

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Godalming College

July 1997

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge and experience in the work they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member who does not work in education and a member of staff from the college being inspected.

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

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Summary	
Introduction	1
The college and its aims	2
Responsiveness and range of provision	6
Governance and management	15
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	24
Teaching and the promotion of learning	32
Students' achievements	40
Quality assurance	53
Resources	61
Conclusions and issues	69
Figures	

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 102/97

GODALMING COLLEGE

SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected May 1996-April 1997

Summary

Godalming College offers a wide range of GCE AS/A level and GCSE subjects and some vocational courses mainly for students aged 16 to 19. The range of courses for adults has grown steadily over the last three years. The college has strong links with other educational institutions, employers and the local community. Arrangements for the recruitment, enrolment and induction of students are good. Students benefit from a consistently high level of support and pastoral care. They are self-disciplined, have good study habits and are highly motivated. They are particularly successful at GCE A level and many progress to higher education. Teaching is generally effective. Both teaching and support staff are well qualified. The college is well governed and managed. An open, consultative style of management promotes effective communications. The management information system provides reliable data. The college has a generally effective quality assurance system. There is adequate specialist equipment for most courses and access to information technology facilities for staff and students is good. The college campus is attractive and well maintained and there is some good specialist accommodation. To consolidate and further improve its provision, the college should address the following: the lack of foundation level programmes; the poor management in a few curriculum areas; inadequate teaching in some areas which fails to take account of students' differing abilities; the declining examination results and retention rates in some subjects; the lack of precision of some performance targets; the poor facilities for media studies and sport; and the overcrowding in a few curriculum areas.

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	1
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	1
Quality assurance	2
Resources: staffing	1
equipment/learning resources	2
accommodation	2

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	2	Art	1
Mathematics, computing and information technology	2	Performing arts and media	2
Business studies	2	English and history	2
Leisure and tourism and physical education	2	Modern languages	2
		Social sciences, geography and general studies	2

INTRODUCTION

1 Godalming College was inspected in three phases. Enrolment and induction were inspected in September 1996, curriculum areas in May 1996 and March 1997 and aspects of cross-college provision in April 1997. A team of 11 inspectors spent 62 days in the college. They inspected 155 classes and examined students' practical and written work. They met college staff, managers, governors, parents, students and representatives of the local community and Surrey Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). They examined a range of college documents, including records of meetings, policy statements, planning documents, and performance data.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Godalming College was established as a sixth form college in 1974, following a reorganisation of post-16 education in the borough of Waverley, Surrey. The college is situated on one spacious site, formerly the premises of Godalming Grammar School, in a pleasant residential area. It is the main provider of post-16 education for a largely rural area. In Surrey, 90 per cent of companies have fewer than 20 employees, with the larger firms mainly in the service industries. There is only 2 per cent unemployment in the area, compared with a national average of 6.6 per cent.

3 The college recruits from over 60 schools. Nearly half of its students come from four local partner schools for pupils aged 11 to 16, a further 19 per cent from maintained schools with sixth forms and 32 per cent from the independent sector. The majority of students travel considerable distances to the college. There are public bus services whose timetables are linked to the college day. However, a number of villages in the area are poorly served by public transport and an increasing number of students use private transport to travel to college.

4 At the time of the inspection, there were 1,726 students of whom 1,441 were full time and aged 16 to 19. The college has increased its total enrolments by 32 per cent since 1993. Student numbers by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3. There are 81 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 39 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. The college is organised in three curriculum areas: humanities and social science; science mathematics and technology; arts, English and modern languages.

5 The college's mission is to provide high-quality education, primarily for students aged 16 to 19, in a supportive environment. The college places great emphasis on trust, integrity, personal opportunity and community involvement and seeks to prepare all its students to take on the challenge of lifelong learning, and to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed in an increasingly technological and rapidly changing world.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

6 The college specialises in the provision of general education courses for students aged 16 to 19. Over 90 per cent of its students pursue general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), GCE advanced supplementary (AS), general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate and advanced courses. The intention is to develop the college into a learning centre for the local area and, since incorporation it has gradually introduced a wide range of courses for adult learners and local businesses. The college has no franchised provision.

7 The college offers 44 GCE A level subjects, many of which have alternative syllabuses, and 27 GCE AS subjects, seven of which are wholly or partly free-standing. There are 17 GCSE subjects available. GNVQs at advanced and intermediate levels are offered in business, health and social care, and leisure and tourism. All advanced full-time students are required to commence a two-year GCE A level general studies programme. However, they have the option of dropping the course after one year and 60 per cent choose to continue. There are no GNVQ foundation level courses. There is additional provision in basic numeracy and literacy for those students identified as needing help in these areas. The college's arrangements to support students with sight or hearing impairments ensure that they have access to the full range of courses.

8 There are additional opportunities for daytime students, aged 16 to 19, to enhance their learning. For example, over 250 students annually take the computer literacy and information technology course. French, German, Spanish and Italian are available as 'at work' courses. The training certificate in equine studies, the community sports leaders award and courses in Japanese are popular. A variety of additional studies courses, many accredited by the Surrey Open College Federation, are also available. There is a wide range of sporting activities.

9 Links with partner schools are good. There is a long-established consortium of four local 11 to 16 schools and the college. Senior staff from the consortium schools meet regularly and share their development plans. Liaison procedures are well established and the schools value the college's response to their pupils' curriculum needs. GCE A level information technology and childcare courses were introduced as a result of consultation with partner schools. The college has a highly effective marketing strategy that involves extensive research into pupil numbers and trends in local schools and movements in the local labour market. The college produces attractive promotional material. Information given in the prospectus and supporting brochures is comprehensive and clear and successfully conveys the college's ethos.

10 The college has a total of 285 part-time students. The college's adult and continuing education unit offers intensive one-year daytime GCE A level courses in 14 subjects. Currently, there are 89 students enrolled on

this programme. The majority are repeating one or more subjects. Nine students are mature adults who are taking subjects at this level for personal or career purposes. There are a small number of GCE A level and GCSE courses in the evenings as well as some vocational and recreational courses. For example, there are courses in counselling, English as a foreign language (EFL), appreciating antiques, bridge and jewellery making. A number of these courses are accredited by the Surrey Open College Federation. The college is careful to avoid duplication of courses run by the Waverley Adult Education Centre.

11 The college's well-developed links with the community and local employers provide students with opportunities to participate in community service and work experience. For example, students regularly take up placements in local schools, a hospital, a hospice and a Cheshire home. The college actively supports the Godalming and Guildford Education Business partnership. Local industrialists run annual science and technology based activities for small groups of students. Other employers provide work shadowing and work experience placements for GNVQ and GCE A level students.

12 Effective links with higher education and Surrey TEC have been established. The college was a founder member of the Surrey Compact which now links Surrey's further education and sixth form colleges with seven higher education institutions, including The University of Surrey. Over 20 students from the college make applications through the compact each year. The college offers modules from the first year of an environmental science degree which is accredited by The University of Surrey through St Mary's University College, Twickenham. Development funds from the Surrey TEC have been used in the last two years to improve networked information technology facilities, including installation of the Internet. The TEC values the college's willingness to extend its teaching programme into vocational and business areas.

13 In 1994, the college established a business development unit. One of its major aims is to provide education and training for students who are under represented in further education. The unit has made two successful bids to the European Social Fund to provide courses for unemployed people and those returning to work. Successful courses in childcare and administration have resulted. In partnership with the Surrey Library Service and using TEC development funding, the college has set up a learning centre in Godalming public library. The centre provides courses and workshops to improve information technology skills for members of the community and employees in local businesses. At the time of the inspection, the centre had 350 members. The business development unit collaborates with 28 employers in the 'Profit from Training' initiative which offers a range of national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Distance learning in GCE A level and GCSE is also available.

14 The college is committed to equality of opportunity and has a long-established and well-publicised policy. The equal opportunities

co-ordinator has monitored procedures at enrolment and induction as well as advising on equality issues in the production of college promotional literature. Recently the college audited equality of opportunity and produced an extensive report. As a result, a joint staff and student committee has been set up to promote a greater awareness of the issues. Both the principal and vice-principal are members of the committee, which is chaired by the equal opportunities co-ordinator. However, strategies to maintain awareness of equality of opportunities issues are at an early stage of development.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

15 The college is well governed. The board of governors has 19 members. There are 12 independent members, a representative of the local TEC, two elected staff members, two elected parents, one co-opted member and the principal. Four of the governors are women. For the last two years, a student has attended meetings as an observer and, in time, the board expects to convert this arrangement to formal student membership. Governors have a broad range of expertise and experience in business, the public service and education and training. The two vice-principals attend the main board and some committees as observers. Other members of staff attend various committees regularly or at the governors' request. Governors recognise their expertise and value their advice. The board has established a register of members' interests and adopted a code of conduct. The average attendance at all board meetings since June 1995 has been good at 84 per cent.

16 There is an appropriate range of corporation committees: finance; estates and assets; audit; curriculum; and personnel and remuneration. In addition, a search committee and employment appeals committee meet, as required. Governors sit on one or more of the subcommittees, all of which have clear terms of reference. There is a well-planned calendar of meetings. The clerk to the board is employed part time by the college and has considerable experience in clerking for governing bodies. Members receive useful papers and agendas in good time. Minutes are well produced and, recently, the clerk has given more emphasis to key points and actions by the use of colour and graphic layout in the minutes. Reporting procedures are effective, and main board meetings do not therefore repeat the discussions of the board's subcommittees.

17 Governors are knowledgeable about further education issues at local and national level and they are well informed about the work of the college. They are generous with their time, they understand their responsibilities and they have a clear view of their strategic role. They share the college's mission and values. Governors have had training for their work and they review their effectiveness informally at the end of each academic year. A combined meeting of governors and college managers takes place in the autumn term. This meeting is a forum for discussion of strategic issues and assists with planning for the new year. Individual governors are

allocated to curriculum and cross-college areas and they meet, for example, to discuss the curriculum directors' annual reports. The curriculum committee provides governors with an opportunity to focus on the academic work of the college in some depth. Appraisal arrangements for the principal are thorough. The principal of another college examines documents and interviews senior staff about their roles and their views on the principal's work. The principal is then interviewed by the chairman of the board and the visiting principal.

18 The principal and the two vice-principals form the college executive. They provide strong leadership. Weekly meetings of the executive take place and informal records of their discussion and actions are kept. The college board, which is the main decision-making forum, also meets most weeks. Its membership includes the executive, the four curriculum directors, the finance director, the college administrator, the admissions and examinations officer, the business development director, the careers and general studies director and the three senior tutors. This board considers all aspects of the college's work, including academic and quality assurance matters. The board has clear terms of reference and its meetings are minuted. One vice-principal oversees the curriculum and holds weekly meetings with the curriculum and business development directors. The other vice-principal is responsible for pastoral matters and has weekly meetings with the senior tutors and careers director. There are various other meetings of curriculum managers and tutors identified in the calendar, as well as a twice-termly meeting of the student and staff council and a termly meeting of all staff. This structure of meetings is well known to staff. Reporting and responsibility lines are clear and all staff have job descriptions. The principal holds a short weekly briefing session and a staff bulletin is issued each week. Communications to and from management are good, but communication within and between some departments is less effective.

19 Curriculum management is generally good. The core courses for 16 to 19 year old daytime students are managed by three curriculum directors. Adult and part-time courses are managed by another director. There are curriculum managers who are responsible for individual subjects or groups of subjects. Most permanent teachers are also pastoral tutors and are responsible to three senior tutors for pastoral matters. Staff understand this matrix of responsibilities and have no difficulty with reporting to curriculum managers for their teaching and to senior tutors for their pastoral function. A minority of subjects are less well managed and some are isolated from related subjects. In some areas, curriculum managers do not work to agreed procedures or use standard documentation. Others have not produced action plans to address weaknesses.

20 Strategic planning is integrated with the college's cycles of meetings and quality assurance procedures. Governors are involved in the strategic planning process and for each full board meeting the principal provides a

written report that is structured around the planned targets and objectives. Staff at all levels are involved in drawing up strategic objectives and targets. The progress towards meeting these targets is reviewed in a variety of committees, but especially at the college board. The outcomes of quality audits, corporation meetings and course reviews are incorporated into the planning process.

21 Procedures for delegating budgets are clear and are widely understood. For example, curriculum managers are given annual budgets based largely on student numbers, with some weighting for activities that require expensive materials. In addition, they may bid for funds for developmental work. The college has met or exceeded its growth targets each year since incorporation. The college's average level of funding in 1996-97 is £18.30 per unit. This figure includes a capital allocation of £114,533 which inflates the unit rate. In 1995-96 the college's average level of funding was £18.54 per unit. The median for all sixth form colleges in 1995-96 was £19.73 per unit. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

22 The college has two separate management information systems, one for finance and one for student and staff records. Senior managers, governors and budget holders receive financial reports which are well presented and easy to understand. The college database has been developed to meet the increasing requirements for staff and student information. The system is able to provide a broad range of integrated data and it is also used by a number of other colleges. Unit and course costings have been produced for several years. Staff have access to data from networked machines in staff rooms and offices. They can also ask for printed reports. The information provided is used effectively by managers and governors. There are plans to integrate the two systems when commercial software becomes available.

23 There are policies for equal opportunities, admissions, employment procedures, health and safety and an environmental statement. Policies are monitored and reviewed as necessary. In its response to the statutory obligations under sections 44 and 45 of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*, the college has, as one of its strategic objectives, the development of understanding of moral issues for all students. In general studies courses which are taken by all students, there is wide-ranging discussion of ethical, religious and moral issues set in the context of different beliefs, faiths and cultures. While the college has no denominational affiliation, there is a lively Christian union which is run by students. It organises Christian worship twice a week and this is advertised through the weekly student bulletin. A more formal act of worship, attended by staff and students and, sometimes, governors and parents, is arranged each term. The rector of the local Anglican parish contributes to the general studies programme and is available for counselling for staff and students.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

24 Parents, students and heads of the four local schools speak well of the advice, guidance and information the college gives to students to help them to decide which programme to follow. Students are interviewed at two of the consortium schools by arrangement and at college in other cases. Students who are already at the college help to inform applicants about life and study at the college. There are open days for prospective students and their parents to learn about the college's provision. Enrolment procedures are well managed. There are clear criteria for interviewers to use, and procedures for dealing with students who are not happy with a recommended course. Third-year GCE A level and other continuing students have a separate enrolment day, the procedures for which are equally good. There is a well-devised induction programme which includes activities to help students get to know one another. Clear outlines of courses and their requirements are provided in student handbooks, and there is the opportunity for existing students to help new ones settle in. In most cases, the programme is conducted smoothly and effectively. Induction for evening students is often included in the first few sessions of a course.

25 Tutorial support is well organised. There are helpful handbooks for tutors of full-time 16 to 18 year olds and of third-year students. Virtually all teachers are tutors. The senior tutors, each of whom is responsible for overseeing the pastoral support and general progress of students in a third of the tutor sets, meet regularly with their groups of tutors and give informal support as required. Training is provided for newly qualified teachers who are to be tutors. The learning support co-ordinator and the dyslexia support tutor contribute to staff development for tutors. Tutors meet their tutees briefly on four days each week and this regular contact promotes good communications and enables students' progress to be monitored thoroughly. On the fifth day there is also a weekly tutorial meeting of one hour for which there is a tutorial programme and weekly bulletins. Students are generally satisfied with the programme.

26 Tutors meet students individually once a term to review progress, to update records of achievements and to discuss career aspirations. There are regular contacts with subject teachers to ensure that these progress reviews are up to date. If there is a cause for concern, students meet a curriculum manager or a senior tutor to resolve matters. Students may change courses with the agreement of senior tutors. About 16 per cent of students change courses in the first half term. Attendance is monitored routinely and there are also 'spot checks' on students' attendance. Parents are contacted if a student is absent for three consecutive days.

27 Virtually all learning support is provided by subject teachers in subject workshops, or at timetabled weekly subject tutorials. Study skills workshops are occasionally included in the tutorial programme. Students' awareness of workshops is variable. Most students feel they receive

adequate support from their subject teachers and do not see the need for additional support. There is careful monitoring of students' academic progress. Students meet subject teachers for an individual progress review once a term and issues for concern are passed swiftly to tutors. After major college examinations, lessons are suspended for a day for individual tutorials and a student review meeting. If a student's performance has given cause for concern, the review culminates in a case conference where all the staff concerned try to remedy the problem. Otherwise, students and their teachers meet during the day to discuss areas of concern. Lessons are also suspended for individual tutorials on three other half-days in the year and students find this beneficial. Parents are kept informed. There are regular consultation evenings. Parents are made to feel welcome in the college and are involved in their sons' or daughters' progress. There is an active parents' association.

28 The college has a disability statement which has been approved by the governors. It offers comprehensive support for the small number of students with sensory or mobility impairment who are studying at the college. All students are systematically screened to identify any literacy and numeracy problems. There are comprehensive procedures within the college, and through outside private agencies, for identifying students with dyslexia. There are 121 students with dyslexia at the college and approximately a third of these receive learning support of high quality from a dyslexia support tutor. The other two-thirds decline help but they do receive additional time to complete examination papers. Support is also provided by the learning support co-ordinator and three part-time support tutors for students with literacy, numeracy or other identified learning needs, often by accompanying individual students in lessons. Good records are kept but there is scope for improving the analysis which is made of them. The learning support room is very small and unsuited to its purpose.

29 There is a student council which has five representatives from each of the three main sets of tutor groups. Members hold office for a year. Among other things, the council organises social events and raises funds for charity. Members of the teaching staff and the 15 student council members meet regularly as the college staff student council. Each tutor set has a student representative to bring issues to the attention of the council.

30 The college careers service is well organised and the careers department devises a comprehensive programme to help students decide their futures. Careers staff liaise with tutors over students' careers action plans, which are reviewed each term. The careers advice available for students wishing to enter employment rather than higher education has been improved this year. The college has a contract with the Surrey Careers Service, two of whose staff visit the college on two days each week to help students. The college participates in The University of Surrey

student tutoring scheme. There is an evening meeting for parents of first-year students to inform them of the requirements for higher education.

31 The college has a range of ways of providing personal support for students. Six staff have received training in counselling, there is a chaplain who visits the college once a week for personal consultation, and the college has arrangements with three external counselling services. These latter services can be contacted either through senior tutors or by students direct. There are several sources of financial support available for students, including the college fund, the governors' transport fund, for students on income support or in evident need, a small bursary to fund one or two students each year for overseas visits, and the student council fund to help with the cost of students' projects.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

32 Of the 155 sessions inspected, 71 per cent had strengths which outweighed weaknesses. This is 8 per cent above the average for all lessons observed during the 1995-96 inspection programme, according to the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. However, the number of lessons graded 1 is below the average recorded in the same report. Less than 2 per cent of classes had weaknesses which outweighed their strengths. The average attendance in the classes inspected was 82 per cent, with the highest attendance in English and history at 89 per cent; it was lower in leisure and tourism, psychology and sociology at 76 per cent and poor in GCE A level general studies at 70 per cent. The average number of students in each session was 11. Punctuality was good. The following table summarises the grades given the teaching sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level	22	66	24	1	1	114
GCSE	2	4	6	1	0	13
GNVQ	3	5	8	0	0	16
Other	1	7	4	0	0	12
Total	28	82	42	2	1	155

33 Teachers are confident and display sound knowledge and expertise in their subjects. There are good working relationships between teachers and students in all areas. In performing arts, students spoke highly of the willingness of their teachers to demonstrate work before expecting them to perform it. In all subjects, schemes of work ensure a comprehensive and well-ordered coverage of syllabuses. In business studies and science, schemes of work are prepared collaboratively by teachers who share a subject group. The best schemes clearly identify the methods teachers should use to develop students' knowledge and skills to meet the

requirements of the course. They state clearly the learning objectives and the procedures for monitoring students' progress. In social sciences, students receive study support booklets, self-assessment packs and coursework diaries to encourage them to develop independent learning skills. In sciences, and some social studies subjects, teachers have divided the work for GCE A level courses into manageable units and developed learning materials to help students. A common weakness in schemes of work is the lack of clear statements about how key skills will be developed. In a few areas, students are expected to wordprocess at least some of their assignments, but except where information technology is a component of the course, this skill is not explicitly identified as one to be developed.

34 Teachers prepare their lessons carefully. In the best lesson plans, for example in art, there is a clear statement of aims and objectives, a coherent sequencing of material and appropriate activities to sustain students' interest and to reinforce their learning. In mathematics and computing, plans include tasks which take account of the different abilities of students, and teachers produce materials of good quality to support their learning. However, in business studies teachers failed to use methods or provide materials which were appropriate for the wide range of students' abilities in some classes.

35 In most lessons, teachers effectively use a variety of teaching methods. In the better lessons, teachers were particularly imaginative in presenting the work and had high expectations of students. They expected students to prepare work before lessons, and to contribute regularly during them. They demanded high standards of practical and written work. In GCE A level art, appropriate emphasis is given to the development of students' drawing skills and there are regular lessons on observational drawing and life-drawing techniques. In a GCE A level theatre studies lesson on Stanislavski's theory and technique, students in groups of four or five were asked to use their own experience to imagine a family of characters. They adopted a static pose as if the 'family' was being photographed. They then improvised short exchanges with one or more members of their 'family'. This helped students to understand clearly the main elements of Stanislavski's views on effective acting techniques. In a history lesson concerned with Liberal party policy prior to the 1906 general election, students simulated arguments between the various factions of the party of that time. Debate was lively and, at times, exciting. The teacher brought the lesson to an effective conclusion by skilfully drawing together different points of view and relating them to the party manifesto which was published before that election.

36 There were examples of weaker lessons, for example in some leisure and tourism sessions, where students were merely required to copy notes projected onto a screen. In mathematics, teachers provided few opportunities for students to take the initiative, lead discussion or demonstrate the skills they had learned. Too often teachers worked through mathematical solutions on the whiteboard, while students

passively took notes. In some modern language lessons, although the GCE A level syllabuses are designed to promote teaching in the language being learned, English was used quite frequently, even for simple instructions. Second-year students in some lessons could not use the foreign language spontaneously. In those classes where there was an expectation that the foreign language should be the normal means of communication, students were noticeably more fluent and confident. A common weakness in lessons across several curriculum areas was the management of question and answer activities which often failed to involve all the students and allowed the more vociferous to dominate discussion.

37 There is no separate teaching group for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Six students with sensory or mobility impairment receive additional support while being fully integrated with mainstream college programmes. For example, facilitators make large-scale notes for students who are visually impaired and lecturers help lip-reading by facing hearing impaired students and by, occasionally, repeating the comments of other students. Students receiving additional help have individual support plans and their teachers are aware of the needs of each one. The careful planning of individual support programmes ensures that the teaching such students receive is of a good standard. The learning support co-ordinator and dyslexia support tutor provide training and guidance for teachers whose classes include students in need of special support.

38 Assessment policies and procedures are well established and are shared with students. In most curriculum areas, students are required to complete substantial amounts of homework and take regular tests. The standard of marking is good and records are well maintained. In sciences, teachers collaborate to ensure consistency of marking for internal examinations and, in biology, all teachers of the same course mark the same sample of work independently and compare their assessments. In mathematics and computing, procedures for setting and marking work and tracking students' progress are part of daily teaching practice. In business studies, marking is generally consistent and there are many instances of helpful comments on marked students' work. However, grammar and spelling mistakes were often left uncorrected. In social sciences, there are high expectations of students' written work. Assignments identify clearly the skills required for success in the final examination and teachers make marginal annotations and provide a summary to help students improve their work. In performing arts and art, oral feedback to students is given in a supportive way.

39 Students benefit from a range of activities which enhance their learning. For example, valuable extra-curricular activities provided in art include study visits to Amsterdam and art galleries. In business studies, work experience is well organised as part of the intermediate and advanced GNVQ programmes. Foreign language students have a work-related element in their courses. They also have the chance of work experience in France and Germany, and about 30 students are involved in this each

year. Spanish teachers have a regular exchange arrangement with a Barcelona college. Students confirm that both exchanges and work experiences are well organised and help them to develop their linguistic abilities. All work experience is evaluated by both students and employers. For the last six years, science students have participated in research projects with industry and higher education which are accredited through the creativity in science and technology awards scheme. This work has created an air of excitement in the sciences and students speak enthusiastically about it.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

40 Most students are highly motivated and many have clear personal goals. In the main, they are well disciplined and have good study habits which are further developed in their chosen programmes. Students are particularly articulate and confident in class. In English, psychology, sociology, and history, they participate readily in discussion and are able to express their views clearly and confidently in debate or group work. Much of students' written work is of a good standard. The spelling, punctuation and grammar of GCE A level students are generally good. Most of them take notes without prompting and many produce well-organised files which serve them well for revision. Students' grasp of their subjects is good, and often beyond what might be expected for the stage of their course. In economics and religious studies, they have a good command of their texts, including difficult concepts. Students involved in practical work carry out their tasks competently and safely.

41 The following table shows the number of students aged 16 to 18 entered for GCE A level examinations each year between 1994 and 1996, together with pass rates at grades A to E and A to C, measured against the national averages for sixth form colleges.

GCE A level pass rates compared with national averages, 1994-96

	1994	1995	1996
Number of students entered	512	557	659
Number of subjects in which students were entered	33	33	35
Average pass rate A to E (%)	89	90	89
National averages at grades A to E for sixth form colleges (%)	83	84	86
Average pass rate A to C (%)	57	58	55
National averages at grades A to C for sixth form colleges (%)	48	49	51
Number of subjects at or above national average	27	28	28
Number of subjects below national average	6	5	7

42 Students aged 16 to 18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1996, scored on average 5.2 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2). While this figure indicates a decline since 1994 when the points score was 5.4 and in 1995, 5.5, the college has remained in the top 10 per cent of sixth form colleges on this performance measure, according to data published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). As the above table reveals, pass rates have been at or above the national averages in 82 per cent of subjects over that period while entries have increased by 29 per cent.

43 Although the retention rate for GCE A level programmes is satisfactory at 84 per cent, retention in individual subjects is variable. A few subjects, such as government and politics, achieve high pass rates combined with high retention rates; in others, satisfactory or good results are compromised by poor retention rates. In a few subjects, both pass and retention rates are poor. The following table illustrates the performance of a sample of subject areas in 1996 by comparing pass rates with enrolments at the start of the course.

Comparison of GCE A level pass rates with numbers enrolled, 1994-96

GCE A level subject (number of students entered)	1996 A to E pass rate	Pass rate expressed as a percentage of all students enrolled on the course in November 1994
Art (89)	100	82
Physics (53)	96	74
Economics (64)	95	75
English literature (188)	93	77
Media studies (91)	92	73
Computing (23)	91	57
Religious studies (13)	85	52
French (74)	85	53
Secondary mathematics project (31)	84	51
Business studies (77)	83	64
General studies* (168)	79	57
Design technology (19)	74	44
Sociology (54)	63	46

** general studies is compulsory for all first-year GCE A level, but optional for second-year students.*

44 The number of entries for GCE AS subjects has almost doubled since 1994, but the numbers of students in most subjects remain small. The pass rate at grades A to E has declined from 80 per cent in 1994, to 73 per cent in 1996, but it remains at or above the national average for sixth form colleges. Passes at grades A to C have been above the national average for the last two years. Where subject entries were 10 or more in 1996, pass rates at grades A to E and A to C were above national averages in business studies, English, French and psychology. The following table shows the number of entries by students aged 16 to 18 for GCE AS subjects from 1994 to 1996, together with pass rates at grades A to E and A to C, measured against national averages for sixth form colleges.

GCE AS subject pass rates compared with national averages, 1994-96

	1994	1995	1996
Number of entries	82	92	159
Number of subjects in which students were entered	14	16	20
Average pass rate A to E (%)	80	72	73
National averages at grades A to E for sixth form colleges (%)	73	73	70
Average pass rate A to C (%)	37	46	36
National averages at grades A to C for sixth form colleges (%)	37	37	33

45 Since 1993, the college has subscribed to an independent, external service which provides an analysis of the value added to students' achievements by comparing their actual performance at GCE A level with their predicted performance based on GCSE achievements. Over a three year period, the value added is significantly above expectations in art, biology, psychology and general studies and significantly below expectations in media studies, French and graphical communications. In all other subjects, it is in line with expectations.

46 Since 1994, the number of students aged 16 to 18 entered for the GCSE has declined by 20 per cent and the number of entries by 32 per cent. This is largely a consequence of the introduction of vocational programmes which the college considers more appropriate for many of the students who were previously enrolled on GCSE repeat courses. Pass rates at grade C or above have been consistently above the national averages for sixth form colleges. However, in 1996, the largest numbers of entries were in mathematics and English language in which pass rates at grade C or above of 40 and 44 per cent, respectively, were achieved. Both of these results are below the national average for sixth form colleges. In 1996, pass rates above national averages were achieved in communication studies, craft, design and technology (design and realisation), history, science and sociology. Retention rates are generally

good. Data on students' achievements on GCSE courses are summarised in the following table.

GCSE pass rates compared with national averages, 1994-96

	1994	1995	1996
Number of students aged 16 to 18	290	233	233
Number of subjects	22	18	14
Number of entries	557	403	385
Average pass rate grades A* to C	56	59	55
National average pass rate grades A* to C for sixth form colleges	49	48	51

47 The college introduced the GNVQ intermediate in business in 1994 and in leisure and tourism in 1995. The number of students has remained fairly constant at around 30. Fifty-one per cent of students on intermediate vocational courses included in the DfEE's 1996 performance tables were successful. This places the college in the bottom third of sector colleges on this performance measure. Eighty-seven per cent of students who completed these courses progressed to additional further education.

48 In 1993, the college introduced the advanced GNVQ in science, business and leisure and tourism. Health and social care was added in 1994. With the exception of a poor first set of results in science, pass rates in all subjects in both 1995 and 1996 have been good, with outstanding results in 1996 for business (100 per cent with 35 entries) and for health and social care (94 per cent with 16 entries). The DfEE's 1996 performance tables show that 89 per cent of the 74 students, aged 16 to 18, in their final year of study on advanced vocational courses were successful. This places the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

49 The college offers a modest range of single subject courses. In 1996, there were very good results in the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) cookery certificate, the certificate in childcare and education, the diploma in nursery nursing, and text processing at levels 1 to 3. The 30 students taking the NVQ in childcare and education at levels 2 and 3 achieved a pass rate of 100 per cent. In 1996, 52 per cent of the 255 students entered for the RSA Examinations Board (RSA) computer literacy and information technology examination achieved the full award and another 37 per cent a partial award.

50 The college has recruited students aged 19 and over for the last four years and currently enrolments exceed 200. About half of these students repeat GCE A levels or attempt a new GCE A level or one or two GCSEs in a year. Typically, entries per subject have been less than 10. In 1996, pass rates at GCE A level were above the national average in all but two of the 21 subjects for which students were entered. The retention rate was good at over 85 per cent. Pass rates in business studies, biology,

mathematics and law were over 85 per cent. In GCSE, the largest number of entries was for mathematics, and four out of seven students achieved passes at grade C or above. In 1996, about 100 students undertook a variety of vocational courses, 40 of whom achieved full NVQ awards at level 2.

51 The college records the destinations of its leavers. Data on destinations of students aged 16 to 18 completing two-year GCE A level or advanced GNVQ programmes for the last two years are set out in the following table.

Destinations of students aged 16 to 18 in 1995 and 1996

	1995	1996
Total number of students completing level 3 courses	499	595
Progression to higher education (%)	58	63
Progression to other further education courses (%)	14	13
In employment or training (%)	10	8
Other (%)	10	5
Unknown (%)	8	11

52 The college encourages its students to develop their talents in activities other than their academic or vocational studies. Students are active in local events, charitable work for Mencap, the probation service, local schools, hospitals, street theatre in Godalming and road safety week. Students' rag weeks raise over £5,000 annually for charity. Recently, students donated three wheelchairs to a local charity for people with disabilities. In sport, both the men's and women's swimming teams have reached the finals for six years running in the national schools competition. The college equestrian team took first place in the National Schools Dressage and Team Showjumping at Hickstead. Several students have gained regional, county or international recognition in sports and athletics. The college is the most successful in the country for the creativity in science and technology awards. Since 1991, students have achieved five platinum and 20 gold awards for muscle robotics and fullerene (newly-discovered carbon structures) projects. The achievements of chemistry students have gained the Salters award and the Royal Society award for that department. Eight students have been on an expedition to the Himalayas. A visually impaired student gained the highest award from the St John Ambulance Brigade. In the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, nine students have achieved the gold standard and another 200 are working towards silver and bronze awards.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

53 The college has well-established procedures for assessing and improving the quality of its provision. The quality assurance system is

integral to the strategic planning process. There are regular reviews covering all curriculum areas, staff development and support services. A parallel quality audit system, which is managed by the quality assurance co-ordinator, investigates specific cross-college issues in depth. The college board oversees all aspects of quality assurance across the college and it has determined quality standards for the curriculum, student support, technical support and college administration. In addition, the principal holds annual meetings with senior managers to review the areas for which they are responsible. The college draws on independent evaluation of its provision in reviews arranged through a consortium of Surrey and Hampshire sixth form colleges.

54 Annual curriculum reviews are produced by curriculum directors. These are a summary of course or subject reviews produced at departmental level and they incorporate performance indicators and the results of evaluations made by students. The curriculum reviews are structured according to the headings in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. They provide comprehensive information on results, assess the extent to which objectives have been met, and identifying targets for the forthcoming year. The process has been effective in some instances. For example, it has led to a change of syllabus in sciences at GCSE level, and subsequently a marked improvement in examination results; progress has been made to develop standardisation of marking. However, a large number of targets are set by this process and some are neither precisely defined nor easy to monitor. Curriculum initiatives are reviewed against college strategic objectives and performance indicators are reviewed annually.

55 College-wide performance indicators are identified and data are collected through the college management information system. The indicators for each course are based on college and national information. A detailed document has been produced to help staff to understand how data are collected and when and where performance indicators can be used effectively. Performance against national standards is monitored by senior managers.

56 A quality audit review team was established in 1994 to monitor cross-college issues. The composition of the team varies according to the issue. To date, audits have been carried out on enrolment and induction, central college records, aspects of the college charter and equal opportunities. The findings are succinctly documented and supported by extensive evidence. Recommendations are made and their implementation monitored by the quality assurance co-ordinator, the college board and the appropriate governors' committee. The audits become part of the college's annual monitoring cycle.

57 Students contribute to course assessment by participating in surveys which are conducted three times during a two-year course. Sometimes students' views are elicited through small group discussion instead of

through questionnaires. Only a third of students at any one time are surveyed, but all students are surveyed at some point during a two-year course. Some students say that they have not received feedback on surveys to which they have contributed. However, few students make recommendations for change in their response to questionnaires but claim that, instead, they contact teachers if they have strong views on how a course could be improved. The surveys have a common core of questions across all subject areas to allow college-wide aggregations to be made and comparisons to be drawn between departments. Students' perceptions of cross-college issues are also sought and they contribute to the annual update of the college charter. Senior staff monitor the implementation of all approved recommendations.

58 Staff appraisal is conducted through a personal review and development system which was introduced for teachers in 1994. The system is valued by staff for the opportunity it provides for reflection, forward planning and development. A formal programme of lesson observations is carried out by managers as well as observation by peers. Personal review and development for support staff was introduced during the current academic year. Consultation with support staff resulted in the production of appropriate appraisal documentation. All staff have now been appraised and speak highly of the process and its influence upon their performance. The college is aiming to achieve the Investor in People award in the autumn of 1997.

59 Staff development is closely linked to staff appraisal. The staff-development manager consults with curriculum managers to identify priorities which align with the college strategic plan. The staff-development budget is 1 per cent of staffing expenditure. A proportion of the staff-development budget is devolved to curriculum directors and the college administrator to support subject-based and support staff training. Staff development is well planned and evaluation of training activities is required. Teachers and support staff have attended a wide range of courses. The college co-operates with other Surrey colleges for some aspects of staff training such as the training of newly qualified teachers and middle managers.

60 The college charter is reviewed and updated annually. There are some omissions from the charter, for example, equal opportunities, but most areas clearly define the type of service that can be expected. A copy of the charter is distributed to students during the induction programme. Few students remember the document and some confuse it with the student contract. The college's self-assessment report follows the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The tabular format of the report aligns with curriculum managers' reviews. This format encourages brevity but the report is generally descriptive and lacks detail. The original report and recent update substantially accord with the views of the inspectors but some significant areas are omitted. The report identifies the need for further action but it does not include measurable targets.

RESOURCES

Staffing

61 The college employs 69 full-time and 29 (12 full-time equivalent) part-time teachers. They are well qualified. Ninety-two per cent of all teachers are graduates and 18 per cent have higher degrees. Ninety-three per cent of full-time teachers have teaching qualifications. All teaching staff are employed on permanent contracts. Twenty teachers hold training and development lead body assessor awards and four hold internal verifier awards. Further training and development lead body training is needed for mathematics and modern languages teachers as their contribution to GNVQ programmes increases. Some staff lack recent industrial or commercial experience although over 20 staff have participated in brief work-shadowing placements. Staff are hard working and mutually supportive. They are efficiently deployed and their duties are well matched to their qualifications and experience.

62 There are 39 full-time equivalent support staff. Many are employed during term-time only. They are well qualified; most have degrees or vocational qualifications appropriate to their supporting role. Technician support is available in all curriculum areas. Information technology facilities throughout the college are effectively maintained by two full-time systems managers and four technicians. There are three part-time foreign language assistants. Personnel policies and procedures are well established. While there is no qualified personnel officer, the college has a contract with Surrey County Council for personnel advice and guidance. Staffing profiles are monitored regularly. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately equal numbers of men and women. Female staff are proportionately represented at all levels through to senior management, where four of the senior management team are women.

Equipment/learning resources

63 The quality of general classroom equipment is good and there is sufficient to meet teaching requirements. The recent establishment of the educational resources centre ensures that all teaching areas have access to a range of audio-visual equipment and a video collection of over 700 titles. College staff are well served by the reprographics department. There are guides to services and resources for both staff and students. The college has established a computerised database of all educational resources to which staff have access. There is an assets register.

64 Learning materials and specialised equipment are generally adequate. All students are supplied with relevant texts. The college has a well-equipped performing arts and music suite and there is a 20-place language laboratory. However, the media studies area is poorly equipped in that its editing and computing facilities are barely adequate to cope with the increasing numbers of students. There is insufficient sports

equipment. The resources centre holds over 13,000 books. Books held in curriculum areas are being gradually entered on to the central catalogue to encourage wider use. There are good collections in history, English, business and sciences, but those in mathematics, design technology, psychology, sociology and leisure and tourism are less adequate. There is a comprehensive range of periodicals and a wide range of compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases. Use of the resources centre is monitored.

65 The college has invested substantially in computers and software for both curriculum and college administration. There are 192 computers, of which 181 are networked for students' use. The ratio of students to computers is 8:1. Most computers are of modern specification. There is access to the Internet and the college has installed an intranet server providing access to the college web site. There are several open access areas, including the resources centre, where students can use computers. A monitor in the reception area enables staff and students to gain information about the availability of computers and software.

Accommodation

66 The college is situated on a pleasant campus of 6.5 hectares, within 10 minutes' walking distance of Godalming railway station. Recent developments include improved access to the college site and extensive car parking for staff and students. The college has six permanent and 14 temporary buildings of various kinds. They provide adequate accommodation for most purposes. Designed in 1933 as a county grammar school, the main block is a three-storey building with an attractive facade. This building provides 40 per cent of the college accommodation and is used for teaching, management and administrative purposes. The college information centre is a two-storey building built in the 1960s. The Gill building, which was completed in 1983, is a three-storey block and is used mainly for the teaching of English, humanities and languages. The arts centre which was purpose-built in 1991, provides good accommodation, although soundproofing is inadequate. Three recently installed system-built classrooms provide good teaching accommodation. However, other wooden classrooms are ageing and are uncomfortably hot or cold, according to the season. Two single-storey buildings which were completed in the 1960s provide good accommodation for craft design technology and the college refectory. The college grounds are extensive and attractively landscaped. There are good playing fields. Future development plans include the construction of a sports hall.

67 Accommodation is used efficiently. The college monitors regularly the use of teaching areas and, where overcrowding occurs, it is alleviated by a reallocation of rooms. However, classes of 20 or more students are not unusual and they are often taught in crowded conditions. The large number of students in biology has increased the pressure on laboratory space. Staff have pleasant work and preparation areas but there is little

social space for students. There are adequate storage facilities. Generally, the college buildings are pleasant, bright, clean and well maintained. The widespread display of students' work and learning materials creates subject identity and enhances the college environment.

68 The college uses the services of a firm of property consultants. There is a 10-year planned maintenance programme. The use of outside contractors to provide catering, cleaning, grounds maintenance and security services has resulted in improved services in these areas. The college has recently installed lifts in two of its buildings to facilitate access for wheelchair users. However, access to some older hatted accommodation remains difficult. There is a well-established health and safety policy; staff and students are kept informed and procedures are rigorously implemented.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

69 The main strengths of the college are:

- the wide range of general education courses
- its links with schools, higher education, the local community and employers
- good governance
- effective management and communications
- good management information systems
- good guidance and support for students
- sound teaching in most areas
- good students' achievements at GCE A level and outstanding results in art
- well-qualified and committed staff
- a well-established appraisal system for teaching and support staff
- its information technology facilities.

70 To improve further the quality of its service, the college should address the following issues:

- the lack of foundation level programmes
- poor management in a few curriculum areas
- inadequate teaching in some areas which fails to take account of students' differing abilities
- declining results and retention rates in some subjects
- the lack of precision of some performance targets
- poor facilities for media studies and indoor sport
- overcrowding in some curriculum areas.

FIGURES

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

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

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

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

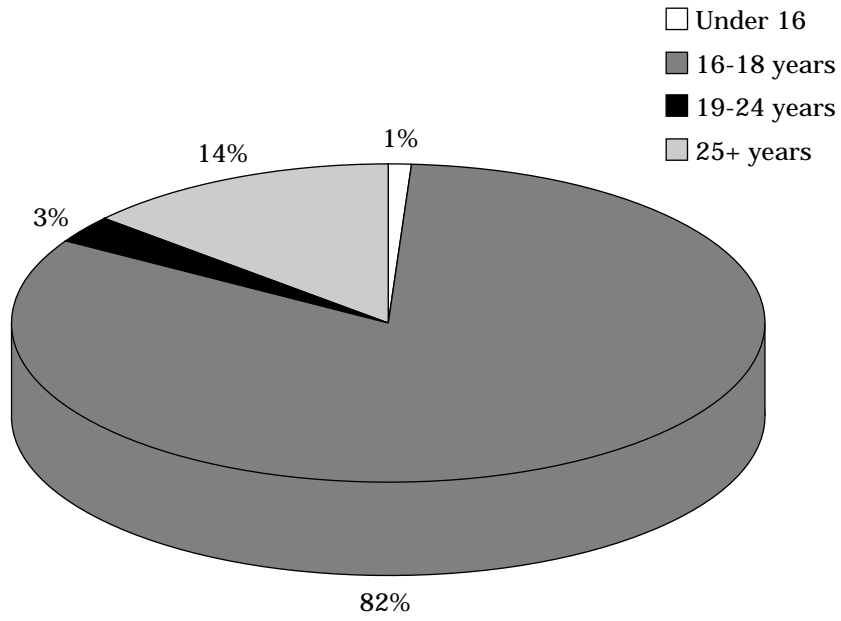
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1996)

 - 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

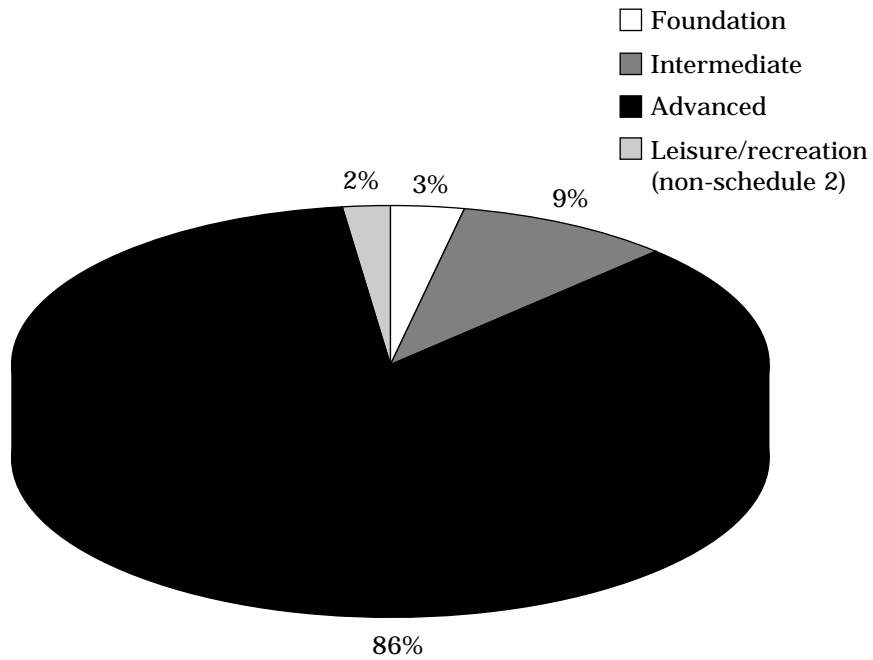
Godalming College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1996)



Student numbers: 1,726

Figure 2

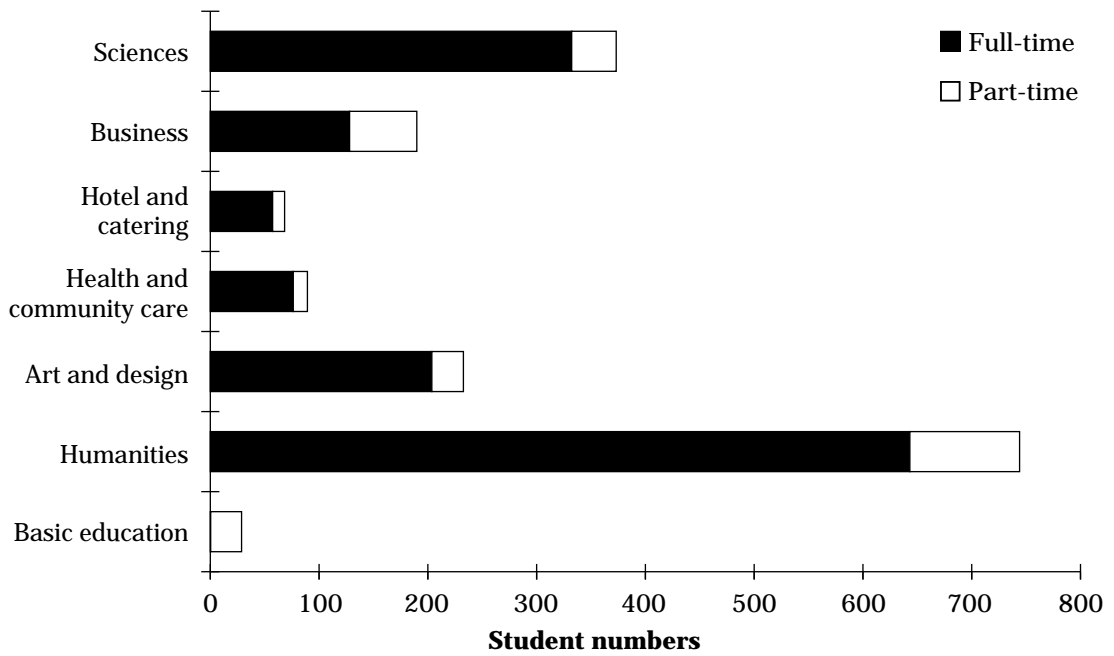
Godalming College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1996)



Student numbers: 1,726

Figure 3

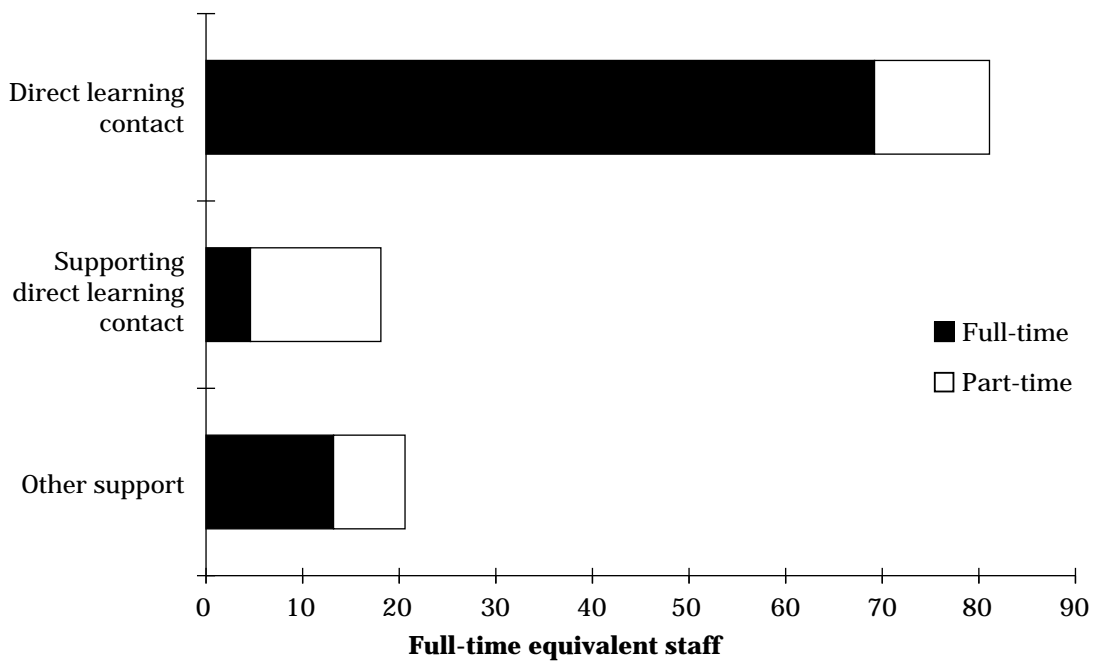
Godalming College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1996)



Student numbers: 1,726

Figure 4

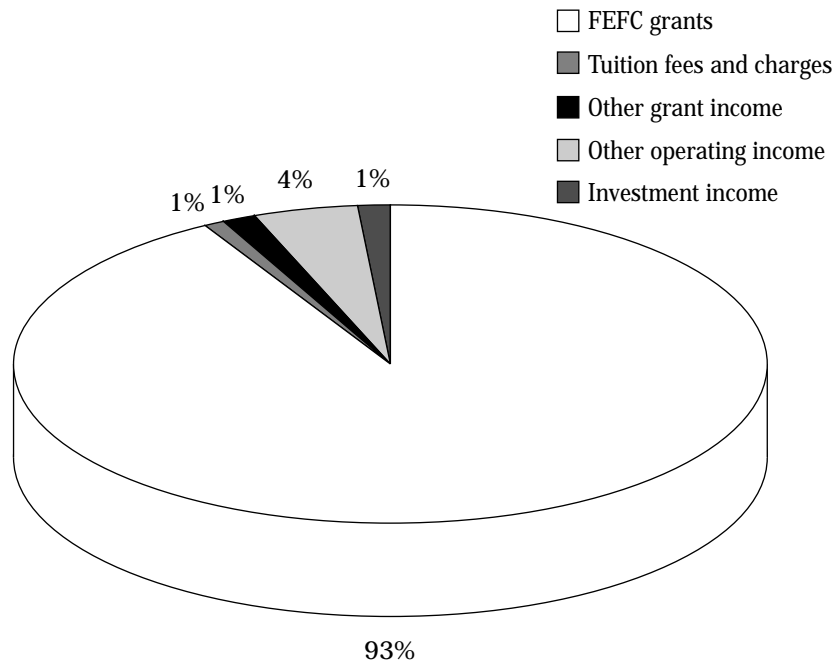
Godalming College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)



Full-time equivalent staff: 120

Figure 5

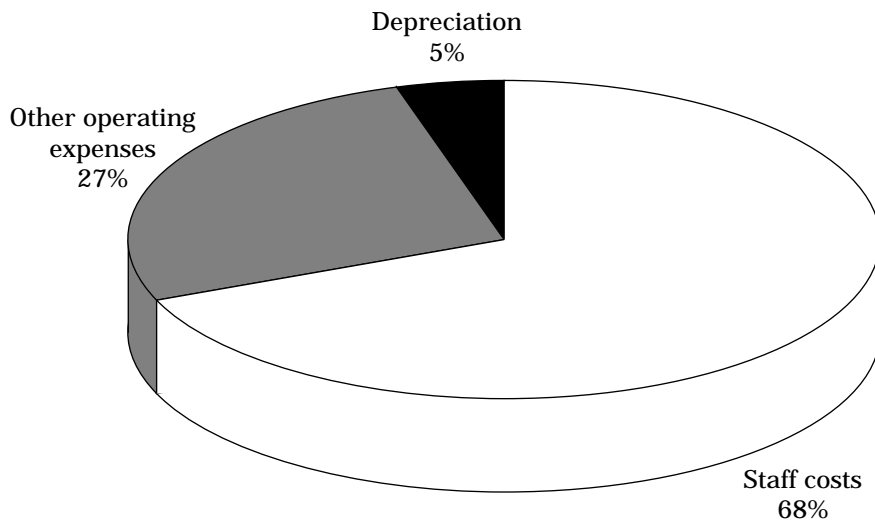
Godalming College: income (for 12 months to July 1996)



Income: £4,682,000

Figure 6

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



Expenditure: £4,676,000

Published by the
Further Education Funding Council
July 1997