

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **High Pavement Sixth Form College**

**June 1995**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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## **THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

### **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.*

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

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 74/95

## HIGH PAVEMENT SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

### EAST MIDLANDS REGION

Inspected August 1994 - March 1995

#### Summary

High Pavement Sixth Form College, Nottingham, is governed by a committed and knowledgeable corporation board. Marketing to school leavers and their parents is effective. Students can extend their experience by participating in a wide range of cultural, sporting, social and college activities. They are generally well taught in a caring and supportive environment. Teaching staff are well qualified. Examination results range from excellent in some GCE A level subjects to poor in some GCSE courses. The college should: review the effectiveness of existing management structures; implement as rapidly as possible its newly-introduced quality assurance framework; strengthen its links with industry; improve the general understanding of the college's mission among staff; and improve the quality of much of its accommodation.

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

<b>Aspects of cross-college provision</b>		<b>Grade</b>
Responsiveness and range of provision		3
Governance and management		3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support		2
Quality assurance		3
Resources:	staffing	2
	equipment/learning resources	3
	accommodation	4

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Sciences	2	Art and design including performing arts	2
Mathematics and computing	2		
Engineering technology	2	Modern languages	2
		Other humanities	2
Business studies	2	Basic education	2
Tourism, leisure and sport	2		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 High Pavement Sixth Form College, Nottingham, was inspected between September 1994 and March 1995. A team of inspectors spent a week in the college from 27 February to 3 March. Seventeen registered inspectors visited the college for 52 inspector days between 1 September 1994 and 3 March 1995. Inspectors observed 138 teaching sessions and examined samples of students' work. Discussions were held with governors, staff and students. Inspectors also met representatives from industry, the local community and the Greater Nottingham Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 High Pavement Sixth Form College was established in 1973. It stands on the site of High Pavement School in the Bestwood estate to the north of Nottingham City Centre. The college also uses some teaching rooms in a nearby secondary school. The Greater Nottingham TEC area has a population of about 607,500; more than 60 per cent of the population of the county. In September 1994, the unemployment rate in the TEC area was 12.4 per cent compared with 16.9 per cent for Nottingham City and 10.6 per cent for the whole of the United Kingdom. Nearly 6 per cent of the population in the Greater Nottingham TEC area are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 16 per cent of the college's students.

3 There is a great deal of competition between providers of post-compulsory education in Nottingham. Within a five-mile radius of High Pavement College, there are five other general further education colleges, a tertiary college, another sixth form college, and 12 schools with sixth forms. The college was originally formed to serve seven local 11-16 schools, but more than half of its current students come from other schools within a wide geographical area. The original buildings accommodated 800 school pupils in the 1950s. In November 1994, 1,057 students were enrolled at the college. Ninety-nine per cent of these were school leavers in the 16-18 age range. There were no students over the age of 25 and no students studying part time. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2.

4 Eighty-two per cent of students are following advanced level courses. Most of these are aiming for General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) qualifications. The college has just begun to provide General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses are also provided for those who need to improve their attainment at this level. Students can take part in a range of sporting and cultural activities outside their examination programmes. Enrolments by curriculum area are shown in figure 3. The college has 96 full-time equivalent staff. Seventy of the teaching staff are on full-time teaching contracts. A staff profile is shown in figure 4.

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5 The college's stated mission is to 'serve the community by enabling students of all levels of ability to continue their education beyond the age of 16'.

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

6 The college provides 29 GCE A level subjects and a few GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects. Twenty-one subjects are offered at GCSE level. For over 20 years the college has also had a vocational programme. The diploma of vocational education was replaced in September 1994 with GNVQ programmes in art and design, business, leisure and tourism, manufacturing, and health and social care. General vocational provision caters for a wider range of abilities from foundation to advanced level. The timetable is sufficiently flexible to allow GNVQ students to include GCE A level or GCSE subjects in their programme of study. There is a wide-ranging recreational and additional studies programme which all students are expected to join. The college does not provide for students with severe learning difficulties but it is increasing its intake of students with other learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

7 The college promotes its sixth form traditions and its record of academic success. It works closely with local schools and acts as host to a local school liaison group. Schools receive regular reports on the progress their former pupils are making at college. The college takes part in a wide range of careers events, and its open evenings for potential students and their parents are highly valued by participants and the local schools. Parents are closely involved in selection and guidance procedures, and are kept informed about their children's progress. In keeping with its traditions, the college provides the same patterns of academic organisation and delivery as its main competitors, the school sixth forms. The restricted period of the college day (09.00 to 16.00) imposes demands on accommodation which are increasingly difficult to meet. The college has considered the possibility of an extended day but rejected it as less attractive to its clients.

8 The major marketing effort is directed at schools, especially the local link schools. There is a comprehensive marketing plan which includes a thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the college's position and clear objectives. The college's enrolment targets have been met. Publicity is aimed mainly at the 16 year old school leaver. Students help to produce advertising material and to ensure that it is reader friendly. Recommendations from past and present students are a major influence on student recruitment.

9 Relationships with Greater Nottingham TEC are cordial, and the TEC's representation on the college's board of governors is effective and valued. The college has had little experience of bidding for project funds although, with other sixth form colleges, it received £5,000 from Greater Nottingham TEC to support work on identifying performance indicators. It also took the lead in a TEC-funded project for the initial diagnosis of

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basic skills needs. The college has strong links with higher education institutions and this assists students progressing to higher education. A foreign exchange programme for staff and students has recently been set up with Halle, in Germany. A visit to the college by the choir and musicians of the Albert Schweitzer Gymnasium has been arranged for April 1995.

10 Work experience for GNVQ students and for some GCE A level students provides the main link which the college has with industry. There have also been 10 teacher placements in industry in the last three years. Every department produces a list of its industrial and community links each year with its targets for the following year. Two industry days which include observation of teaching have been arranged for employers. There is no forum for more general input from local employers, other than through the business members of the corporation. Links with employers need to be strengthened, particularly in the light of the development of GNVQs. There is an extensive community service programme for over 100 students.

11 Students of all religions can use the facilities provided for private prayer. The college does not offer any courses in religious education, nor does it hold a weekly act of worship. It is, therefore, not meeting the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 with respect to worship and religious education.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

12 The college is governed by a committed and knowledgeable corporation board. The experienced clerk to the board is provided on a part-time contractual basis by the local education authority (LEA). The board has 19 members and one vacancy for a co-opted member. The 11 business members include local business people and a nominee from Greater Nottingham TEC. There are two co-opted members from Nottingham County Council social services and Nottingham Trent University, respectively. The principal is a member, as is the president of the students' union. Two members are nominated by staff and two by parents. The board has six committees: employment policy, finance and general purposes; remuneration; audit; curriculum, policy and planning; personnel and students; and a search committee to help the board renew its membership. Each committee has agreed terms of reference. Meetings are supported with appropriate agendas and briefing papers. They are generally well recorded, but the minutes of some meetings do not identify as clearly as they might the actions which have been agreed. Almost all meetings are well attended.

13 Governors have been closely involved in drawing up the college's strategic plan. Members take a close interest in the performance of the college. They are involved in open evenings, attend parents' evenings, and visit college departments. Senior staff help to keep governors informed about college matters by regular contributions to the meetings of the board

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and its committees. The chairman meets all new staff. The board has identified a need for more governor training. A small working group is developing an induction programme for new governors.

14 There are differing interpretations of the mission statement within the college. Staff do not share a common understanding of current and future developments. There is an unresolved tension between the wider role of the college in the community and the present narrower focus on more able 16-19 year old students. Recruitment is largely restricted to the traditional market of school leavers studying full time, mainly for advanced level qualifications. Some development work is beginning with community groups on the Bestwood Estate.

15 Strategic objectives do not always lead to focused operating plans and not all departmental plans relate clearly to the college's strategic plan. The college has begun a review of the extent to which targets have been achieved in both college and departmental plans, but the quantitative indicators for measuring this are not yet sufficiently developed. There are proposals for improving the college accommodation but on present financial forecasts no large-scale building work will be possible in the next three years. The college has considered raising funds from non-traditional sources but, so far, this has not led to additional funding. Reduction of the staffing budget has been identified as a strategic objective, but the college has yet to formulate an effective plan for human resources which takes account of intended developments.

16 The college has comprehensive and well-presented policies for equal opportunities, health and safety, and learning support. It purchases a number of services from Nottinghamshire County Council, including advice on personnel, and health and safety. There is a detailed implementation plan for health and safety, and responsibilities are clearly communicated to staff. The equal opportunities committee involves a wide range of staff and students. Implementation of the policies for equal opportunities and learning support is still at an early stage; the policies have yet to be reflected in the work of individual departments.

17 The college's curriculum board meets every three weeks. Its members include the senior management team, the heads of the 16 subject departments, the college careers co-ordinator, the librarian and cross-college co-ordinators. The board has some decision-making powers but is used mainly for the dissemination of information including information on the decisions taken by senior management. Its membership is too large for effective discussion and decision-making.

18 The senior management team comprises the principal, two deputy principals, three assistant principals, two senior tutors and the college finance officer. This team is to be reduced in size following the retirement of three of the senior managers in July 1995. The size of the senior management team, the large number of subject departments and the range of college working parties has led to fragmentation and difficulties in

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communication. It is not always clear who has the power to make decisions or when and where decisions have been taken. The principal has taken direct line management responsibility for a number of essential college functions, including personnel matters and quality assurance. His direct management has helped to advance developments in these areas.

19 Staff are organised into subject departments. There are 16 teaching departments. Most departments are well run; there is strong team-work and a developing expertise in planning and reviewing. Many heads of department see their role as that of expert teacher rather than college manager contributing to policy making. The extent and quality of discussion taking place in departmental meetings varies considerably between departments. Staff with cross-college responsibilities for GNVQ courses, student support and learning support, have problems in obtaining the full co-operation of departments and in convening meetings of relevant staff. Governors and senior managers should review the management structure of the college as a whole and the assignment of roles and responsibilities within it.

20 The principal is committed to an open management style. Great efforts have been made to improve communications between senior management and other staff, but not always with success. Although staff appreciate these efforts, many find it difficult to understand the information presented to them, particularly when issues of finance and funding are involved. Some senior managers fail to take account of the gap between their own grasp of whole college issues and the understanding of staff not closely involved in management. Staff receive a comprehensive staff handbook. Minutes of important committees are displayed in the staff room. The principal holds weekly briefings and produces regular briefing notes and reports for staff. Full staff meetings are held each half term. All college restructuring and financial issues are brought to the attention of the curriculum board.

21 The college has a clear and well-understood policy for the allocation of funds for consumable items to individual departments, which is based on student numbers. Heads of department receive monthly financial statements. Capital equipment is allocated through a recently-introduced bidding system. Staffing budgets are centrally managed. The finances of the college are managed by the college finance officer, who is a qualified accountant, and by one of the deputy principals. Expenditure is carefully monitored. Regular financial reports are produced for the governors. Improvements in cost efficiency have resulted in savings in a number of areas. However, the college did not meet the target it had set itself for reducing expenditure on staffing in 1993-94. The current systems for managing equipment and other resources should be refined. There is no co-ordination of the purchase, management, planned maintenance and replacement of equipment. The FEFC equipment grant of £71,000 for 1994-95 is supplemented by £30,000 from the college.

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22 The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £18.94 per unit. The median for all sixth form colleges is £19.81. Summaries of the college's income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6. Currently 99 per cent of income comes from the FEFC. A development officer has been appointed to raise funds from other sources.

23 Enrolment targets are set for the college as a whole and are carefully monitored. Although there has been an increase in the size of some teaching groups, there are many classes which are still running with very low numbers. The college has recently begun to analyse completion rates at course and subject level and to make year-by-year comparisons. An increase in student withdrawals during 1994-95 has led to a downward revision of enrolment targets for future years. The college undertakes a detailed analysis of students' destinations.

24 The computerised management information system is networked to five senior managers and the administrative office. It is used to collect and disseminate information on finance, students' applications, enrolments, retention rates and space utilisation. The updating of the system, and the addition of an integrated package for wordprocessing, spreadsheets and databases, will allow managers to receive more comprehensive information. The network is to be extended to other senior managers, including the principal. Middle managers currently have little understanding of management information and have received no training in the use of information technology, although it is planned to provide such training. The college has not yet begun to analyse unit costs. Work has recently begun to make use of the performance indicators set out in Council Circular 94/31, *Measuring Achievement*.

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

25 Information provided for prospective students is clear. An attractive prospectus is supplemented by individual course leaflets and by documents providing detailed course descriptions including the entry requirements for each course. Learning support is not yet effectively promoted in college prospectuses. More than 40 per cent of students are recruited from link schools. Students as well as staff are involved in the recruitment of pupils, and visits by college students to talk with pupils have been an effective aid to recruitment. A successful pilot scheme was mounted last year in which school pupils 'shadowed' college students on their courses. Enquiries and applications are answered quickly and interviews with course teachers are arranged within a few weeks.

26 There is a well-structured induction procedure and all new students are provided with detailed information about it in advance. On induction each student is assigned to a personal tutor, who conducts a guidance interview. The system does not work as effectively when students enrol later than is normal. Transfers between courses are well managed. All new students receive a copy of the college charter and the college handbook, and each signs a learning agreement.

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27 The learning support policy acknowledges students' rights to receive an assessment of their learning needs on entry, and considerable efforts are made to assess these. Once a difficulty is recognised, appropriate diagnostic testing is arranged. An educational psychologist is retained to assist in the assessment of specific learning difficulties and to brief staff on the teaching approaches appropriate for individual students.

28 Support for students with additional needs is generally effective. Some 39 students are provided with additional help outside the classroom. They sign an agreement on what their support will be and how it will be provided. In some cases, assistance to particular students is provided in the classroom, alongside the class teacher. Provision of classroom support in English for speakers of other languages is poorly developed at present. A list of students with specific individual needs is circulated to all staff in confidence. A fuller briefing on individual students for the staff who teach these students, provided by the learning support co-ordinator, would be more effective.

29 The tutorial system is an effective and important feature of college life, highly valued by students. Each of the 55 personal tutors are responsible for between 18 and 20 students drawn from different courses. Personal tutors monitor students' academic progress and provide pastoral care. A 10-minute registration period ensures that students have daily contact with their tutors. Personal tutors are allocated one hour per week for extended tutorial supervision. This hour is no longer timetabled at a set time which causes difficulties for some tutors in finding a time when their students are available. Two part-time counsellors provide an independent and confidential counselling service on two mornings and two afternoons a week. This service is well-regarded by those students who use it, but it is not heavily used. Tutors' reports on students' progress are issued to students themselves and their parents and the college holds regular parents' evenings. Students also receive good information on their progress from subject teachers. A profile is completed by students as a continuation of the national record of achievement initiated in their schools, but the profile is not taken seriously by some, and students are not required or expected to draw up plans of action for future progress.

30 The personal development of students is encouraged through a wide range of cultural, social and sporting activities in which they are required to participate on Wednesday afternoons. They choose from a programme of some 50 activities at induction. Sporting and cultural activities are also available at lunch times and outside college hours. The college has a strong and successful tradition of team sports and has recently reintroduced a range of outdoor pursuits including rock climbing.

31 The students' union was established two years ago. It enjoys the full support of senior management and is guided by a sabbatical president. The students' union contributes to the well-being of the college, giving students responsible advice on their rights and responsibilities and

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contributing to the decision-making processes of the college. The president is a member of the college corporation.

32 There is a procedure for monitoring student absences. College literature and personal tutors draw students' attention to the requirement of regular attendance. However, there are sometimes delays of as many as five days before an attempt is made to contact students, and it is occasionally longer if they are not on the telephone. Attendance rates vary widely across the college from below 50 per cent to 100 per cent. Work is being done to collect data on absences but it is not clear how reliable this information is or how it will be used to secure improvements.

33 Careers guidance is available to all students and the service is well publicised. Careers education is not a timetabled activity so that sessions intrude into the lunch break or subject teaching time. The head of careers works closely with a team of three advisers from the local authority careers service who are contracted to provide careers counselling. The careers information area in the library is well used. Accommodation for careers counselling is limited and there is little privacy for interviews. Students receive comprehensive and detailed advice to help them at all stages in their applications to enter higher education. This is a valuable service for the 82 per cent of students who are following advanced courses.

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

34 Strengths outweighed the weaknesses in 70 per cent of the 138 classes inspected. Weaknesses outweighed the strengths in under 2 per cent of the sessions. The following table summarises the inspection grades:

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

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
GCE AS/A level		9	41	20	2	0	72
GCSE		2	12	4	0	0	18
GNVQ		5	21	14	0	0	40
Other		1	6	1	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>138</b>

35 In science, a variety of teaching techniques was used. Teachers used examples from everyday experience to explain concepts. The GCE A level physics work placement scheme is especially strong; a wide variety of placements is used to give students insight into the part that physics can play in industry. In mathematics and computing, the GCE A level and GCSE courses were heavily directed towards examination requirements. Students would benefit from a less narrowly focused approach. Many students received a lot of individual help from their teachers. There were regular schedules for setting, marking and returning work. The assessments inspected were fair and accurate.

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36 Design and technology courses were well planned. There was a comprehensive study guide. Students' progress was carefully monitored and recorded. Work was challenging and helped to develop students' skills. Projects were of an appropriate standard and there were clear assessment criteria. Many of the GCE A level technology projects were concerned with the design of aids for people with disabilities. Students' interest was sustained throughout lessons and they worked industriously. In almost all sessions, there were good opportunities for students to contribute as individuals or in groups.

37 Business studies teaching was well organised. Teaching schemes and lesson plans were thorough and comprehensive. Students enjoyed a good rapport with staff which developed their self-confidence. Completion dates for assignments were set by agreement between teachers and students, and students were aware of the penalties for failing to meet these. However, students were not always given clear guidance on how to improve their work and their progress was not recorded systematically.

38 In sport and leisure courses, teaching and the promotion of learning had many strengths. Schemes of work and lesson plans were used constructively. In academic physical education classes, students received insufficient opportunity to engage in group and project work. Teachers employed a wider range of teaching styles in the vocational leisure and tourism programmes. Students had opportunities to engage in work off the college site and to make use of central learning resources.

39 There was a good relationship between most staff and students on GNVQ health and social care programmes. The two foundation level students studying in the intermediate group received a good level of additional help. Although the topics of communications, numeracy and information technology were separately timetabled, there were many examples of the effective integration of core skills with vocational studies. Work experience was an asset to the programme and increased the motivation of students. Teachers made little use of available learning resources such as audio-visual aids.

40 The art and design department has some good contacts with industry which were usefully exploited. The programmes of work were well planned and the quality of teaching was sound. Students experienced a range of methods of working, including open-workshop sessions with one-to-one tuition, formal lectures and demonstration sessions. A good working atmosphere was generated as students moved freely between workshop spaces, although there was some overcrowding in a number of classes. Students of theatre studies were enthusiastic about the theatre visits arranged for them. Theatre studies is based in an annexe, which has limited facilities. Students used the library in the main building for research purposes. Teachers were up to date in their subject and enthusiastic. Teaching followed a clear curriculum plan and generally sustained students' interest and motivation. Theatre studies students give stage

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performances in the college hall and at local junior schools. Creative arts students also have the opportunity to share their work with an audience. During the inspection, students and staff held an exhibition in the college which was well attended by parents and guests.

41 Language provision includes GCE A level and GCSE courses, and non-examination classes in French or German. Staff were well organised and enthusiastic, and made every effort to develop students' skills and competences. Language teachers shared a common approach. Classes were usually conducted in the language being learned and there was close attention to the history and culture of the relevant countries. For GCE A level language students, a visit to the country whose language is being studied was a key part of the course.

42 The GCE A level in English language was introduced in September 1994. Teachers worked together closely to devise the new programme and they continue to double mark students' work to ensure consistent standards. Teaching and the promotion of learning within the English department was well organised and all sessions were thoroughly prepared. Well-designed activities ensured that students were interested and were learning effectively. Students' work was assessed regularly but written comments on assessments did not always provide sufficient guidance on how work could be improved. In some sessions, students needed more individual support to reach the necessary standard.

43 Geography and history teaching was well planned and effectively managed. In geography a reasonable variety of activities included a useful programme of local fieldwork and a five-day residential course in North Yorkshire. Some good use was made of audio-visual aids. Teaching time was sometimes lost because students were late for classes. In psychology and sociology, group-work exercises drew some excellent contributions from students. However, there was little evidence of variety in methods of working across the day or week. In some classes, especially at GCE A level, there was not enough challenge to the students and the pace of work was too leisurely. Some examples of immature behaviour went unchecked by teachers.

44 The college succeeds well in meeting the individual learning needs of its students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, some of whom are attending an establishment of learning for the first time in their lives. The quality of teaching and learning was of a high standard. Excellent relations between teachers and students produced positive attitudes towards learning. The teachers' approaches were supportive and helpful. Students with dyslexia received individual support. Staff used a wireless transmission system to teach a student with hearing problems.

### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

45 Ninety-one per cent of students completed their courses in 1993-94. This compares with an average completion rate for all sixth form colleges

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of 94 per cent. At the time of the inspection in March 1995, nearly 8 per cent of the students who enrolled in November 1994 had withdrawn from their courses. The rising number of students failing to complete their studies is a matter of concern which the college is investigating.

46 Last year, for the first time, the college attempted a value-added analysis of examination results at GCE A level. According to the analysis, the grades achieved at GCE A level were, on average, better by half a grade than those predicted from the students' performance at GCSE.

47 In 1993-94, there were 913 entries for GCE A level subjects. Eighty-three per cent of these resulted in passes at grades A-E. This pass rate is in line with the provisional average pass rate for 18-year old students studying at sixth form colleges. All candidates who entered for GCE A level in art, physics, government and politics, music, technology and textiles achieved a pass grade. Subject pass rates higher than the provisional average for sixth form colleges were also achieved in biology, business studies, chemistry, communication studies, design, economics, geography, English Literature, French and German. Results in computing, history, mathematics, physical education, psychology and sociology were below average. The average points score for High Pavement College candidates who entered for two or more subjects in 1993-94 was 12.7 (where A=10, E=2). This is below the average for sixth form colleges of 14.5 points per candidate based on the data in the 1994 tables published by the Department for Education. An alternative measure of achievement which reduces the effect of differing policies for examination entry is the points score per GCE A level entry. In 1994 High Pavement College entries averaged 4.5 points, which put the college in the top third of all further education sector colleges on this performance measure.

48 GCSE examination results were variable. The college achieved results above the national averages in nine subjects out of 25, the best being in computer studies, electronics and physics. Forty-six per cent of the 796 GCSE entries in 1993-94 resulted in grades A-C, a figure close to that for the previous year. The provisional pass rate for all sixth form colleges in 1993-94 was 50 per cent.

49 Most science students were acquiring appropriate levels of scientific knowledge. Students carried out group work effectively. Some students' GCE A level project work was of a high quality but others were let down by the limitations in their use of scientific language. Students were able to carry out practical work safely and speak about their work clearly and enthusiastically. In 1993-94, science results at GCE A level were above the national average. However, GCSE results, with the exception of electronics, were poor. The pass rates at grades A-C were 31 per cent in biology and 38 per cent in chemistry, well below the averages for sixth form colleges of 39 per cent and 44 per cent.

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50 In mathematics, GNVQ students were developing the core skills of information technology and mathematics and were on course to meet the requirements of the examination boards. In 1993-94, the pass rates at GCE A level mathematics was 75 per cent, compared with 82 per cent for all sixth form colleges. GCSE results have improved from the preceding year but are still below the national average. In 1994, 37 per cent of candidates achieved grades A-C compared with the average for sixth form colleges of 39 per cent. This was markedly better than the 26 per cent who achieved grades A-C in 1993. In 1993-94, 124 of the 291 students who began their GCSE mathematics course had already gained a grade D, yet 42 of these students (34 per cent) failed to improve their grade. Twenty-eight students entered for GCE A level computer studies in 1993-94 and 75 per cent were successful in achieving grade E or better, which is just below the average for sixth form college students. Forty students entered for GCSE computer studies and 68 per cent achieved grade C or better, which is well above the average of 39 per cent for all sixth form colleges.

51 The pass rate in both of the GCE A level technology courses is higher than the average for the relevant examination board. In the past five years no one has failed GCE A level technology and all students have completed the course. GCE A level design students who fail to complete the course satisfactorily usually do so because they find the coursework or project work too demanding. The first group of students undertaking the GNVQ in manufacturing at intermediate level have taken the first series of external tests with good results.

52 Business studies students enjoy their studies and work with confidence and enthusiasm, whether singly or in small groups. In one session, three second-year GCE A level economics students gave an outstanding presentation to the rest of the class. They used a whiteboard to explain complex economic concepts without reference to notes. Only in information technology skills are the levels of attainment less than high. In 1994, the GCE A level pass rate for business studies was 84 per cent, compared with a national average of 82 per cent. At GCSE, the department achieved results in line with the averages for sixth form colleges: about 44 per cent achieved grades A-C. Students following the foundation and intermediate level GNVQ programmes understand the grading criteria in use. The standards so far achieved on these programmes are in line with expectations.

53 In sport and leisure, most students had a clear understanding of the objectives of their course. Core skills of communication, numeracy and information technology were not a strong feature of the GCE or GCSE programmes. Students do not use the available computing resources regularly or effectively. In 1992-93 the college achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in GCE A level physical education, but the 1993-94 pass rate was lower at 84 per cent, as compared with the average for sixth form colleges

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of 94 per cent. GCSE results for 1994 were disappointing with only 16 per cent awarded grade C or better. However, 10 students received sports leadership awards, two with distinction and four with credit. Students have been successful in competitive sport. The college is well established in local and regional sporting competition through its hockey, netball, table tennis, basketball, soccer, rugby, cricket and athletics teams. Individuals and teams have won awards in athletics, badminton, hockey, netball, soccer, swimming and table tennis.

54 Students are following GNVQ programmes in health and social care at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels for the first time in 1994-95. The first external tests set by the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) were taken in January 1995. Results were variable, but good at advanced level where over 70 per cent were successful. Retention of students on the GNVQ health and social care programmes is a concern to the college. In the period from enrolment in the autumn of 1994 to the inspection in January 1995 the drop-out rates were over 20 per cent for both intermediate and advanced programmes. These percentages compare unfavourably with national non-completion rates for all GNVQ candidates over the year 1993-94.

55 Art and design students were able to talk knowledgeably about their work and understood clearly why they had been awarded particular grades for their assignments. Assignment grades were appropriate to the work seen and accurately reflected the standards required for GCSE and GCE A levels. There was a 100 per cent pass rate in GCE A level art in 1994, and 61 per cent of candidates received grades A and B. In GCSE art and design 55 per cent obtained grades A-C in 1994, just below the average of 58 per cent for all sixth form colleges. Staff have not yet come to terms with the revised grading criteria for GNVQ and, at the time of the inspection, no valid grading of work had been carried out. Students of theatre studies are able to criticise their own performance and that of others in a constructive way, showing insights appropriate to the level of study. Written work is of a more variable standard; some students have particular difficulties with spelling, punctuation and grammar. In 1994, the pass rate in GCE A level theatre studies was 91 per cent.

56 English students make good progress over their course in acquiring skills in the analysis and interpretation of text. Study skills such as essay planning are developed in a sensitive way, but the ability of some students to express themselves clearly in writing is limited by their grasp of punctuation and basic rules of grammar. In 1993-94 pass rates in GCE A level English literature and communication studies were 7 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, above the averages for all sixth form colleges. At GCSE, students taking English language also achieved grades above the average for sixth form colleges: 61 per cent of entrants were awarded grades A-C compared with the national average for sixth form colleges of 55 per cent. In English literature, the comparable figures were 63 per

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cent for college students and 64 per cent nationally. Before the present academic year (1994-95), all students entering the college with a grade below C in GCSE English language were required to continue with the study of this subject and resit the examination. This requirement has now been abandoned, and only those students who wish to study GCSE English language do so.

57 Achievements in other humanities subjects such as history, geography, sociology and psychology are variable. Generally, results at GCE A level are better than for GCSE. Most students produce work of an appropriate standard though some have limited skills in written English. The 1993-94 GCE A level pass rate in geography was 87 per cent which is above the pass rate for sixth form colleges nationally. Passes at grades A-C in A level history have shown progressive improvement, from well below the national average in 1992 to above average in 1994. The pass rates in GCE A level psychology and sociology were below the average sixth form college pass rate of 80 per cent for all social studies subjects. GCSE results in geography and history were below the national averages in 1993-94. Results for history were particularly poor with no student achieving better than grade D compared with an average pass rate at grades A-C, of 43 per cent for all sixth form colleges. Only 23 per cent of GCSE psychology students gained a grade C or better in 1993-94.

58 GCE A level language students show significant improvement over the period of the course in oral communication and other linguistic skills. This progress is particularly marked in German. Eighty-eight per cent of GCE A level French students achieved grades A-E, compared with an average of 84 per cent for sixth form colleges. The GCE A level pass rate in German in 1993-94 was 92 per cent. In 1993-94, results in GCSE French were poor when compared with preceding years. Only 12 per cent achieved grades A-C compared with 57 per cent nationally. Few students at the college progress from GCSE French to study GCE A level French.

59 Students following foundation level courses were positive about their achievements. Half of them passed their externally-set GNVQ assessments at the first attempt. While not every student achieves the full GNVQ, all achieve some units. As this is the first year of these courses, no objective achievement data are available, but generally students have made a good start to GNVQ work. GNVQ courses have replaced the diploma for vocational education. When the last group of students completed their diploma studies in 1994, 48 of the 86 candidates gained the diploma: a success rate of 56 per cent.

60 A high proportion of students proceed to higher or further education courses. Of the 330 students who completed GCE A level courses in 1994, 199 (60 per cent) went on to higher education, 20 students to further education and 37 to employment. Of the 149 non-advanced students completing courses in 1994, 88 returned to further study at the college, 18 moved to other further education colleges and 10 obtained employment.

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## QUALITY ASSURANCE

61 The college charter is easy to understand and attractively presented. It covers induction, enrolment, examinations and complaints. It refers students to policy documents that are available upon request and to the college handbook which contains the names of governors. One of the senior staff prepared the charter in consultation with staff, students and governors. New students and staff receive a copy of the charter as part of their introduction to the college.

62 A central framework, building on existing good practice, has been devised by a working group to cover all aspects of quality assurance. Performance indicators have been adopted from Council Circular 94/31, *Measuring Achievement*. Teaching departments have used their own methods for evaluating performance with varying effectiveness. At best, departments carry out thorough and well-documented monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and students' achievements, but such practice is not widespread.

63 Students are asked for their views in wide-ranging surveys and the results have been used, though not very systematically, to inform decision making. The information on which evaluation is based does not come from a single authoritative source and data collection at department level is patchy, though most staff are aware of examination results, enrolment figures, retention rates and destination statistics.

64 The college's first self-assessment report was written for the inspection using the headings in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The report identifies strengths and weaknesses, without attaching numerical grades. Evidence for the self-assessment came from a variety of college documents such as minutes of meetings, surveys and reports, rather than the systematic quality reports which the college intends to use as the basis for future self-assessment reports. The report shows that the college is aware of its strengths and weaknesses and is addressing the issues and actions necessary for progressive quality improvement. Its evaluation of strengths and weaknesses coincides in many areas with those of the inspection team.

65 The college mission statement, strategic plan and management plan all refer to the entitlement of staff to professional development. This entitlement is addressed in a policy which covers staff induction, appraisal and development. Work towards the Investor in People standard has just begun. The college allocated 0.5 per cent of its total budget to staff development in 1994-95, but cover for staff under training comes under other budget headings and there is staff development which takes place internally which does not draw on any of these budgets. Cover to enable the few specialist support staff to attend staff training and development is difficult to arrange and they have missed some training to prepare for new developments. Some staff-development activities are carefully targeted to strengthen particular areas of work, for example, to improve careers

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education and guidance. However, there are no procedures for identifying and setting priorities so that the needs of individual staff and those of the college can be balanced. At present, staff development is not primarily aimed at meeting the objectives in the strategic plan. It is most often provided to individual teachers in response to recommendations from heads of department.

66 The college has an induction programme for full-time and part-time staff. Support is comprehensive and includes observation of teaching. Staff who were new the previous year are invited to attend some of the induction events to provide peer support. New teachers are assigned to the professional tutor who provides guidance and support.

67 The college uses the local authority's scheme of appraisal. Appraisals do not always cover all aspects of an individual's work and, in some respects, the process lacks rigour. All teaching staff have had some form of training. Progress on appraisal, which is based on a triennial cycle, is on target. About 50 per cent of the teaching staff have been appraised. Appraisals include drawing up individual development plans with agreed targets for annual review. The link to individual development plans requires further development and there is, as yet, no link between quality monitoring and staff development. The college is in the process of developing a similar scheme for support staff, who are not currently appraised.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

68 The college has high pay costs which it is seeking to reduce. Teachers are professionally competent and well qualified. All have a first degree or equivalent and 16 have higher degrees, four of them doctorates. Many have been employed by the college for a long time, and they work well in teams, particularly within departments. The changing curriculum that is gradually being introduced requires a change of emphasis in experience. There is currently a lack of vocational training or experience among staff teaching on GNVQ health and social care, art and design, and leisure and tourism courses. Staff in the business and computing areas have valuable industrial and commercial experience, and a number of staff from different departments have undertaken short periods of work experience during the last four years. Staff are undergoing assessor and verifier training for GNVQ, and the completion of this programme requires a greater urgency. The college lacks a qualified and experienced teacher of English for speakers of other languages to provide additional language support.

69 There is an even balance of male and female students, which is matched appropriately by the gender balance in the teaching staff. Women are not well represented in management; there is only one woman on the senior management team of nine. Seventeen per cent of the teaching staff

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are over 50 years of age, and 47 per cent are between 40 and 49. Four teachers and one member of the support staff are from minority ethnic groups; they represent about 6 per cent of the full-time staff.

70 Support staff make valuable contributions to the work of the college. Technical, clerical and administrative staff are competent and experienced, but the level of clerical and administrative support is too low to meet current demands. The college librarian is a chartered librarian and offers good support to departments and students across the college. There are examples of effective partnerships between the library and languages staff in the development of topic work and the development of resources for English. Good support is provided by technicians. The college should review the level of technician support required in the light of the planned expansion in computing equipment and developments in teaching styles in areas of the curriculum such as modern languages.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

71 Equipment and learning resources are adequate for most subjects. Each department is responsible for its own equipment. With the exception of business studies, departments are well equipped with audio-visual aids. Textbooks and reference works are available in departments. There is a good range of materials to support history and geography. Language resources are well organised. The resource materials produced for business studies are excellent. The science department is well supplied with equipment and consumable materials. A wide range of small equipment is available for practical and theoretical teaching in physical education but gymnasium equipment is dated. Equipment for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is appropriate to their needs. Three students who are dyslexic have been provided with portable wordprocessors. The specialist equipment, particularly computers, for vocational work in art and design is inadequate or inappropriate.

72 Information technology equipment is inadequate to meet all students' needs. The college-wide information technology curriculum is placing heavy demands on current equipment. There are some good facilities in individual departments: for example, good-quality, up-to-date hardware and software are available to students of modern languages. However, the computers and software in use in some areas of the college are dated and due for replacement as soon as is feasible. Student access to computers outside class hours is limited. There are 160 computers in the college to support the curriculum for staff and students. Of these, 38 are networked. It is planned to increase the number of networked machines to between 80 and 100 by June 1995.

73 The library stocks 9,070 titles. Holdings in many subject areas are dated. Some 588 new books have been purchased from the small budget of £5,700 for 1993-94. Most departments purchase books from their departmental allocations. In some cases there is co-operation with the librarian, but there is no co-ordinated approach to the purchase or

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recording of books and other resource material held in departments. The library has a stock of 31 video and 25 audio tapes and a reasonable selection of 15 periodicals. The librarian and her assistant make off-air recordings, as does the audio-visual technician within departments. Again this is not centrally co-ordinated. The library also compiles useful databases for departments. The adjacent careers library has a good selection of careers material and a computer which runs a selection of careers software.

### **Accommodation**

74 The accommodation is inadequate for the current operation of the college; students and staff are crowded into a difficult working environment. Many defects are in need of urgent attention. The majority of the buildings were erected in 1952-53 for a much smaller population. In the 1980s, five temporary classrooms were installed, but these were removed by the local authority in 1990 when the college was given the ground floor of a classroom block in the nearby Padstow School, an 11-16 comprehensive school, as an annexe. Since 1990, some internal remodelling work has been carried out and five double temporary classrooms have been installed.

75 The use of the annexe has a number of disadvantages for students and staff. The college does not control its heating, maintenance and other services. There has been damage due to vandalism. There are no catering and library facilities and no access for students with restricted mobility. School pupils sometimes disrupt classes. Accommodation in the annexe for art and design studies is open-plan, enabling team teaching and providing a potentially good working atmosphere. However, the space is overcrowded and cluttered and offers no scope for development. Its future is also uncertain pending the secretary of state's decision on closure of the school. The college has no plans for the development of the annexe.

76 Classrooms are generally clean, warm and well lit, and many are carpeted. Staff and students enrich and improve the appearance of rooms with interesting wall displays. The suite of language teaching rooms provides a good-quality environment. Some classes are subject to disruption because classrooms form routes to other parts of the building. There are limited opportunities for one-to-one sessions in privacy with students owing to the lack of suitable rooms. Science laboratories are old fashioned and not suitable for theory work. Preparation rooms are small and cluttered. There is a shortage of storage space. Litter is difficult to control and is particularly bad at the annexe.

77 Social accommodation for students is inadequate. The current student union accommodation is small. The college cafeteria is too small for the student population. Seating is inadequate and there is congestion at lunchtimes. The siting of the area is inappropriate, in that the students waiting to use the refectory overspill into the main foyer of the college and cause obstruction. There are no other places for eating or drinking.

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Individual study facilities are severely limited; the library has only 32 study places. The shortage has been mitigated by the conversion of the main hall into a study area, but it does not link with the library. Wheelchair access is restricted to the ground floor, and there are no adequate toilet facilities for students with physical disabilities. Staffroom and office accommodation is cramped and inadequate as a working environment for many members of staff.

78 The college has spacious and well-maintained playing fields on site. Indoor facilities for sports and leisure courses are inadequate for the programme now being offered. Changing room facilities are poor. There are good car parking facilities for staff and students. Recent changes to the entrance and traffic flow have resulted in a more attractive and safer approach to the college.

79 A maintenance plan has been drawn up, based upon the condition survey prepared by the local authority. In the current year there is an allocation of £25,000 for general maintenance. There has been little refinement of the maintenance planning process.

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

80 The strengths of the college are:

- the caring and supportive ethos
- generally high standards of teaching by well-qualified staff
- some high levels of achievement especially in some GCE A level subjects
- the wide range of cultural, sporting and social activities available to students
- the contribution of the governing body
- effective marketing to school leavers and their parents.

81 The college should address the following issues:

- the differing interpretations of the college's mission
- links with industry
- the management structure, including the roles and responsibilities of staff
- the efficient deployment of staff
- low student achievement in some areas of work, especially at GCSE level
- effective implementation of the quality assurance system
- improvements in accommodation, particularly at the annexe
- the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 in respect of worship and religious education.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

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

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  - 3 Enrolments by curriculum area (1994-95)

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

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  - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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

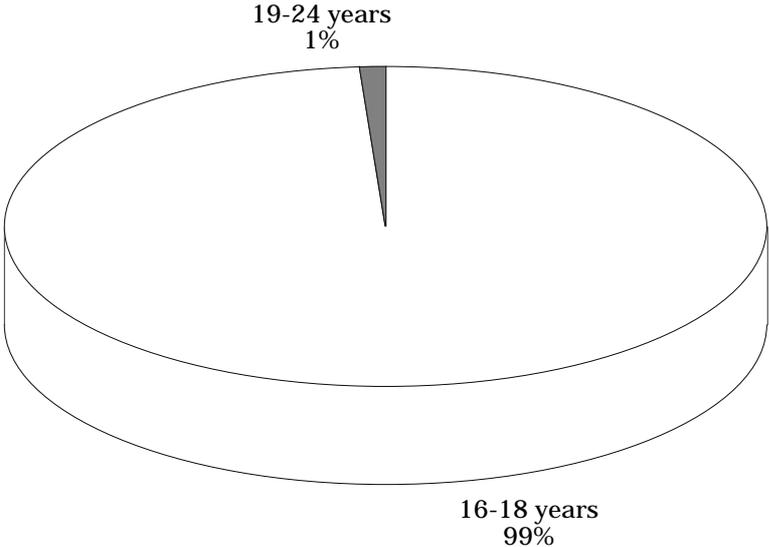
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**Figure 1**

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**High Pavement Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)**

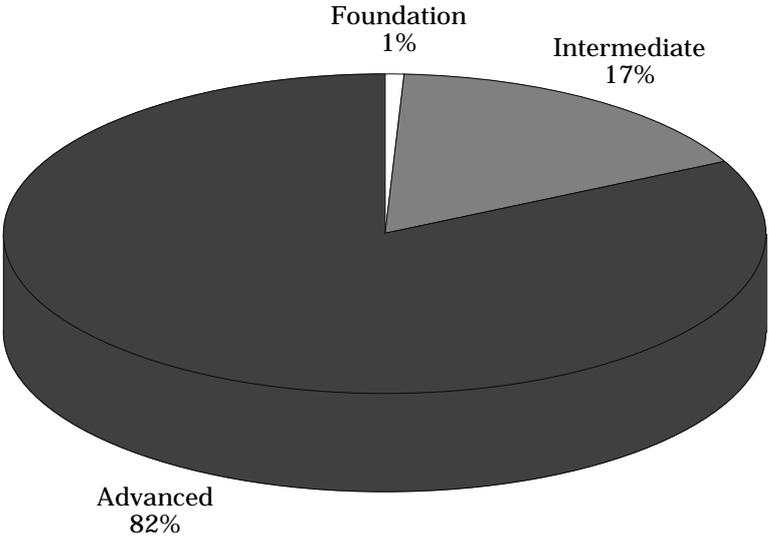


Enrolments: 1,057

**Figure 2**

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**High Pavement Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)**

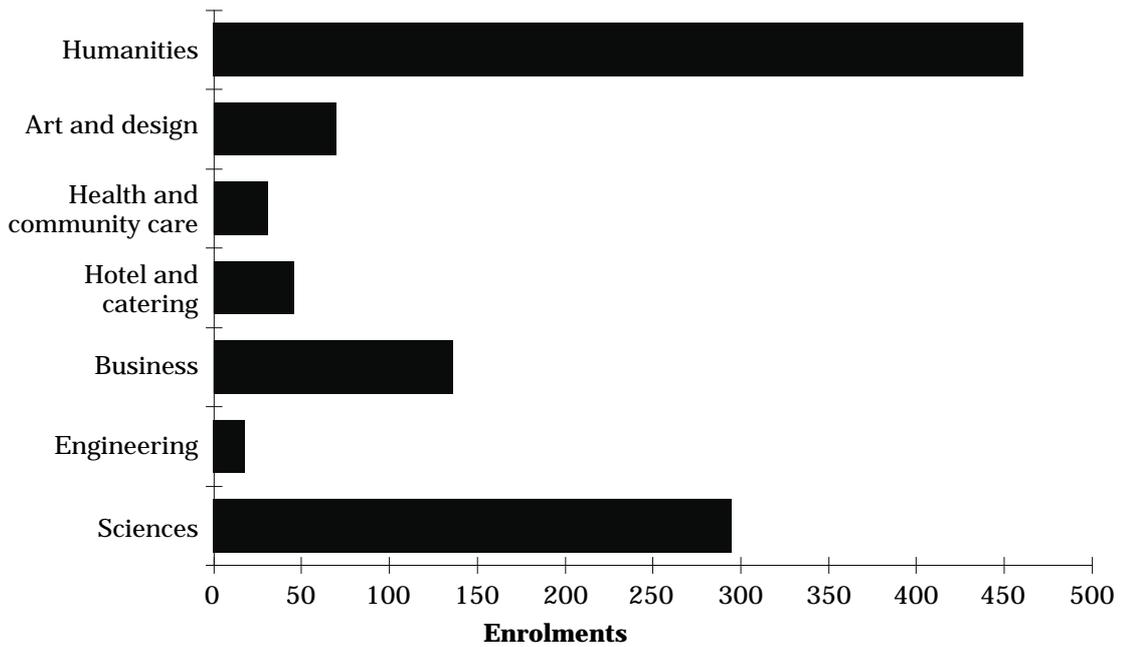


Enrolments: 1,057

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**Figure 3**

**High Pavement Sixth Form College: enrolments by curriculum area (1994-95)**

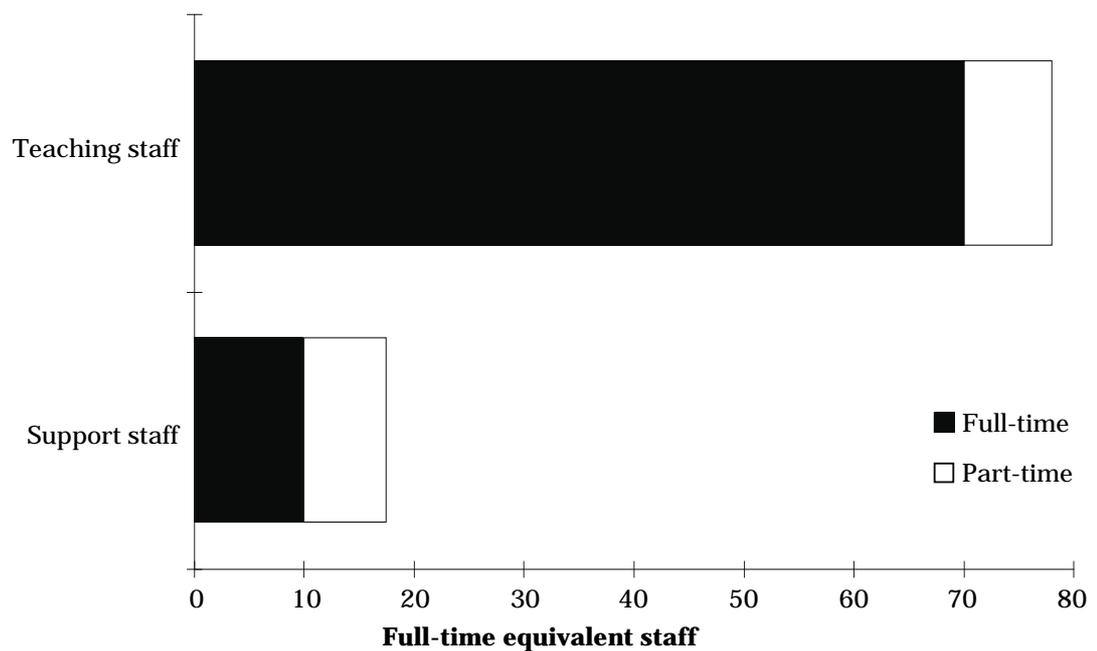


Enrolments: 1,057

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**Figure 4**

**High Pavement Sixth Form College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)**



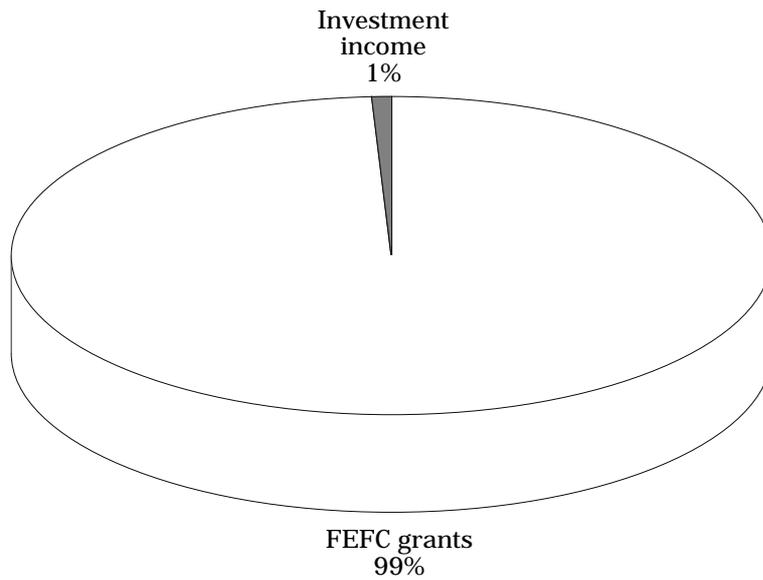
Full-time equivalent staff: 96

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**Figure 5**

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**High Pavement Sixth Form College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)**



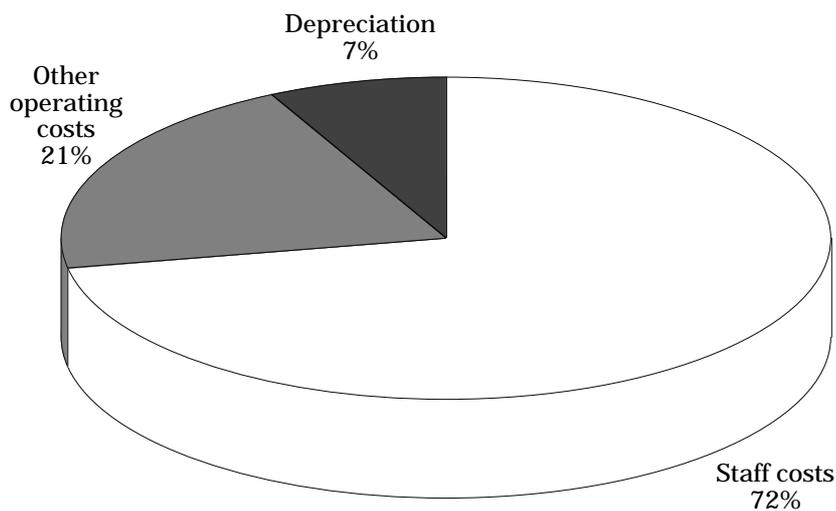
Income: £3,882,000

*Note: this chart excludes £10,000 other grant income.*

**Figure 6**

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**High Pavement Sixth Form College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)**



Expenditure: £4,033,000

*Note: this chart excludes £3,000 interest payable.*

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