectively. The college also uses other methods of communication such as a fortnightly staff newsletter and a system of roadshows which are presented round the college to cover important issues. However, some staff still consider that they are insufficiently involved in college developments.

27   The college emphasises flexibility and responsibilities at team and middle management levels rather than the blanket imposition of systems and structures. As a result, the number of formal college committees is kept down to two, the academic board and the health and safety committee, and much of the development work is carried out by the use of short-term task groups. These work well, though the number of staff involved is relatively small. A non-prescriptive approach to much of the rest of the college's work has also been adopted. For example, a limited number of key policies are in place to direct long-term developments and these are complemented by strategy documents that provide guidance to teams. Policy documents and strategies provide an effective framework, but not all staff are aware of their existence. Co-ordinating of some cross-college aspects of curriculum, such as the tutorial programme, is not always effective. While this approach enables course and team leaders to make their own decisions, it leads to inconsistencies in students' experiences.

28   The Washington Business College, from its inception, was set up as a project to develop and evaluate approaches that are radically different from those of the main college. The centre has a simple, well-understood management structure and has a clear focus on business success. It has developed rapidly, providing cost-effective provision that meets the needs of the locality. Communications within the centre are good but staff, other than managers, have little contact with staff elsewhere in the college. They perceive themselves as separate from the main college.

29   At the end of 1993-94, the college's cash flow position suffered badly from a miscalculation of the original conversion from full-time equivalent

students to funding units of activity, and an overspend on part-time staff salaries. As a result, the college started 1995-96 with a deficit of £230,000. In order to avoid a recurrence of these problems, budgetary control procedures have been reviewed and strengthened. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The college's average level of funding from the FEFC in 1995-96 is £20.57 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £17.84 per unit. A comprehensive set of 10 business review reports go to the full management team five times a year. These include reports on the contribution each curriculum area is making to the college's business success. Budgets for consumables are allocated to teaching teams on the basis of a funding methodology that reflects that used by the FEFC. Team leaders see it as fair and generally understand the basis on which it is made. An external consultant has provided benchmarks covering much of the college's costs. The college intends to use this information to improve efficiency.

30   The college's management information system is inadequate. The senior management team is aware of this and have initiated a project to develop a more comprehensive computerised college-wide system for management information. The registry has systems to record student data, examination entries and student attendances. The system for handling examination entries is manual. The different systems cannot easily exchange data. There are delays and inaccuracies in producing attendance records and registers. Team leaders have to produce a weekly return on taught hours to authorise payment for part-time teachers since there is no way of obtaining actual taught hours from the registers. Staff complain that they are frequently asked for information that they have already provided. Despite the high priority given to the six FEFC key performance indicators, there is no systematic approach to performance indicators at course or teaching team level. Only senior managers have access to college information on the computer management information system network but there are plans to extend access to all budget holders. Although Gateshead College management information system is used at the Washington Business College when appropriate, staff there have developed their own systems in response to specific requirements.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

31   Arrangements for students joining courses at the college are good. The systems for providing information, guidance and enrolment services are effective. These are co-ordinated by a central team who use well-established and understood procedures and standards. The information centre, located at the main entrance of Durham Road, is open throughout the year, providing advice and guidance for students. Promotional materials, such as prospectuses and course leaflets, are generally of high quality. The prospectus for full-time courses is available in large print, Braille and as an audio cassette. Little promotional material is available in languages other than English.

32   A comprehensive range of information and advisory events is available to school pupils. Most year 11 pupils from the three 11-16 partner schools attend introductory sessions at the college. The college provides a programme of open evenings and other events in most curriculum areas to which all applicants are invited. Link courses with five special schools assist their pupils to progress smoothly to courses at the college. Providing information about the college to pupils in many of the schools catering for 11-18 year old students is difficult.

33   Students can enrol throughout the year, but the main enrolment periods are in September and January. Enrolment is well organised. Students have access to impartial advice from Tyneside Careers Service staff or other trained guidance officers at the college. Interviews for courses are conducted professionally and without delay. Most full-time students attend the college at least twice before they enrol and are satisfied with the service they receive. The enrolment of part-time students is generally well planned and efficient. Appropriate numbers of specialist and guidance staff are available to help them. Arrangements for late enrolments are good.

34   For the most part, induction sessions for students are effective in acquainting them with the student charter, college services and their courses. Lecturers using a college checklist introduce their own teaching programmes. Induction materials used during some of these sessions are at the wrong level for the needs of the group. Some courses offer diagnostic assessment of specific vocational skills. All full-time students are screened for literacy skills and many for numeracy skills. From this, about 15 per cent of students are identified as in need of additional help. The results are returned to personal tutors and help is offered to students in the form of attendance at support sessions in the mathematics and communications learning centres. However, the results are not always fed back to students quickly enough and the take-up and progress of students offered this support are not monitored effectively.

35   All full-time and many part-time students are given individual support through their personal tutor. Tutors are responsible for monitoring and reviewing students' progress and for dealing with absenteeism and with course changes. Most tutors have two hours each week for this work. To meet the needs of their group, tutors devise their own tutorial programme based on a framework developed by curriculum managers. Students are appreciative of the support received and are generally kept informed of their progress. In 1994-95, over 60 per cent of eligible full-time students left with a national record of achievement. However, the formal system for reviewing students' progress is not always followed. Tutors do not meet together to agree the tutorial programme or develop resource materials. The tutorial experience of students varies in quality and there is little consistency across tutorial groups.

36   A comprehensive programme of careers guidance is offered through a well-organised calendar of events. Students may make appointments

with careers or guidance officers at any time during their course. The main focus for guidance has been on progression to higher education, but recently priority has been given to improving support for those seeking employment. Not all courses or tutorials include job-seeking skills and careers advice. The end of year survey for 1994-95 showed that 27 per cent of students at intermediate level felt they had received insufficient careers advice.

37   Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high-quality individual support that enables them to obtain maximum benefit from their courses. At the time of inspection, 56 students were receiving support from signers, readers and personal carers. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the full-time course designed specifically to meet their needs are well supported. In recognition of the financial difficulties faced by many students, the college has agreed to pay the examination and registration fees for all students who study for more than 14 hours each week.

38   Students make good use of the college's three general learning centres where they can use a variety of resources. Each centre has a range of computer-based equipment that can be booked during opening hours. The Durham Road site also has specialised learning centres for information technology, communications, mathematics and language. These resources and up to 50 hours of specialist staff time are available to support the development of core and specialist skills in these areas. The communication centre has a good range of assignments to support learners of English from basic skills to advanced levels.

39   The college has developed an effective system for the accreditation of students' prior learning. It was established with TEC funding and has specified roles for advisers and assessors. In 1995-96, over 530 students are using accreditation of prior learning processes to gain full awards or specific units in 11 vocational areas covered by NVQs. These are mainly in engineering, management and teacher training.

40   The college has completed the first part of a TEC-funded project looking at students who successfully complete their course of study. The project has been praised by the TEC for its scope and for the identification of issues that the college is now investigating further. Attendance of students is monitored but, where this is poor, it is not always followed up effectively. The withdrawal of students from courses is regularly reported to managers, but mechanisms for identifying and recording these early withdrawals are not uniform across the college.

41   There are childcare facilities at Washington and Durham Road for up to 40 children of students studying at the college. Waiting lists exist for places. According to Gateshead social services, the nursery at Durham Road provides an 'ideal learning environment for young children and a valuable service for parents'. A bus has been converted to provide mobile creche facilities for children of parents who are attending courses taking place in areas remote from the college.

42   Despite strenuous attempts by staff to promote the students' union no students stood as officers last year and so there was no union executive. The lack of a students' representative body makes it difficult for them to take up their places on the governing body and the health and safety committee. There is confidence amongst college staff that a students' union executive will be in place shortly.

43   A wide range of sporting activities is offered throughout the week at the college and over 400 students and staff take part regularly. Many students with restricted mobility take part in these activities. Arrangements for students at the Washington Business College are not as well developed.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

44   Inspectors observed a total of 201 teaching sessions. In 53 per cent of these strengths outweighed weaknesses; in 8 per cent the weaknesses outweighed the strengths. The following table shows the grades given to the sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level	2	12	15	1	1	31
GCSE	1	5	5	2	0	13
GNVQ	3	15	16	3	1	38
NVQ	1	6	5	1	0	13
Access to higher education	1	2	1	0	0	4
Access to further education	2	2	0	1	0	5
Basic education	1	6	3	2	0	12
Other vocational	10	15	23	2	0	50
Higher education	0	2	3	0	0	5
Other	5	15	7	3	0	30
Total	**26**	**80**	**78**	**15**	**2**	**201**

45   The average attendance level in the teaching sessions inspected was 75 per cent. The attendance rates varied between 70 per cent in mathematics, engineering and computing and 87 per cent in teacher training, psychology and counselling.

46   The relationships established between students and staff are friendly, relaxed and conducive to learning. Most of the classes involving mature students are conducted in a way that recognises their adult status. The staff in some sessions for 16-19 year old students do not allow them sufficient responsibility for their own learning. Staff are enthusiastic and

conscientious. Many sessions are well planned and have high-quality schemes of work. Lesson plans are generally less well prepared and many were produced purely for the purposes of inspection. The better ones were associated with the more successful sessions and demonstrated effective ways of working with mixed ability groups. The poorer ones were only headings from the schemes of work with no indication of objectives, methods of teaching or assessment strategies.

47   In science, the documentation for full-time courses is of a high standard and many of the most important sections are shared with students. Science teachers have regular schedules for setting, marking and returning work within agreed deadlines. The scripts are well marked with constructive criticisms and encouraging comments. The balance of subjects and topics within the curriculum of vocational courses is good and well planned. However, where courses are made up of a combination of subjects, such as GCSE and GCE A level programmes, students do not necessarily receive a satisfactory curriculum that allows them to develop common skills such as numeracy, communication, and information technology. Some classroom management is poor. For example, in one session, all female students sat at one end of a long room, the males sat at the other end, and the teacher taught from the middle.

48   A varied approach to teaching information technology and computing helps to maintain students' interest in their work. In many of the better sessions, teachers provide individual support and are able to accommodate a wide range of age and ability within the same session. For example, in a GNVQ class in computing at the Washington Business College, students worked informally but constructively on individual assignments, using activity sheets designed specifically to enable students of varying ability to work at their own pace. Staff management of the approaches to support students of differing abilities varies considerably. Good practice is not shared effectively.

49   In mathematics sessions staff are supportive of individual students and prepare the content of the lessons well. However, teaching is generally poorly planned and there is a considerable variation in what the students experience. In many sessions the pace of the work is too slow and teachers make little use of question and answer techniques or fail to link the work to previous learning. There is insufficient differentiation within mathematics classes; no account is taken of the different needs of students who have entered with a grade D at GCSE and those who have entered with a grade F.

50   The teaching in engineering is generally sound but the pace of work in classes is frequently too slow and fails to maintain students' interest. Higher national certificate courses include projects which identify common skills elements and assessment documentation that is useful to students. Teachers in computer-aided design have effective approaches for dealing with students of widely differing abilities, using appropriate learning

support materials. In some classes, for example, a national diploma class in electrical practice, content does not match the aspirations of students nor is it integrated with the rest of the course. In motor vehicle engineering classes, although many sessions are satisfactory, there is an over reliance on teacher exposition and excessive periods of note taking.

51   Business studies classes are challenging and stimulating, well planned and varied. Courses leading to professional qualifications frequently use examples from current commercial practice. They also use the knowledge and experience of students to good advantage, relating it effectively to commercial activities. There are variations in the way skills in numeracy, communication and information technology are developed on each course. For example, while these skills are taught as separate components in GNVQ business studies on the foundation and intermediate level courses, they are integrated and made more relevant in the GNVQ advanced course. Some staff do not use visual aids or questioning to good effect.

52   The quality of the teaching and learning experiences of students on care courses is generally high. A wide variety of teaching methods is used; many methods involve students by drawing on their work and life experiences. For example, a nursery nursing class that aimed to develop skills in producing display materials had a good balance of activities focused on students' verbal contributions and practical outcomes. This allowed students to learn from each other and to build their self-confidence. Teachers have high expectations of their students in a way that stimulates them to achieve more but does not overburden them. In a minority of poorer sessions there is too much teacher exposition so that students' involvement is limited and only a minority of students respond to questions.

53   The teaching of art and design lacks sparkle; it relies predominantly on teacher exposition and there is little student interaction. Poor use is made of visual aids; only one handout was seen in use throughout the inspection. Photographic components are properly integrated with the GNVQ art and design curriculum and the standard of this work is high. Good use is made of drawing from life; this allows students to develop freehand skills and is valued by them. Staff comments on students' work are often insufficiently critical. In the teaching of media studies and performing arts, the balance between practical and theoretical activity is good.

54   In classes in English and communications, teachers' questioning is often too general and produces little student response. Where questions are well focused, they are used effectively to reinforce previous work. Some of the tasks set for students are at an inappropriate level and sometimes the difficulty which students have in obtaining some reading material restricts their learning. Mature students are encouraged to assess their own needs and plan a suitable programme of study for themselves. The teachers of modern foreign languages are well prepared and use a range of learning aids, for example, paired work, listening to tapes or

watching appropriate videos. There is, however, limited review at the conclusion of sessions of problems or concerns common to a number of students.

55   In psychology and counselling classes, the main teaching technique is effective group work. The teacher's feedback to the whole group at the end of the class is particularly valued by the students. Students in teacher training classes have access to good documentation and they are given support towards completing their portfolios of work during tutorials. These classes are well taught, lively and involve the students in the work to good effect. Teachers of politics, sociology, history and geography use a variety of activities and up-to-date material. They have an appropriate concern to develop students' oral and written skills. However, sometimes the teaching of these subjects relies too much on worksheets as the main stimulus material, and in using question and answer techniques there is a tendency to use open-ended questions or to allow a minority of over-confident students to dominate the proceedings.

56   Courses delivered in the community, in adult basic education and in vocational classes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good use of an extensive range of teaching and learning styles. Residential experiences are used effectively to enhance learning and assess their progress. Staff place a commendable emphasis on enabling students to think for themselves and to take responsibility for their own learning. There are some classes where the teaching is unimaginative. Within the Broadway foundation programme there is an overemphasis on classroom-based teaching and insufficient differentiation between students on the first and second year of the programme.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

57   Students generally enjoy their studies. Standards of written work are satisfactory but standards of oral work vary considerably from one area to another. For example, students in art and design classes lack the confidence to engage in group discussions. The reverse is true in modern foreign languages, counselling and teacher training classes, where students generally work well together and, through debate, contribute to each other's progress.

58   Practical work in science is carried out competently and safely, with one exception where students were informed that they should wear safety spectacles but ignored the instruction. Value-added analysis on GCE A level subjects is available for all science subjects except physics and show that students perform at, or better than, predicted levels. With the exception of physics, which has a pass rate of 40 per cent, all the science GCE A level results are at or above the national averages for general further education colleges. Within physics GCE A level classes, some students lack the necessary mathematical ability to cope with the course. The rate at which students leave courses prematurely, in both GNVQ advanced and

GCE A level sciences is high. For example, only four out of nine students successfully completed the GNVQ intermediate course in science. The GCSE results of full-time science students are poor; with the exception of biology they are all below national averages. For these students, the proportion of those who successfully complete compared with those who originally enrolled, is less than 10 per cent.

59   In computing, the quality of assignments and their presentation is good, particularly at the Washington Business College. Some information technology courses have a high drop-out rate and poor pass rates; for example, only 28 per cent of students successfully completed an introductory programming course. These drop-out and pass rates are not routinely tracked and analysed. This has made it difficult for the college to obtain reliable information on which to take action. Student destinations on the other hand are well documented and analysed.

60   The college recruits students to GCE A level mathematics classes who have lower achievements on entry than many other colleges. It is therefore not surprising that their results are at or below the national averages. Students who enrol on GCSE repeat classes improve their achievements, on average, by one grade. This often means that they do not achieve the A-C grades they need. For example, in 1994-95, only 24 per cent of students obtained A-C grades and if the number of successful students is compared with the number who originally enrolled, this percentage drops to 15 per cent.

61   In motor vehicle engineering classes, students develop appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. The first diploma in motor vehicle engineering had good examination results in 1994-95; 71 per cent passed, compared with the previous year's 10 per cent. On general engineering courses the pass rates achieved on most NVQ and other craft courses are good. A number of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) students leave before the end of the course and, as a result, BTEC pass rates are generally poor. For example, the BTEC national diploma in engineering has a success rate of 24 per cent, and rates for the part-time national certificate courses vary from 26 per cent to 44 per cent.

62   Business studies students have well-developed group work and presentation skills. For example, a GNVQ advanced course in business studies used to good effect an assignment that took them out to a range of local companies and required them to present their findings to the whole group. The proportion of students completing business studies courses is generally high and their results are good. For example, a course for association of accounting technicians at intermediate level studying at Washington has an 80 per cent pass rate, compared with the national average of 51 per cent. Exceptions include the NVQ in administration at the Washington site, where only 63 per cent of the students complete the course, and some business-related GCE A level subjects where the drop-out rate is also high.

63   The documentary evidence provided by the college on the achievement of students on care courses is contradictory. For example, curriculum area documents show a pass rate better than the national average for further education, whereas the course statistics provided centrally indicated the opposite. The BTEC national diploma in nursery nursing has a good pass rate at 84 per cent whilst the National Nursery Examinations Board results are less satisfactory at 68 per cent for 1994-95, a sharp drop compared with 87 per cent for 1993-94. An unusually high number of students have had to resubmit work on GNVQ care courses; only 21 per cent passed at GNVQ intermediate and advanced levels in 1994-95.

64   On art and design courses, students show a strong commitment to their work. They are well organised and their folios of work are clearly presented. The work is, however, generally uninteresting, and students do not interact effectively with staff or each other. Examination pass rates on courses vary considerably. For example, there were pass rates of 59 per cent for GNVQ advanced students in art and design, 50 per cent for those on the intermediate level course and 100 per cent for those on the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) photography course. On the BTEC national diploma in performing arts course, the pass rate of 70 per cent is good, but when dropout is taken into account, only 44 per cent of those originally enrolled are successful. Similarly, for the BTEC national diploma in media studies, the pass rate is 50 per cent but only 26 per cent complete the course successfully.

65   Results for GCSE and GCE A level English subjects vary according to whether the students are part time or full time. Both GCSE and GCE A level English results for part-time students are above the national average for further education colleges but those for full-time students have declined and, in many cases, are below the national average. Retention is poor in part-time English and communications classes; for example, a part-time GCSE English class has less than 50 per cent retention. The destination of students who have studied English subjects is monitored and shows that 48 per cent of GCE A level English candidates progress to higher education courses and 13 per cent to employment. Students studying modern foreign languages have skills in the language studied appropriate to the level of the course and use it with confidence. The GCE A level results in foreign languages are good and at or above the national average. However, the proportion achieving the higher level A-C grades is generally low. The pass rate on full-time and part-time language courses is unsatisfactory. For example, on courses leading to qualifications of the Institute of Linguists only 15 out of 74 students entered for the examinations passed.

66   Students on counselling courses, the higher education foundation programme, and teacher training courses are articulate in group discussions, highly motivated and enthusiastic. On counselling courses, students are supportive of each other and use their own experiences to

provide a real context for their learning. This is reflected in the high completion rates on these courses of 95 per cent for the basic course and 83 per cent for the more advanced certificate course. The portfolios of evidence on teacher training courses are of a good standard and are well monitored by staff. The pass rate on GCE A level psychology in 1995 was poor at 42 per cent with only 5 per cent achieving the higher A-C grades. Withdrawal from the psychology option of the higher education foundation programme is also high at 39 per cent. The examination results on other humanities subjects vary considerably from a 40 per cent pass rate for the part-time GCE A level geography students to a 100 per cent pass rate for history. GCSE results in these humanities subjects are poor; the pass rate for students entered for history is 25 per cent, 33 per cent for geography and 44 per cent for sociology.

67   The retention of students on adult basic education courses, partners in learning and gateway to learning programmes is generally high, varying from 70 per cent to 100 per cent. There are significant achievements within parts of these courses. For example, all the adult basic education students who sat achievement tests in numeracy were successful. Within the provision the college makes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a number of students have progressed from the schools link programme to the Broadway foundation programme and then to full-time vocational programmes such as the GNVQ in business and finance. Students receiving support clearly gain in confidence and self-esteem as a result of the work they undertake.

68   In 1994-95, performance overall in both full-time and part-time GCE A level examinations at the college shows considerable improvement over 1993-94 results. Full-time and part-time students achieve an A-E grade pass rate of approximately 70 per cent compared with 64 per cent in the previous year and a pass rate of 69 per cent for students of all ages in general further education colleges. Thirty per cent of full-time students and 68 per cent of part-time students gained GCSE A-C grades. This compares with the national averages of 37 per cent for 16-18 year old students and 60 per cent for those over 18 years of age. The 148 students, aged 16-18, entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1994-95 scored, on average, 3.1 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1995 performance tables published by the Department for Education and Employment.

69   The college's three GNVQ foundation courses have been successful. Business and art and design courses achieved pass rates above 70 per cent, although the health and social care programme was less successful with a 41 per cent pass rate. Seven of the eight intermediate level programmes have improved their results dramatically over the previous year. Three of the eight GNVQ advanced courses have results above the national average. Sixty-one per cent of students 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 in the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

70   A framework for quality assurance, which operates at corporate, curriculum and team levels, has been developed for all areas of the college. Staff appreciate the flexibility that the structure allows them in modifying elements of the process to suit their own specialist areas. The quality assurance framework builds on a strong commitment to course review and evaluation and a regular cycle of 30 management reports on aspects of college activity. Criteria for monitoring the effectiveness of the framework have yet to be established. Not all areas of the college have reached an acceptable standard in controlling the quality of their provision.

71   The quality assurance system in the college was developed by building on existing good practice. For example, the college commercial company has achieved International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9002 and some of their systems have been used to improve the management of other areas in the college. Staff in the guidance and admissions area worked on a Further Education Unit project that has helped them to develop a range of quality standards. The lessons learned as a result have been widely disseminated through the college. The college applies for a number of different awards and accreditation for its developments. It benefits from external feedback and the processes used to prepare the applications. The approach to quality piloted at Washington Business College stands outside the college quality assurance framework. It lacks thorough criteria to enable it to be evaluated effectively.

72   The academic board has been reconstituted with a remit to monitor and assure the quality of the student learning experience. It developed 15 quality characteristics that reflect the college's commitment to meeting the needs of its clients. Course teams are represented on this body and have developed a process of evaluating team performance against a selection of specified standards. The process is a lengthy one. A schedule of the teams to be evaluated is drawn up for each forthcoming year. Members of the selected team present their report to the board. Academic board members, in conjunction with the appropriate team, then review, evaluate and present recommendations to the next meeting of the board. There is no process for targeting courses giving cause for concern. The development is now in its third year but, despite extensive consultation and staff development, systems are not fully evolved and implemented.

73   The management of quality in the curriculum is variable across the college. One of the deputy principals has overall responsibility and curriculum managers also have specified responsibilities and accountabilities for quality assurance. However, curriculum managers and course team leaders are not fully aware of these responsibilities for assuring quality. The development and implementation of standards is

approached from a number of different angles and this is causing confusion. Teams are required to develop their own quality standards within the structure of the quality characteristics, building on some general standards produced in conjunction with curriculum managers. Progress varies with service teams generally at a more advanced stage than teaching teams. Curriculum review and evaluation reports are routinely produced by all course teams but they are not standardised and are of variable quality. Often these reports are too descriptive and fail to provide sufficient quantitative focus or identify action. Some reviews concentrate on description and lack analysis and supporting quantitative data.

74   An internal quality audit team includes two deputy principals and one of the governors, who has trained as an FEFC inspector. This small team was set up last year and began by sampling the operation of the induction process. This included consideration of the quality of teaching during induction sessions. The team found a 96 per cent general compliance with standards. However, the audit team's impetus has slowed down and only recently have plans for the next audit been produced.

75   College provision generally meets the requirements of external validating bodies. Reports from these bodies are widely distributed and action from them monitored. Although the college works closely with many external organisations, there are few formal opportunities for them to contribute to the college's quality assurance framework. Meetings with employers or sponsors have resulted in the redesign of some programmes, such as partners in learning. The Washington Business College is committed to meet regularly with its external business clients. Minutes are kept and reviewed by the director. However, action points are not identified from these meetings.

76   A comprehensive system for monitoring and analysing comments or complaints from students is operating effectively. For example, potential health hazards have been dealt with as a result of comments from students. The marketing team conducts surveys after enrolment and induction and disseminates the results. Course teams are responsible for collecting students' opinion on the college and their experiences whilst they are on programmes. These views are used to inform curriculum review and evaluation reports. Some service teams also seek students' opinions. The catering team issues fortnightly questionnaires asking for suggestions to improve their service. This has resulted in a greater variety of food being included on the menu. This team also operates a quality forum where staff and students meet to discuss the provision.

77   A task group of staff and governors has developed the college charter which contains precise and measurable service standards, in line with the college's quality characteristics. Supportive information sheets are being written in a friendly style in a variety of languages. The charter is also available in Braille and on audio-tape cassette. Performance against most of the charter standards is now being monitored and reasons for

non-compliance sought. This year, the charter standards are published in the student handbook. A process for consulting staff and students about future revisions has been identified. The college intends to develop an employers' charter. Students at Washington Business College were not issued with the college charter, but received instead a learners' charter that did not meet all the requirements of the Department for Education and Employment.

78   The college's extensive human resource development strategy includes staff development. It identifies five staff-development areas to support the corporate objectives. These are used to prioritise staff requests for individual and team development. Each area is led by nominated managers who meet regularly to plan a programme of delivery. Staff consider themselves well supported by the staff-development programme and are proud of the fact that in 1994 the college was the first education provider to be awarded a National Trainers' Award for training and developing its own staff. The personnel manager has produced a helpful guide for staff that explains the procedures for staff development. Useful reports and evaluations of staff-development events are produced as part of the management reporting process. The college devotes 1 per cent of its budget to staff development and last year all staff were involved in some activity. The college was the first in the region to secure the Investors in People award. A major outcome of this award is to ensure that all staff complete an individual development plan. These are collated at team level and inform the human resource plan. At the moment, the focus of the team plans is on individual staff development rather than on team or college needs.

79   A good self-assessment report based on the headings set out in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement* was produced in preparation for inspection. Many of the judgements resulted from the work of teams and the draft reports were circulated throughout the college. Comments as a result of this consultation were used to improve the final version. The judgements generally accord with those of inspectors. A useful feature of the document is the way it is cross-referenced to the operational plans of the college.

RESOURCES

Staffing

80   Teaching and support staff are equally valued members of the college. Support staff attend course meetings, particularly when there are relevant agenda items. The gender balance of the staff for the college as a whole is appropriate, although there is considerable imbalance in some curriculum areas, for example, in engineering where all teaching staff are male. There is an appropriate mix of longer-serving members and newer appointments.

81   Teaching staff are generally well qualified, with degrees or relevant professional and vocational qualifications. Seventy per cent of full-time

staff and staff on fractional appointments have a first degree. Nineteen per cent have higher degrees, a considerable number are working towards a higher qualification and 88 per cent have teaching qualifications. Most teaching staff have relevant up-to-date commercial and industrial experience, but there are some important exceptions, for example, in science and business. Most subject areas have sufficient staff who have appropriate Training and Development Lead Body assessor awards.

82   Good use is made of part-time teachers who bring specialist expertise to the college. Part-time teachers are generally well integrated with teams and they feel supported. They are generally effectively deployed. The proportion of full-time to part-time teaching staff varies considerably across curriculum areas. In engineering, staff are mainly full time but in, for example, business administration and social studies, there are large numbers of part-time teachers. The recruitment of part-time specialist staff is handled by team leaders, with support from the personnel department.

83   Technical support staff are managed effectively by two technician managers. They are involved in teams to which they regularly contribute. Technicians work flexibly, often on their own initiative, and there is interchange of staff to cover for absences. A gradual move towards multi-skilling is taking place, supported by appropriate training.

84   Administrative support staff are generally well qualified and deployed appropriately in sufficient numbers to support the work of the various areas. Learning centre staff have relevant library-related qualifications. An experienced team is working on the college-wide implementation and development of information technology provision. The pool of clerical assistants providing secretarial and other support is situated at the Broadway site; this causes some difficulties if a quick response is required.

Equipment/learning resources

85   Classrooms are generally well supplied with teaching equipment, such as overhead projectors, screens and whiteboards. However, there are still significant numbers of classrooms with blackboards, some of which are beyond their useful life. The college has recently concentrated on providing information technology equipment in learning centres. The overall level of provision is now generally good, but there is still some shortfall in the learning centres at the Broadway site. Hardware and software for information technology equipment is of an appropriate industrial standard. The college has fitted an Internet connection and a room of eight computers has recently been established to allow students to browse for information. Most staff have access to computers for wordprocessing and internal electronic mail.

86   There is a good stock of compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases at Durham Road and at the Washington Business College. However, the Broadway site has only one machine but it lacks a sound

facility and there are few compact disks. The book catalogue has been computerised and is available to students. There is an electronic link between the two Gateshead sites but not to the Washington Business College. The bookstock at the Durham Road site is satisfactory with appropriate numbers of recent texts, together with journals and periodicals. However, the range of stock at Broadway and Washington is inadequate.

87   Specialist equipment is generally suitable for its purpose. A media suite has recently been established at Broadway, comprising 15 high specification computers with desktop publishing and multimedia processing capabilities. The range of specialist equipment in science is good, with a particularly wide selection of biological models for demonstration purposes. An Autocad computer-aided drafting suite has recently been upgraded. Motor vehicle has an up-to-date car body alignment jig that is used in co-operation with an industrial sponsor. Engineering has a modern electronics facility, although some specialist equipment is approaching the end of its useful life, for example computer numeric control machinery. Performing arts has minimal levels of basic equipment. Some equipment of good quality is underused, for example, the language laboratory.

88   Maintenance is generally good, much of it carried out by technician staff. Procedures for the systematic renewal of equipment are being developed, though there is no defined policy. The college actively pursues value for money through its centralised purchasing arrangements. Specifications for the acquisition of furniture are insufficiently demanding. Some recent purchases of classroom tables, for example, are already showing signs of damage.

Accommodation

89   The Durham Road site comprises one main building and several others dating from the 1940s. It is on a walled site that has a considerable gradient. The caretaker's house has been successfully converted into a nursery. One of the houses and a number of temporary buildings on this site are in poor condition. Circulation through the buildings and the site is complicated by the changes of levels and complexity of corridors and stairways. The Broadway building is about two miles from Durham Road. It is a former school dating from the 1970s and this site includes sports playing fields and the college's main sports hall. The Washington Business College is located in the central shopping area of Washington and is housed on an upper floor of an office building.

90   The college has made use of external consultants to develop a strategy for the systematic upgrading and rationalising of the estate. A large number of areas have been refurbished to a high standard from a low base of previous maintenance and investment. Some of the areas that have not been refurbished are poorly decorated; for example, the motor

vehicle workshops have a shabby appearance. There has been little attempt to give subject areas a sense of identity and many classrooms have no display of materials to stimulate learning.

91   To improve space management the college is attempting to ensure that rooms allocated to a specific subject are physically adjacent to each other. There are several spaces suitable for larger groups including two sports halls, one of which is being converted into an information technology centre. Most teaching spaces are of adequate size though some classrooms, for example, some rooms at the Washington site, are not large enough for the groups currently using them. Some areas are underused, such as a complete workshop that is awaiting business from a collaborating industrial company.

92   An energy management policy is being developed. The control of heating at the Durham Road site is often poor. Some rooms have ventilation problems and are too hot and stuffy. The college buildings are generally kept clean and tidy and are free from signs of graffiti or vandalism. External lighting is adequate and security is improving. The reception area at the main site is staffed during college opening hours. Car parking is adequate at the Broadway and Washington sites but there is a significant problem of accommodating students' vehicles at the main site.

93   A group, including external representatives, is assessing issues relating to access to the site. Access to the Durham Road site is difficult, mainly due to the ground contours. There is a lift but it is not signposted and is difficult to find. A stair-climbing machine has recently been purchased. If advance notice is given, temporary ramps can be arranged for wheelchair users but this is not a satisfactory system. Significant areas of the building, for instance, those used for mathematics and languages, cannot be reached by students with restricted mobility. There is much recent improvement on the Broadway site including ramps. There is, however, no lift, and some rooms, including the new media suite and the refectory on the first floor, are inaccessible to students with restricted mobility. Where possible, the college has responded to physical access problems by relocating classes to ground floor classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

94   The college has made much progress in achieving its mission. Its strengths include:

• a broad and varied range of provision that meets the needs of employers, the community and groups under represented in further education

• a large number of developments, some of them innovative and soundly based on information from market research

• a governing body that is representative of its community, supportive of the college and provides effective strategic direction

- experiences from Washington Business College that have been used consciously to develop and evaluate approaches that are radically different from that of the college's main provision

- an effective system of management reports that enables governors and college managers to work together towards meeting their goals

- good arrangements for informing, guiding, enrolling and supporting students

- relationships between students and staff that are generally friendly and relaxed

- the variety of stimulating learning strategies used in the best lessons and students' written work that is of a generally high standard

- a clear commitment to quality and a long-term strategy for developing a quality assurance framework

- staff who are generally well qualified and valued equally across the college

- the high standards of refurbished accommodation and the good equipment levels in many areas.

95   If the college is to maintain and improve the quality of its provision it should address:

- insufficient sharing of good practice gained from the large number of projects and developments with which the college is involved

- poorly-developed curriculum links with employers and schools

- inadequate data provided by the college's management information systems

- inconsistent development, implementation and monitoring of college-wide activities

- variability in the quality of tutorials

- some poor teaching, and poor retention and examination pass rates on some courses

- incomplete implementation and ineffective monitoring of the quality assurance system

- some poor accommodation and limited access for wheelchair users.

FIGURES

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

Figure 1

Gateshead College: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1995)

Legend:
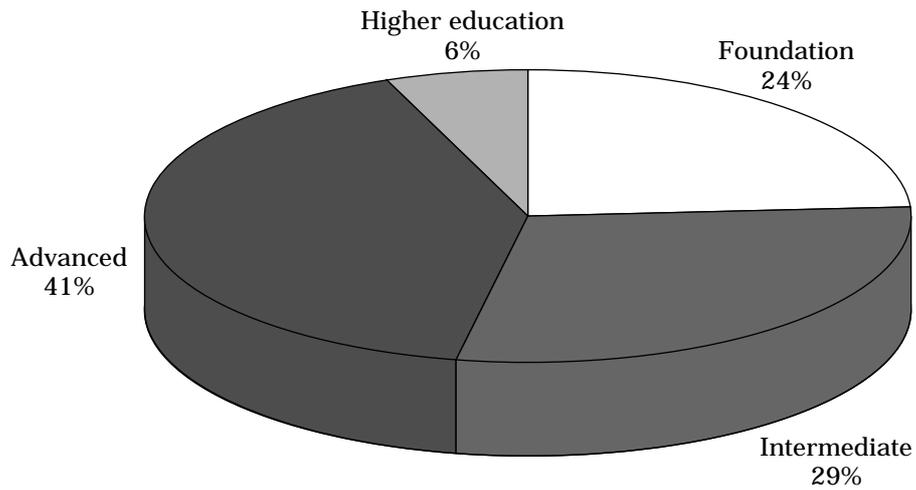- □ Under 16
- ■ 16-18 years
- ■ 19-24 years
- □ 25+ years
- ■ Not known

1% 1%
21%
22%
55%
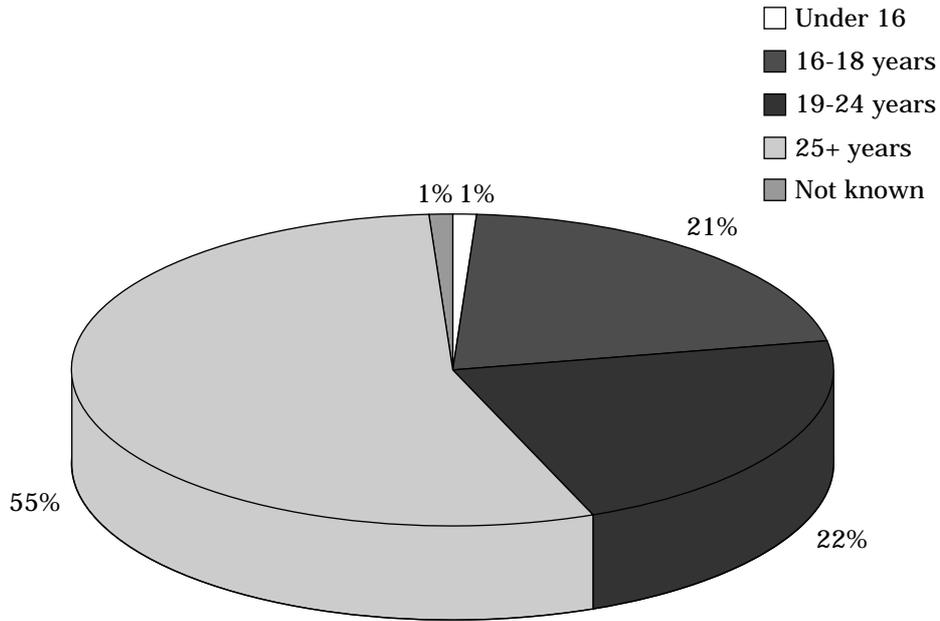
Enrolments: 11,118

Figure 2

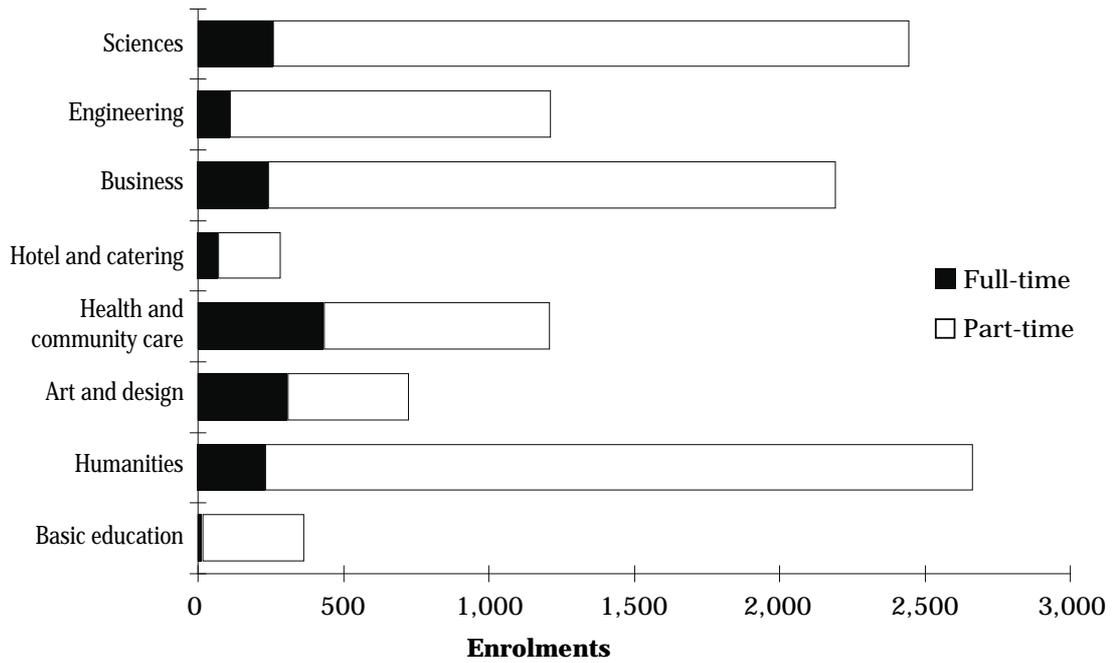**Gateshead College: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1995)**

Higher education
6%
Foundation
24%
Advanced
41%
Intermediate
29%

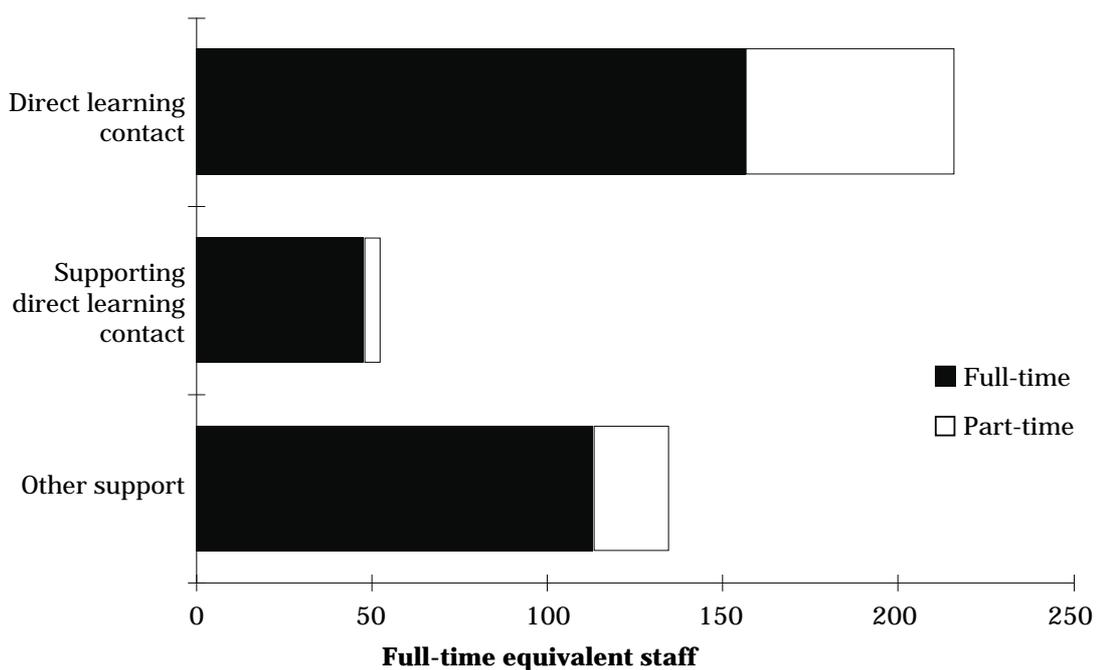Enrolments: 11,118

Figure 3

Gateshead College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)

Enrolments: 11,118

Figure 4

Gateshead College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1995)
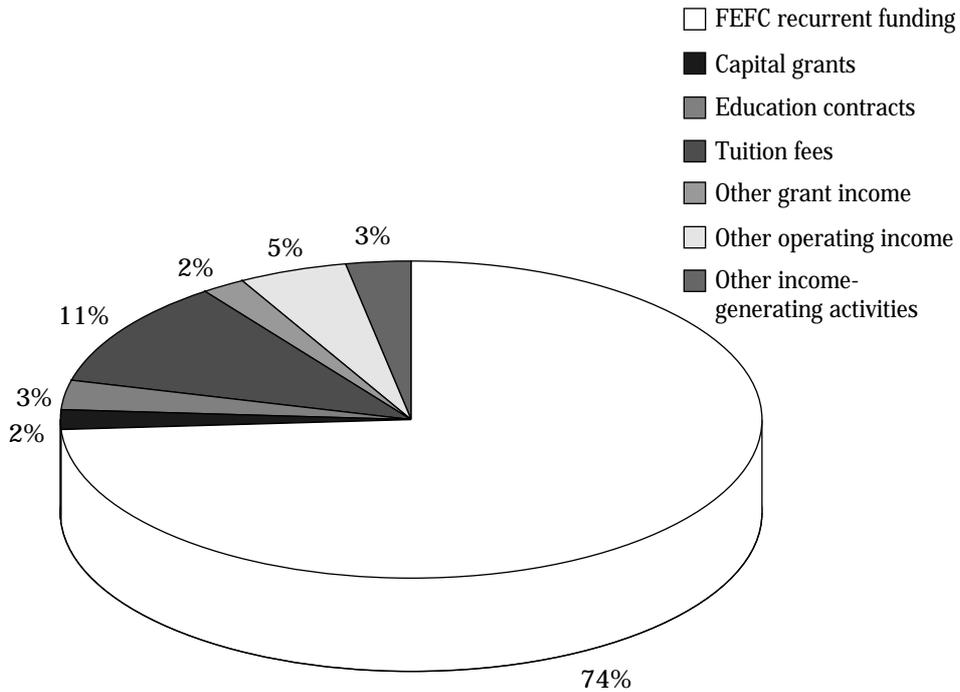

Full-time equivalent staff: 404

Figure 5

Gateshead College: estimated income (for the 12 months to July 1996)

☐ FEFC recurrent funding
■ Capital grants
▨ Education contracts
▨ Tuition fees
▨ Other grant income
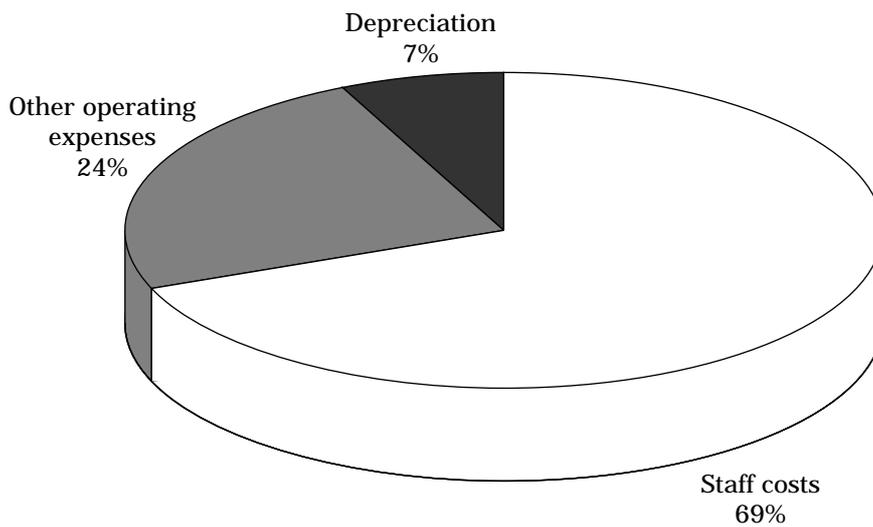☐ Other operating income
▨ Other income-generating activities

Estimated income: £10,866,000

Figure 6

Gateshead College: estimated expenditure (for the 12 months to July 1996)

Estimated expenditure: £11,365,000

Note: this chart excludes £4,000 interest payable.