

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Solihull Sixth Form College**

**March 1997**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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# CONTENTS

	<b>Paragraph</b>
Summary	
Introduction	1
The college and its aims	2
Responsiveness and range of provision	8
Governance and management	18
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	27
Teaching and the promotion of learning	34
Students' achievements	45
Quality assurance	60
Resources	70
Conclusions and issues	81
Figures	

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## **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

*The procedures for assessing quality are set out in the Council Circular 93/28. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also use a five-point grading scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.*

*The descriptors for the grades are:*

- *grade 1 – provision which has many strengths and very few weaknesses*
- *grade 2 – provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- *grade 3 – provision with a balance of strengths and weaknesses*
- *grade 4 – provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- *grade 5 – provision which has many weaknesses and very few strengths.*

*By June 1996, some 329 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 329 colleges are shown in the following table.*

### **College grade profiles 1993-96**

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

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 29/97

**SOLIHULL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

**WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

**Inspected March-December 1996**

## Summary

Solihull Sixth Form College is a successful college located in attractive grounds near the centre of Solihull. It offers a broad range of GCE A level subjects and is developing GNVQs. An extensive enhancement programme enables students to broaden their studies by taking part in academic, artistic and sporting activities. There are some opportunities for adults to study at the college. The corporation conducts its business well. Senior management is effective. Student recruitment procedures are well developed. There are strong links with local 11 to 16 partner schools. Teaching is of a high standard. Students respond well and increasingly take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching resources are good. Students achieve good examination results at GCE A level and on vocational courses. Some results at GCSE are below average for sixth form colleges. Retention rates are high and are closely monitored. Staff are committed to the quality assurance process which focuses on improving teaching and learning and services to students. The college should: develop stronger links with higher education, employers and the local community; improve its management information system; strengthen communications between the curricular and pastoral areas of the college; improve the arrangements for students' induction; extend the industrial and commercial experience of staff; and develop the use of performance indicators by subject departments.

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

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science	1	English, modern languages	
Mathematics and computing	2	and communications	2
Business studies	2	History	1
Art and design		Politics and sociology	2
and media	2		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Solihull Sixth Form College was inspected between March and December 1996: curriculum areas were inspected between March and October; enrolment and induction were inspected in September; and aspects of cross-college provision were inspected in December. Seventeen inspectors took part in the inspection. They visited 145 classes, scrutinised students' work, and examined college documentation. Meetings took place with members of the corporation, senior managers and other staff, students, employers, members of the community, parents and representatives of the Central England Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Solihull Sixth Form College is one of the largest sixth form colleges in the country. It opened in 1974 in purpose-built accommodation on a single site close to Solihull town centre. A new teaching block which was added in 1991 provides extra classrooms, additional chemistry laboratories and open-access facilities for information technology. Two new modular blocks with teaching space and extra social accommodation for students were opened in September 1996.

3 Most students are 16 to 19 years old and study full time. Since incorporation, enrolments have grown by 47 per cent. At the end of the 1995-96 academic year, 2,100 students were enrolled in the college. Student numbers by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area, are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

4 The Borough of Solihull forms the south-east edge of the West Midlands conurbation and has a population of 202,000. It has a growing commercial and industrial base. Some large manufacturers have their headquarters in the borough. In October 1996, the percentage of the borough's workforce in manufacturing was higher than the national average and unemployment, at 5.6 per cent, was below the national figure of 7.1 per cent. Many of the residents of Solihull commute to Birmingham. The area has excellent communication links. There are good rail and motorway networks and Birmingham International Airport is nearby.

5 As well as the college, the borough has nine 11 to 16 schools, four 11 to 18 schools, two of which are Roman Catholic foundations and a large general further education college. There is also a large independent 11 to 18 school and other smaller independent institutions. Five other further education colleges lie within seven miles of the college in south and east Birmingham, and there is extensive post-16 provision in schools and other sector colleges elsewhere in Birmingham. The competition for school-leavers is strong. Since incorporation the college has worked in partnership with the nine 11 to 16 schools. In 1996, 74 per cent of statutory age school-leavers in Solihull chose to stay in full-time education or training

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and, of these, 25 per cent went to the college. Since 1992, the number of new students attending the college from outside Solihull has risen from 40 to over 300. As a consequence, the social and ethnic mix of the college differs from that of south Solihull, the area in which the college is located. The diversification of the curriculum into vocational areas and the introduction of new general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) subjects are designed to cater for an increasingly wide range of student needs.

6 The college, through its mission, seeks to promote learning of high quality for all its students. The mission focuses on preparing its full-time students for higher education or for employment at 19 and beyond. In the current academic year, 618 students, about 26 per cent of all full-time students are enrolled on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses. Recently, the college has begun to provide opportunities for adult learners at evening and weekend classes.

7 The principal is supported by two vice-principals, one with responsibility for curriculum and pastoral matters; the other for resources and personnel matters. There are managers for each of the three curriculum areas: communications; business and humanities; and mathematics and science. The 17 subject departments are grouped within the appropriate curriculum area.

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

8 The college offers 39 GCE A level subjects. Modular programmes in, for example, GCE A level mathematics and the sciences extend this choice. There are arrangements for students to follow GCE advanced supplementary (AS) courses but the take-up is very small. On average, there have been fewer than 30 entries a year. The college's portfolio of courses has expanded over the past three years to include vocational as well as general education provision. Students have a good choice of courses at GNVQ intermediate and advanced levels, and there are plans for further expansion. The college now provides seven courses at advanced level. The six intermediate level courses have progressively replaced all but four of the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects which the college previously offered. Business, and leisure and tourism are the two most popular vocational programmes, attracting 30 per cent and 21 per cent of GNVQ students, respectively. The college does not offer foundation level courses to 16 to 18 year old students.

9 An extensive 'enhancement programme' provides opportunities for students to broaden their studies and to gain a variety of extra qualifications, including open college credits. Participation in the enhancement programme is compulsory for most first-year or one-year students, and is actively encouraged for others. Currently, 900 students follow the programme. Sporting and musical activities are popular. Some 60 students take part in service to the community as part of the programme and the organisations with which they work speak favourably

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of their reliability and commitment. National vocational qualifications (NVQs) in administration, and sport and recreation have recently been introduced, in part to provide additional units for students on vocational courses. As yet they are not well established. GCSE courses in mathematics and English are offered as part of the enhancement programme. Students who did not achieve a GCSE grade of C or above in mathematics and English, while at school, are also strongly encouraged to resit their examinations. They do so in large numbers. Students for whom GCSE mathematics is unsuitable take the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) numeracy level 1 qualification.

10 The college's main provision is for full-time day students aged between 16 and 19 years. Evening courses for adults which started in September 1996 have met with limited success. Several have failed to attract students. So far there have been 94 enrolments, with information technology and elementary wordprocessing courses the most popular. The college has attracted a further 25 enrolments to its newly-launched Saturday classes. There are plans to investigate the market more thoroughly and for improvements in the advertising of adult classes.

11 A rich variety of sporting activities is available to students. The college has a well-equipped fitness centre. Centre staff offer students an induction session and provide fitness plans on request. Both beginners and advanced players have a choice of sports such as squash, basketball, and table tennis. College team sports include football, hockey, netball and rugby. End-of-year activities are open to all students. These have involved canoeing in the Dordogne and an activity week in Derbyshire.

12 There is close and productive collaboration between the college and the local education authority (LEA). The principal regularly meets representatives of the LEA and its schools to discuss matters of mutual interest. The college still contracts with the education authority for the services of its advisory team for staff and curriculum development. Additionally, the contract gives college staff the opportunity to take part in meetings of heads of subjects, which they find useful. Teachers from the college and neighbouring schools also take part in exchanges which give them the valuable experience of working in a different phase of education. Links with other local authority departments and with the community are not well developed. For example, despite the significant proportion of students from minority ethnic groups in the college, there are no formal links with the communities to which they belong.

13 There are well-established links with the college's nine partner schools. The members of the schools' liaison team are responsible for maintaining day-to-day contact with these schools but many other staff and students from the college also assist in visits and the provision of 'taster' courses. Head teachers of schools and their staff clearly value these links. They confirm that they find the college's staff accessible, flexible and responsive to their particular needs. As the college is now

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regularly drawing students from schools other than their partner schools it is reviewing and extending its links. The college has long-standing links with schools and colleges in Europe which are of benefit to staff and students and which help to enrich the curriculum. It has recently developed a European strategy which aims to extend awareness of, and interest in, European matters across all curriculum areas.

14 Links with higher education are not extensive. Members of staff have good informal contacts with liaison officers and lecturers in several universities. The University of Wolverhampton validates 'taster' courses in foreign languages. The college hosts an annual higher education and careers fair, which is well attended. There are, however, no sustained curricular links.

15 Links with industry are maintained in a number of ways. The college has an employer database with some 700 entries, is a member of the local chamber of commerce, and keeps in regular contact with its local TEC. It has made successful bids to the TEC on two occasions, for funding to support the development of adult learning and the development of NVQs. A TEC representative spoke with approval of the way in which the college involves the TEC fully in the discussion of its strategic plan. Links with commerce and industry are of particular use in helping the college arrange projects for students and work-experience placements. There were 470 work placements in 1995-96, 75 per cent of them taken up by students on GNVQ programmes. Each year, about 20 students are placed with companies abroad. Work experience is well organised and integrated with other aspects of vocational courses in ways which help students. Short placements last for one week, though this period can vary and depends on the requirements of the course. The education business partnership, which maintains some of the work, and the contacts established during the technical and vocational education initiative, enable a few teachers each year to undertake industrial placements. One of the college's vice-principals is a member of the education business partnership's management committee. The college has no formal or systematic arrangements, such as advisory committees, for consulting employers on their needs and expectations.

16 The college has recently strengthened its marketing activities. A marketing officer, responsible to one of the vice-principals, took up post in June 1996. A wide-ranging marketing strategy now exists, though implementation is at an early stage. A house style has been established for promotional literature and information leaflets. No information is printed in languages other than English. The college effectively promotes its services to schools.

17 The college has a detailed equal opportunities policy and copies of the policy document are prominently displayed throughout the college. The original policy, which was drawn up in 1987, was followed in 1991 by arrangements aimed at ensuring equality of response to all applicants for

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jobs. An equal opportunities monitoring committee was set up in 1995. Its first major task was to review the existing policy. It has already done much to promote both the policy and good practice throughout the college.

### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

18 Members of the corporation are knowledgeable, dedicated and effective in their support for the college. They take an active interest in the affairs of the college, but do not interfere in its day-to-day running. The board has recently increased its membership to 20: twelve are independent; three are co-opted; two are members of the teaching staff; and one is a student. The principal is also a member of the board. One business member resigned shortly before the inspection, leaving a vacancy. Five of the board members are female. Despite a search by the board appointments' committee there is no one from a minority ethnic group. Members have backgrounds in the professions, industry, commerce, and education. Those with expertise in estates, quality assurance and personnel are members of the various committees dealing with such matters. There are five committees: audit; personnel; remuneration; finance and general purposes and a board appointments' committee. Each has clear terms of reference and appropriate membership. All governors who are not also members of the college have developed links with a specific area of the college such as a subject department or cross-college area. Attendance by governors at this year's eight full meetings of the corporation has been moderate; three governors have a poor record of attendance. The corporation has recently evaluated its own work through a questionnaire and established procedures for monitoring its effectiveness. Members have listed their interests and there is a comprehensive code of conduct for their corporate and individual actions.

19 All governors have had formal training for their role and are kept up to date on developments in the further education sector. On joining the board recently, four new governors received an effective induction which included clear briefings from the senior management team on the strategic issues confronting the college. These sessions were also open to more experienced governors, and several attended. The vice-principal (resources) is clerk to the corporation, seeks to offer independent advice and has undertaken training in governance. The corporation conducts its business well. It is thorough in its deliberations and the minutes and other supporting documentation for meetings of the corporation and its committees are full and well presented. The corporation takes an active role in establishing strategy and it regularly monitors key items of college business such as finance, enrolment and students' achievements. The relationship between governors and senior management is cordial and workmanlike. Governors are well briefed and are given a clear steer by the principal or the appropriate senior member of staff.

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20 An effective planning process ensures that most staff are involved in the development and review of the strategic plan. Governors examine the evolving plan at regular intervals and ensure that the final draft meets the needs of the college and its mission. The existing strategic plan contains clear aims and measurable objectives which are framed in the context of the national targets for education and training. The 12 key strategic aims are contained in the staff handbook. Departmental planning is generally derived from these key strategic aims, and involves staff at all levels. Departmental plans are reviewed twice a year with the principalship. The quality of some of these plans is variable.

21 There is an effective process for setting and agreeing enrolment targets. Curriculum area managers hold discussions with heads of departments on probable student numbers for subject areas for the following year. These discussions are informed by useful statistical data obtained from the local schools and by labour market intelligence. The process is also influenced by various surveys of students' choices, and information on changes in the curriculum in local schools. A comprehensive paper is prepared by senior managers who, with help from senior tutors, decide on the draft targets. Proposals on enrolments are discussed at the finance and general purposes committee and approved by the corporation. Progress in achieving the targets is carefully monitored by senior managers and the corporation is kept informed about developments. Enrolments have increased year on year and targets are met in most subjects.

22 The management structure is complex but clearly understood by staff. There are established lines of responsibility and delegation of authority at the various levels of management. Senior managers are competent, they provide support for staff and operate an open-door policy that staff appreciate. College committees with clear terms of reference cover the key functions of curriculum, pastoral support, resources, and management. The college has established an academic board. It met for the first time recently to establish its terms of reference and to set up subcommittees. Communications within the college are generally good. The principal gives a Thursday morning briefing to all staff during the common break. Comprehensive and well-structured documents are prepared for most meetings. Noticeboards around the college effectively display current information and bulletins of meetings. However, there is room for improved communication between departments and also between the pastoral and curriculum areas of the college. The notes of some meetings are lengthy and liable to be left unread.

23 The college monitors its financial position closely and staff and other resources are deployed effectively. The college is proud of its financial position and the controls it has at the strategic level. The management of its finances is seen as an important performance indicator. Staff understand the criteria for allocating resources. However, the managers

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responsible for cost centres are not always provided with sufficiently detailed information to enable them to monitor their budgets effectively. At present, the college does not have a system for measuring unit or course costs. The college achieved its funding target in 1995-96 and is expected to do so in 1996-97. Its average level of funding in 1995-96 was £18.05 per unit. The median for sixth form colleges was £19.73. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

24 Since 1995, the college has improved its management information systems. The newly-appointed director of services has built up a management information systems team. The college is continuing to address deficiencies. For example, an information technology user group has recently been established to look at the accuracy of the information entered into the student database.

25 Data on students' destinations are comprehensive and monitored effectively. The information is used in advising students of the modules they need to take and the grades they need to achieve if they are to succeed in their career aims. In addition, students are advised about the type of work experience that could strengthen their prospects of entering higher education or of gaining particular forms of employment. Seventy-three per cent of those who left in 1996 progressed to higher education. Retention rates are closely monitored to ensure that the college retains its high year-on-year target of 96 per cent. The college achieved this target in 1995-96.

26 Equal opportunities and health and safety policies were amended earlier this year. Subsequently, the equal opportunities monitoring committee published a report identifying how a programme spread over three years could effectively monitor equal opportunities throughout the college. The college recognises a need to develop a formal programme for promoting equal opportunities containing clear action points and guidelines which will enable its policy to be monitored with accuracy. A draft environmental policy has recently been prepared for consultation. A document providing a range of information on chemical hazards in the sciences is a model of good practice. It includes a database giving extensive safety information on chemical compounds. Nevertheless, cross-college safety audits are not as regular or rigorous as might be expected. Responsibilities for carrying out and monitoring these policies are allocated to senior management.

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

27 The range of courses offered, and the local reputation of the college, are most frequently given as the reasons for students choosing the college. Recruitment procedures are well developed. Applicants are given ample opportunity to consider and discuss the courses they wish to pursue. Links with local 11 to 16 partner schools are strong and well established.

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Senior staff visit these schools and get to know the pupils before they join the college. There are also some effective contacts with other schools outside the immediate locality. Pre-course guidance is well documented. Prospective students are given advice and guidance in promotional literature and through a range of activities which includes school visits, an open day and open evenings. A new, well-produced prospectus uses a common format for presenting information on each of its courses and subjects and this enables students to make effective comparisons of one area of study with another. All applicants are offered an interview. Procedures for offering places to applicants are effective. Some students who have achieved better GCSE results than were anticipated have been offered a place on appeal.

28 All prospective students attend a 'welcome to college' day in the summer term. College staff prepare well for the event and students found the day to be an informative and valuable introduction to college life. The one-day college induction in September 1996 included individual interviews and small group sessions that helped to reassure students, but they were sometimes given far more information than they could reasonably be expected to hold and the repetition of information caused some students to lose interest in the proceedings. Parts of the building were untidy and practical arrangements for some of the talks were unsatisfactory. A college survey showed that many students were dissatisfied with this year's induction. A quarter of the students described the start of their programme as chaotic. Departmental arrangements for induction varied but included some well-planned programmes, for example, in politics and sociology.

29 The particular learning needs of some students are identified at application or during induction. Diagnostic tests are used to identify the needs of all GNVQ intermediate students. There are also literacy tests for students achieving below grade C in GCSE English. The college has no formal policy on support for developing students' numeracy. Effective procedures ensure support for students who have dyslexia or physical disabilities such as hearing impairment. Accreditation of students' prior learning is available but its use is not well developed. A current project involves accrediting students' learning on work placements. The support provided by a professionally-qualified counsellor and other agencies, including the Solihull Educational Psychologist Service, is valued by staff and students.

30 Students can change courses, but only after a thorough investigation of the circumstances and with the agreement of the senior tutor. Students say that, in practice, transfer is accomplished without difficulty. Students who withdraw before completing a programme are offered careers guidance. Students are asked to bring their records of achievement to their interviews for admission and are subsequently encouraged to maintain them during their studies. Tutorial arrangements for updating records of achievement were unsatisfactory. A template which can be

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used to update records is available on the computer network. The college handbook and student diary are helpful documents which, together, inform students of their rights and responsibilities.

31 Following extensive discussion between staff, students and parents, a new pastoral system was introduced in September 1996 primarily to meet the needs of 16 to 19 year old students. Most students have a timetabled one-hour group meeting with their personal tutor each week, and are also allocated a senior tutor. Communications between personal tutors, students and senior tutors are hindered by timetable constraints. However, the increased number of senior tutors and improved arrangements for appointments have improved students' access to their tutors. Well-developed procedures for assessing students' progress involve the students, their parents and personal tutors. Parents receive regular written reports and have opportunities to meet tutors at organised meetings. Students are well known to their tutors, and receive good help and support. Since the first specialist inspection, the college has revised its procedures for monitoring absence. These are now much more effective. A delay in the allocation of personal tutors marred the start of the new pastoral system, particularly for second-year students. While most students express satisfaction with tutorial support, the college has identified a need to improve students' perceptions of tutorials. Adults who have joined the recently-introduced part-time evening courses value the opportunity to use the college's information technology and library facilities. Tutorial support for this group of students has yet to be developed.

32 Careers education and guidance is co-ordinated by a qualified and experienced senior college careers officer. The careers pack provided for personal tutors has comprehensive guidance notes on the preparation of applications through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and on the drawing up of action plans for gaining employment. These notes help tutors to plan a balanced and interesting tutorial programme. Parents of former students spoke highly of the support provided by the college in the transition to higher education. They value the wide range of information on careers, which includes displays in subject departments, the identification of teachers who can advise on particular careers, an extensive programme of higher education visits, an annual higher education fair, a well-stocked, up-to-date careers library, and a range of careers software. Under a service agreement, a team of Central Careers Service staff work in partnership with college staff. Action plans are drawn up at careers guidance interviews and these are followed through systematically. Support is offered to students in the days after GCE A level results are published, and careers guidance is available during college holidays. The college is developing a programme for students who wish to take employment after finishing their course. A recent TEC-funded initiative involved staging a theatre presentation to help GNVQ intermediate students explore career prospects, including modern

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apprenticeship. Job vacancies are advertised in the college's careers area and in the college's bulletin and the monthly careers and higher education update is a useful extra source of information. Despite the wealth of provision, students' responses to a recent survey showed that some, particularly those interested only in higher education, remained largely or wholly unaware of the services and resources available.

33 There is a college Christian union. Members meet weekly for Bible study or discussion of Christian issues. Muslim students welcomed the support of the college chaplain, through whom a room has been made available for prayer. There have been opportunities in the past for students and staff to participate in an act of worship. In respect of collective worship, the college does not presently fulfil the requirements of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*. A few students receive financial support from college hardship and access funds. There is a well-established student council. Its members value the opportunity to participate in college committees, and to meet regularly with senior managers to discuss matters of mutual concern.

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

34 The teaching observed was of a high standard. Twenty-nine per cent of sessions were judged to have many strengths and very few weaknesses and a further 57 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. These figures are well above the average for all lessons observed during the 1995-96 inspection programme, according to the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. Weaknesses clearly outweighed strengths in less than 1 per cent of sessions. The average number of students in the classes observed was 15 and the average attendance was 87 per cent. The following table summarises the grades given to the sessions which were inspected.

##### **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		30	62	6	1	0	99
GCSE		3	4	0	0	0	7
GNVQ		2	13	4	0	0	19
NVQ		4	3	4	0	0	11
Other		3	1	5	0	0	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>145</b>

35 Departments have clear programmes of study. The best schemes of work included information on teaching methods. Objectives for learning were shared with students both at the start of the course and lesson by lesson. For the most part, the work was appropriately challenging and students responded with hard work and enthusiasm. Many students demonstrated an ability to write and speak with clarity and assurance.

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36 Teachers collaborated in planning and reviewing their teaching and there were good working relations between teachers and students. Teachers in the languages department employed varied and effective methods of teaching and students were involved in a wide range of learning activities. History lessons were well planned. Teachers used a variety of methods of working including question and answer and group work. They made effective use of overhead transparencies and handouts, and found various ways to test students' understanding. In the sciences, the thorough preparation of lessons meant that work was conducted at a good pace and students were interested and well motivated. In media studies, teachers operated from well-planned course and assessment documents, and students benefited from good lesson plans which included clear objectives for learning. In mathematics, some sessions had particularly effective introductions and conclusions. In chemistry, work schemes of high quality had been produced as a team exercise. Specific approaches to teaching are discussed and agreed weekly in the biology and physics teams. There is further scope within and across programme areas for teachers to benefit from each other's good practice.

37 More consideration needs to be given by most departments to the teaching of classes containing students of differing levels of ability. At present, teaching methods fail to take account of differing learning needs and some students are not achieving their potential. For example, modern language students who had completed a task ahead of others had to wait without further work. In English, a small minority of lessons were inadequately structured. In computer studies, insufficient attention was given to helping slower students. In science lessons, some work was organised to cater for the more able and the less able, but there is scope for further development in both theoretical and practical sessions. In GNVQ sessions, students on the intermediate course who reached the required level for information technology were able to progress to the next level.

38 In most subjects, students were encouraged and helped to learn on their own. Teachers regularly allowed class time for students to work alone, in pairs and in small groups, and to feed back their findings to the class through presentations, posters and flip-charts. Students would often be required to defend their work in discussion with the teacher and other students. In English, politics and sociology, teachers designed tasks for students in pairs and groups. At the end of most history lessons there were opportunities for students to work in groups on small-scale research activities. The evidence gained was presented to the class and skilfully used by the teacher as the basis for the next lesson. In modern languages, there was much effective work in pairs and groups though this did not leave many students confident enough to make oral contributions in front of the full class. In most mathematics lessons, students had some opportunity to work on their own or to join in group discussion. In business studies, all the classes inspected were based on inputs from students.

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Students' presentations were of a high standard. They made good use of visual aids to present their ideas and were able to generate discussion with other members of the class. Science students were split into groups to undertake a variety of practical tasks. In a GCE A level biology lesson students observed bogmoss plant cells under a microscope to discover the effect upon them of sugar solution, and skilfully integrated an examination of maize seedlings with statistical analysis of data in an investigation of applied genetics.

39 In all subjects, there were regular, appropriate assessments of students' work. Much homework was set. Marking schemes kept standards secure across the subject team. At its best, the marking of students' work, for example in English, the sciences and languages, was meticulous, rigorous and constructive. On occasions, however, teachers' comments were too brief to be of help to students. For example, more informative comments would help a minority of mathematics students to improve their work. Assessment procedures are explained in course handbooks and at the front of student diaries. Students receive grade targets to aim for; in the case of GCE A level these are based on data from an external, independent source and calculated from GCSE results. Students have agreed action plans and deadlines which relate to their various assessments and diaries in which they can keep track of their own progress. Departments keep careful records and ensure that their assessment tutorials are conducted on a systematic basis so that students are kept aware of their progress. There was exemplary practice in record keeping and the conduct of tutorials in the sciences and in history. On several GNVQ courses, students were helped by being constantly reminded of the most effective ways to complete assignments and of the criteria for achieving a good grade.

40 Both students and teachers find the enhancement programme rewarding. Over 50 per cent of the enrolled students are involved with the programme, which the college views as an experience which is distinct from advanced and GNVQ options, and as a means of strengthening subsequent applications to higher education and to employers. On most enrichment courses students were well motivated. Praise and humour were used by teachers to good effect and in some sessions there were lively and stimulating exchanges between teachers and students. In less effective sessions, planning was often minimal, or there was too little opportunity for students to think for themselves, raise questions and engage in discussion.

41 Work experience is organised thoroughly, and is rated highly by staff and students. It is an integrated feature of GNVQ, and an extension of GCE A level in such subjects as chemistry, business studies and languages. Under the sponsorship of the Education Business Partnership and some local businesses, groups gain experience in Paris and Frankfurt. Some students engaged in community service are at the same time sampling careers; for example in teaching where they benefit from placements in a variety of local schools.

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42 Good progress has been made in the application of information technology to teaching and learning, but it has not yet been consolidated across the whole college. Students have access to computers in the specialist areas at times of their own choosing. There is a consistent approach to software and students show a high level of skill in using general purpose packages. There is good use of information technology in history, chemistry, English and media. GCE A level business studies students, however, make little use of information technology. On GNVQ courses, students are making good progress in developing information technology skills. Policy for information technology across the whole college, however, has not been clearly established. Better targets and measures need to be developed. There is some, albeit limited, access to the Internet, the compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database in curriculum areas and some software. The college has no means of identifying systematically the information technology skills of its students so that, where necessary, they could be provided with appropriate training.

43 The major curriculum initiative of the last three years has been the successful introduction of GNVQ at intermediate and advanced level. The 618 students at present enrolled are studying on seven advanced and six intermediate courses, across six programme areas. A high priority has been given to staff recruitment and to staff development for this work. Administrative care is taken to establish time when all who are involved in teaching GNVQs can meet to plan, monitor and review the work. There is evidence that a variety of teaching methods in other areas of the curriculum have benefited from the attention given on GNVQ courses to record keeping, assessment and key skills.

44 Some key skills, particularly communication skills and study skills, are integrated successfully with other aspects of the curriculum, largely on the initiative of subject managers. An explicit, systematic, college-wide approach to key skills is in the early stages of development. Such development is being stimulated and carried forward by college working groups, by involvement in the Further Education Development Agency project 'whole college approaches to key skills', and by the introduction of GNVQ. There are three key skills advisers in the college. Staff groups are carrying out a college-wide audit of current practice, investigating the application of the GNVQ model to GCE A levels, and considering how students' mastery of key skills can be demonstrated, valued and accredited. In the summer of 1996, all subject departments were for the first time asked to review the ways in which they approach and can improve their work with key skills.

#### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

45 Most students tackle their studies with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are motivated by, and benefit from, the variety of teaching methods and the rapport with teaching staff. They respond well to challenges and are developing an increasing ability to work effectively on their own.

In many subjects, the emphasis on students working by themselves, in pairs and in groups was helping to foster self-reliance and confidence and the ability to work with others. In 1995-96, the retention rate for GCE A level was 85 per cent; for GNVQ it ranged between 64 per cent and 87 per cent.

46 GCE A level results are generally good and have remained relatively consistent over the period 1993-96. The average pass rate for GCE A level, 1993-96, was 86 per cent, which is a little above the 1995 national average for sixth form colleges of 84 per cent. The proportion of candidates achieving grades A to C was 55 per cent, compared with a national average for sixth form colleges of 50 per cent. The college uses an agency to carry out an analysis of students' achievements at GCE A level in relation to their previous attainments of GCSE. This shows that students' results were in line with those predicted by the college. A summary of students' achievements at GCE A level, 1993 to 1996, is shown in the following table.

**GCE A level examination results 1993-96**

	1994	1995	1996
Number of GCE A level candidates	735	754	743
Average GCSE score	5.8	5.7	5.8**
Average points per subject entry*	5.3	5.0	5.0
Average points per candidate	15.3	15.1	14.5
Average number of passes per student	2.5	2.52	2.47
Number of GCE A level entries	2,114	2,267	2,109
Grades A to E	87%	84%	87%
Grades A to C	55%	55%	53%
Grades A to B	34%	32%	31%

\* *grade A=10 points; B=8 points; C=6 points; D=4 points; E=2 points*

\*\* *this value is not directly comparable with previous years when the A\* grade was not awarded*

47 According to the data in the tables published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) for 1996, the 750 students aged 16 to 18 entered for GCE A level examinations scored, on average, 5.0 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2). This places the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

48 In the 1995 GCE A level examinations, pass rates of 100 per cent were achieved in mathematics (162 entries), further mathematics (14), Spanish (7), Russian (5), and art and design (60). A 97 per cent pass rate was achieved in chemistry (132 entries) and business studies (125). In physics (74 entries) the pass rate was 93 per cent. Other subjects with a pass rate above 85 per cent included biology (107 entries) and human biology (59), French (64) and Italian (8). All these pass rates were above

the respective averages for sixth form colleges. In history (129 entries) the pass rate of 83 per cent matched the national average for sixth form colleges. In politics (42 entries) the pass rate of 83 per cent was just below the national average for sixth form colleges of 87 per cent. The results in English literature (127 entries) are the subject of an investigation between the college and the examining board. Over the past three years, the pass rate for the subject has averaged 98 per cent with about two-thirds of the students achieving grades A to C. This year, the pass rate has dropped to 79 per cent. A few subjects had pass rates significantly below the national average for the subject, including German (31 entries) at 77 per cent, computing (59) at 74 per cent, and sociology (42) at 62 per cent.

49 It is college policy to enter candidates for GCSE mathematics and English language, when they have previously failed to gain grade C or above in these subjects. Other than the GCSE subjects taken by a few students, as part of the enhancement programme, these are the only two subjects offered at GCSE. English language results in 1996 were outstandingly good; 83 per cent of candidates gained grade C or above. In mathematics, just over 40 per cent of candidates gained grade C or above, which is below the national average for sixth form colleges.

50 In the college's first set of GNVQ results, 86 per cent of candidates gained the qualification at advanced level. Sixteen out of 54 candidates passed with distinction and 23 with merit. At the intermediate level, there was a 70 per cent pass from 106 candidates, with 16 distinctions and 37 merits. Results are summarised in the following table.

#### **GNVQ results 1996**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Entry</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Merit</b>	<b>Distinc- tion</b>	<b>Unit certifi- cates</b>	<b>Percentage achieving qualifications</b>
<b>GNVQ intermediate</b>						
Art and design	8	0	2	3	3	62.5
Business	36	3	14	7	12	66.6
Leisure and tourism	29	7	12	3	7	75.8
Media	19	5	7	2	5	73.7
Science	14	7	2	1	4	71.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>70.8</b>
<b>GNVQ advanced</b>						
Business	26	4	7	11	4	84.6
Leisure and tourism	25	3	16	5	0	96.0
Science	4	2	0	0	0	50.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>87.2</b>

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51 Eighty-seven per cent of the 16 to 18 year old students in their final year of study on the advanced vocational courses included in the DFEE's 1996 performance tables were successful in achieving their qualification. This places the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

52 In the humanities programme area, levels of achievement varied. Most students reached an appropriate standard in their written and oral work but a minority of them were unable to analyse beyond a superficial level. The extent to which students were developing effective key skills, in particular information technology skills, differed from one subject to another subject. Students' confidence and expertise in handling information technology tended to depend on the combination of subjects which had been chosen.

53 GCE A level results in politics have been consistently good. In sociology, results from the college's first cohort of students were considerably below the national average for sixth form colleges. In languages, examination results were above the national averages in French and Russian and below in German. Some foreign language students showed impressive levels of oral and written fluency in their second year but there were many who were reluctant to speak the language in class. In history, GCE A level students were able to contribute effectively to class discussion and had good study skills.

54 Despite the apparent set back in English literature in 1996, pass rates on GCE A level and GCSE courses have been high for several years. Some GCE A level students are held back by the difficulty they have in expressing abstract ideas but it was evident that the majority were able to think clearly and develop their ideas. By their second year many students were able to write fluently in a variety of modes.

55 In the business studies programme area, examination results are above the national average for sixth form colleges.

56 In art and design, pass rates have ranged between 90 and 100 per cent over the last three years. However, the proportion of students achieving grades A to C is below the national average for sixth form colleges. In GCSE media studies, only 17 out of 44 students gained grade C or above. The first results on the GNVQ media programme at intermediate level are good.

57 GCE A level results in science, 1993-96, were at or above the national average. Results in chemistry were excellent and there were also good results in biology and physics. In GCE A level computer studies, examination results have varied and retention rates have been low. The quality of work achieved by students is sound but rarely distinguished. Mathematics students are developing appropriate mathematical skills. Over the last three years GCE A level results have been consistently above the national average and in 1996 they were outstanding. GCSE results have fluctuated above but also well below the national average for sixth form colleges.

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58 Students' destinations when they leave the college are recorded carefully. The data for 1994 show that 73 per cent of students moved in to higher education, 10 per cent to further education, 8 per cent to employment, 7 per cent to voluntary or part-time work and the destinations of 2 per cent were unknown.

59 There is much individual and group achievement. A group of students recently won the Royal Society of Chemistry Industrial Award for the United Kingdom and then came fourth in the European finals. A college trio reached the final of the National Chamber Music Competition. In sport, students have had considerable success in regional and national competitions.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

60 The latest version of the college charter is made available to all students and parents. The charter document describes the standards that students can expect, from initial application to the time they leave the college. A diary issued to all students contains a succinct summary of the charter as well as useful information about monitoring, assessment, value-added calculations, complaints and grievance procedures. The charter contains no details of how standards are to be measured, nor is there any reference to employers or the community. A separate document specifies standards and identifies how commitments in the charter can be assessed. These standards are now being monitored by the college's support services. Some standards, including the time taken to respond to letters and applications, are being met. There is no information on learning agreements or standards of conduct for students. Links between statements in the charter and the college's quality assurance system need to be strengthened.

61 Staff are committed to the quality assurance process which focuses mainly on teaching and learning, and services to students. Annual departmental reviews are conducted, using a standard format modelled on Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The process is described in a quality assurance manual which covers all aspects of the college's quality assurance procedures. Quality assurance for areas of the college that give support to learning are significantly underdeveloped. Performance standards are yet to be fully established. Overall, the drive for improvement in the college is set within an effective annual cycle involving the collection of data, review and action plans arising from review. The timetable for the cycle is well defined in the manual and is an integral part of the college year.

62 The subject departmental reviews are an effective part of the quality assurance process. Departments systematically analyse students' achievements, retention, attendance and, in larger departments, the size of teaching groups. Most departments have established performance indicators. Targets are set and regularly reviewed. Strengths are identified and areas for improvement are documented in action plans, the best of

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which include information on the timescales for action, the names of the staff responsible, the criteria for success and the senior member of staff responsible for monitoring improvement. Some action plans lack sufficiently tight targets and timescales. The quality of evaluation within the review process also varies. For example, some departments do not make effective use of the reports from examination and validation bodies. The quality of some of this year's draft reviews is better than the quality of those produced in previous years.

63 Extensive use is made of 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. The information provided by the service is used at departmental level in subject reviews and to help current students.

64 The departmental review process culminates each year in a formal meeting between the principalship and members of each department. Reviews are analysed critically, and targets and actions are formally agreed. Modifications are made where necessary and these form the basis for the next cycle of quality assurance. The college quality assurance working group, which comprises staff selected from all areas of the college, two students, and a governor with experience in quality assurance receives and evaluates all reports on quality. The group has done much to maintain the effectiveness and momentum of the annual quality assurance cycle.

65 The college undertakes surveys of the views of students and their parents on aspects of college life such as induction, the annual open day and other college events and functions. Surveys of students' views are also increasingly used at departmental level to inform judgments and improve teaching and learning. Improvements which have resulted from the findings of student surveys include changes to students' social accommodation and to the running of the college's open days. The findings from surveys of staff opinion are used to evaluate and improve staff training days.

66 The college's quality assurance audit report, which also served as the self-assessment document required for the inspection, is based on the annual reviews from departments and support sections. It also contains a critical review of the college's key achievements and actions. The current year's strengths and weaknesses, presented under the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement* are described and grades are given for each area of work. There is also a detailed action plan. Weaknesses are cross-referenced to other college documents, including the strategic plan. The report assisted the inspection process. The strengths and weaknesses that were identified and the grades given coincided in many respects with inspectors' findings. In a few areas, there was a tendency for the college to be overgenerous in assessing its strengths and not critical enough in commenting on weaknesses.

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67 An appraisal scheme for teachers began in 1992 and was extended to all staff in 1994. It runs on a two-year cycle. In the latest round, only 40 per cent of teachers and 28 per cent of support staff have been appraised. The same format for appraisal applies to all staff but teachers are additionally observed teaching in the classroom. Appraisers and appraisees receive the same training. The college has recognised the insufficiency of the links which exist between appraisal and strategic planning by forming an appraisal review group to improve professional development and appraisal. The college, which committed itself in July 1995 to obtain Investor in People status by September 1997, is well on the way to this achievement. While only a minority of teachers have been appraised, in practice almost 70 per cent of teachers have been observed teaching, including all newly-qualified teachers who are formally observed during their first six months of employment. All staff teaching a new course are similarly inspected. Some observations are carried out under contract by Solihull local authority inspectors, as part of departmental reviews.

68 The college is committed to staff development for both its full-time and part-time staff. The 1996-97 budget of £66,900 for staff development represents approximately 1.2 per cent of recurrent expenditure. The staff-development programme is managed by an assistant principal. Staff-development needs arise from the requirements of the strategic plan, from individual appraisal interviews and from annual departmental reviews. The commitment to achieve the Investors in People award is helping to shape and co-ordinate the staff-development system. All staff undertake a minimum of five days of training each year. Training is focused on college priorities, such as GNVQ development and information technology skills, as well as on specific departmental activities. A rolling programme of management training for senior and middle managers is at the planning stage. Recently the corporation undertook an evaluation of its own work. The findings have been used to prepare an action plan for improvements which includes further training for governors.

69 Staff who are new to the college attend a well-structured induction programme. At the beginning of the autumn term, 20 staff were following this programme, receiving information about policies, procedures and key personnel. Induction continues within departments under the guidance of the line manager. New staff, who complete a questionnaire on the effectiveness of induction, said that the course met their objectives. Throughout their first year, newly-qualified teachers are regularly observed teaching by their managers. They are paired with an experienced teacher who acts as a mentor. Governors new to the college also receive their own short, but effective, induction.

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## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

70 The college has well-qualified and experienced staff. Teachers show drive and commitment. Of the teaching staff, 29 per cent have higher degrees, 99 per cent a degree and 85 per cent a teaching qualification. More than half those teaching GNVQ courses have achieved training and development lead body assessor awards and a further third are completing the award. Achievement of the awards has been slow in some vocational areas; for example, in computing. Six members of staff have internal verifier awards, one in each of the six programme areas in the college. In some vocational areas the industrial and commercial experience of staff is limited and few of the staff teaching in non-vocational areas have recent industrial experience. As its range of courses increases, the college is appointing new staff who bring valuable up-to-date experience of industry. Some existing staff are taking up placements to bring their industrial experience up to date.

71 Currently, there are 125 academic staff and 78 support staff. There is an almost even balance of male and female staff. The senior management team of 10 includes four women, two of whom are vice-principals. Staff are well deployed between the three curriculum areas. Many staff have been willing to take on new challenges; for example, teaching GNVQ courses.

72 Three per cent of staff in the college belong to minority ethnic groups, a proportion which is similar to that within the local community. Nine per cent of students come from such groups. The college promotes a single staff community; staff from different sections and levels of college life are involved in working groups and have appropriate development opportunities. Support staff fulfil essential administration duties and give help to teaching departments. A review of administrative staff has led to seven new appointments and the use of part-time clerical assistants at peak times. The ratio of support staff to teachers is 1:2.5. The ratio of technicians to teachers is 1:8.5 and this is insufficient at times. The technicians, of whom 50 per cent are part time, are well qualified and provide good assistance to learning.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

73 There is generally good and sometimes exceptional provision of specialist equipment in programme areas. Information technology resources in some departments are outdated. Only two teaching rooms are connected to the college's network system. The information technology classrooms are equipped with 20 personal computers of an appropriate quality which support modern software. There is a shortage of equipment and few book resources for specialist computer programming classes. The supply of printers, which includes 20 colour printers, is adequate. In science, much of the equipment is modern, but the provision of

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information technology is generally poor. Art and design has a modern range of up-to-date equipment. Resources, including computing facilities, are of a high order in business studies. The two language laboratories are dated, but in other respects there is an exceptional range of resources for modern languages, including satellite television. The only resources in the huts used for teaching are overhead projectors and whiteboards. A good-quality fitness centre is available on site.

74 The attractive, well-furnished library has recently been extended to include 172 work places. Opening hours have recently been extended to 19.00 hours to provide a service to students before their evening classes. The library can be very full during the mornings and at lunch times. Book provision is good and there is effective liaison between the library and curriculum areas. A CD-ROM database facility has replaced newspaper cutting files. A wide range of periodicals is accessed by on-line services. The computerised library catalogue does not give enough help to students when they are trying to locate resources nor does it provide adequate management information. A new cataloguing computer system has been ordered. Students' use of library resources is monitored on a regular basis.

75 Students have open access to four attractive information technology centres which are equipped with a total of 77 personal computers and 15 printers. The computers are networked to provide access to CD-ROMs and other centrally held resources. Access to the Internet is extremely limited. Students' use of information technology facilities is not monitored electronically. Records are maintained manually. Improved data are required to help with the future planning of these resources.

76 The college approached consultants for advice on information technology in late 1995. Work has continued over the past year to carry out their recommendations. Priority was given to bringing the college's student information systems up to standard. Several other recommendations have been implemented, including improvements to the network cabling. Management and administrative areas are well supplied with personal computers and printers. A significant part of the college is networked. There has been a consistent approach to the purchase of both software and hardware. A policy of replacing hardware every three years has recently been adopted but there is no three-year purchasing plan. There are 14 laptop computers available to teaching staff and one laptop for students with special needs. The college has recently set itself a significant challenge: to reduce the ratio of personal computers to students from the existing 1:15 to 1:10.

### **Accommodation**

77 The college's accommodation is located on an attractive 30 acre site on the edge of open parkland close to Solihull town centre. Externally, the site is well maintained and well lit. However, more direction signs inside the college and on adjoining roads are needed. For vehicles, the site has

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one narrow access road which it shares with the adjacent primary school. The college buildings were extended and refurbished under two major programmes, one in 1976, the other in 1991. Further significant expansion and refurbishment took place in 1996 to complete the first phase of the effective accommodation strategy for 1996-99. The college's plans for information technology need to be considered in the next review of the accommodation strategy.

78 The college has a compact set of buildings and adjacent playing fields. Eight of the 89 classrooms are housed in prefabricated modular buildings. Thirteen classrooms, a student common room and a student service area, are located in good-quality modular buildings which were built this summer. A further four classrooms are located in buildings of acceptable quality and eight classrooms are housed in two timber prefabricated buildings that have disadvantages as teaching spaces. None of these 12 classrooms has adequate heating controls. The remainder of the teaching accommodation is of high quality. The science laboratories and preparation areas are of a good standard. Staff work spaces are pleasant and departmental storage space is generally adequate. Sports and changing facilities have been refurbished to a good standard. All the college's accommodation, other than the huts, is accessible to wheelchair users, although the sloping site presents problems. Accommodation is clean and well decorated, and most of the rooms have stimulating wall displays of students' work.

79 The library provides a suitable environment. Improvements to the permanent accommodation carried out in the summer of 1996 included the conversion of a mezzanine floor next to the library into an attractive open learning area. The four well-appointed information technology centres in the traditionally-built accommodation are of particular value to teachers and students using adjacent classrooms. Some departments, such as English, business, and history, have dedicated teaching areas. Other departments such as art and design are spread over several buildings. There is insufficient private space for teaching students with literacy problems.

80 The growth in student numbers has led to some crowded conditions in a minority of classrooms. The college has modified the timetable to alleviate the problem. The original refectory, designed for 754 students, was supplemented in September 1996 by a new common room in one of the modular buildings which is equipped with snack machine facilities. The dining area continues to be overcrowded at lunchtimes despite staggered breaks between midday and 14.00 hours. Further action is planned to reduce overcrowding until the construction of additional social facilities, planned for 1998.

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## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

81 The main strengths of the college are:

- the broad range of GCE A level subjects
- the extensive enhancement programme
- effective governance and management
- high retention rates
- well-developed recruitment procedures
- the strong links with partner schools
- good teaching and learning
- generally good GCE A level and vocational examination pass rates
- well-focused quality assurance
- well-qualified staff
- good teaching resources
- students' enthusiasm in class
- an attractive and well-maintained site.

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

- weaknesses in its management information systems
- communication between the curricular and pastoral areas of the college
- arrangements for students' induction
- links with higher education, the community and employers
- some GCSE examination results
- the use of performance indicators
- the industrial and commercial experience of staff.

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## FIGURES

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

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

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

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

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  - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1996)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

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

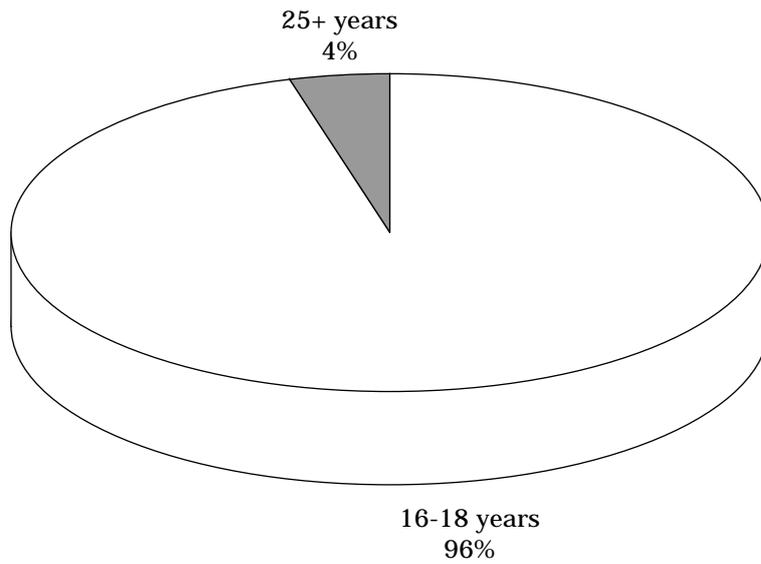
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**Figure 1**

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**Solihull Sixth Form College: percentage student numbers by age (as at July 1996)**

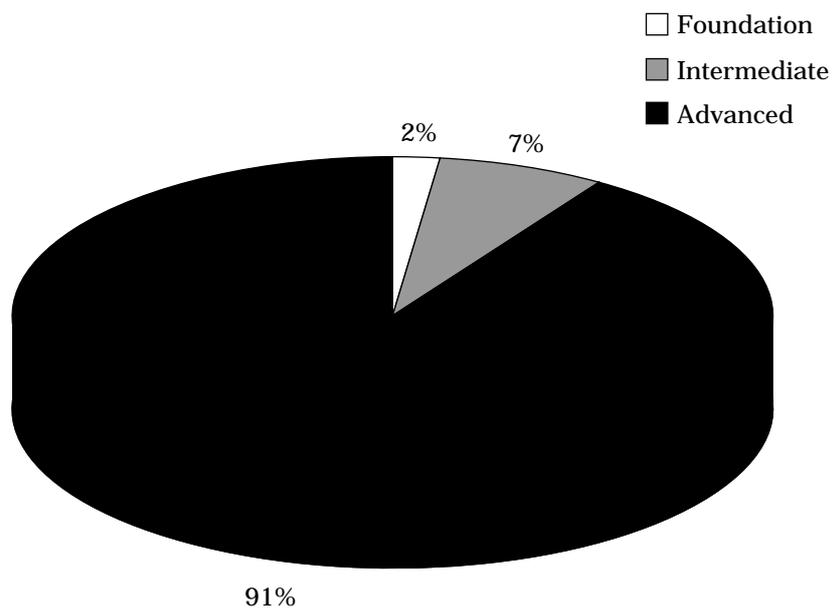


Student numbers: 2,100

**Figure 2**

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**Solihull Sixth Form College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at July 1996)**



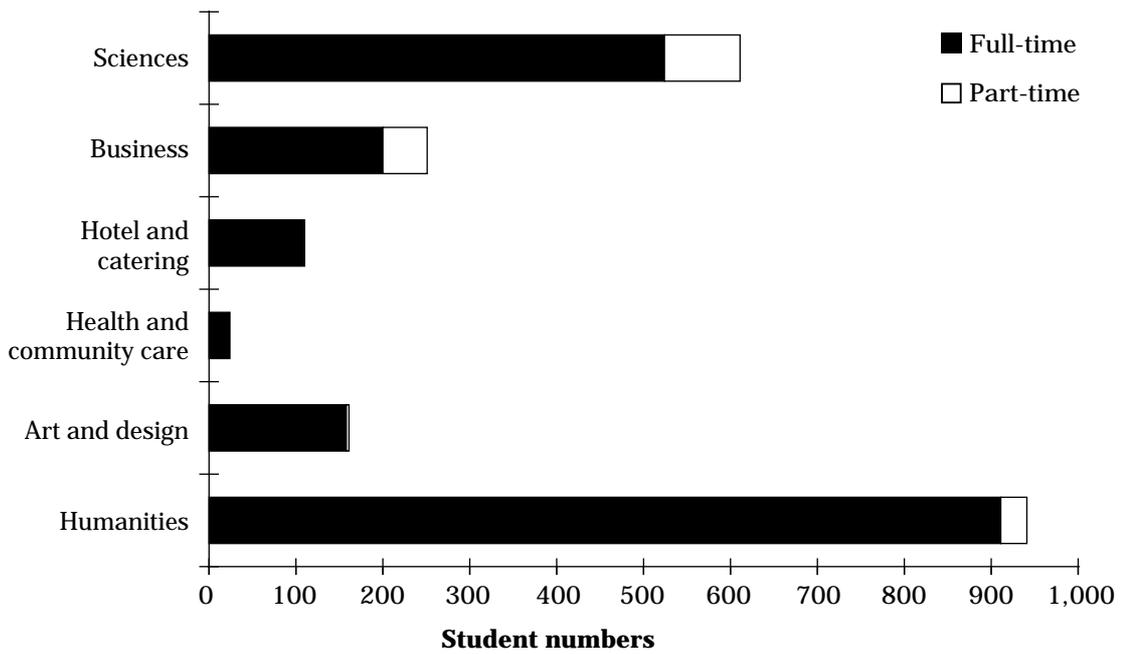
Student numbers: 2,100

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**Figure 3**

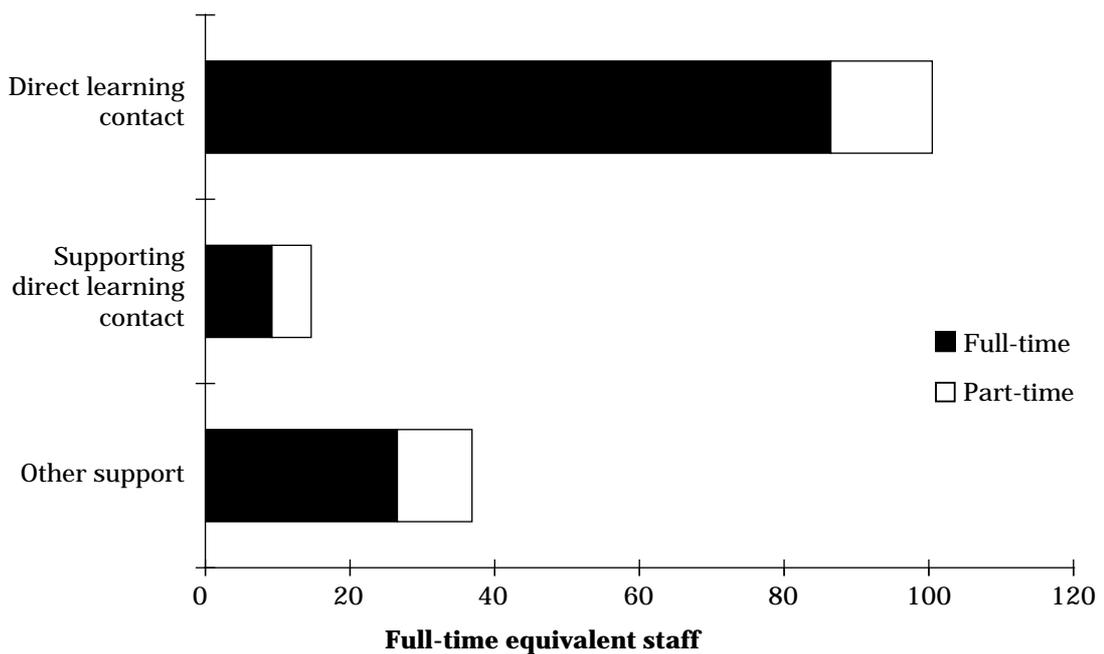
**Solihull Sixth Form College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1996)**



Student numbers: 2,100

**Figure 4**

**Solihull Sixth Form College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at July 1996)**



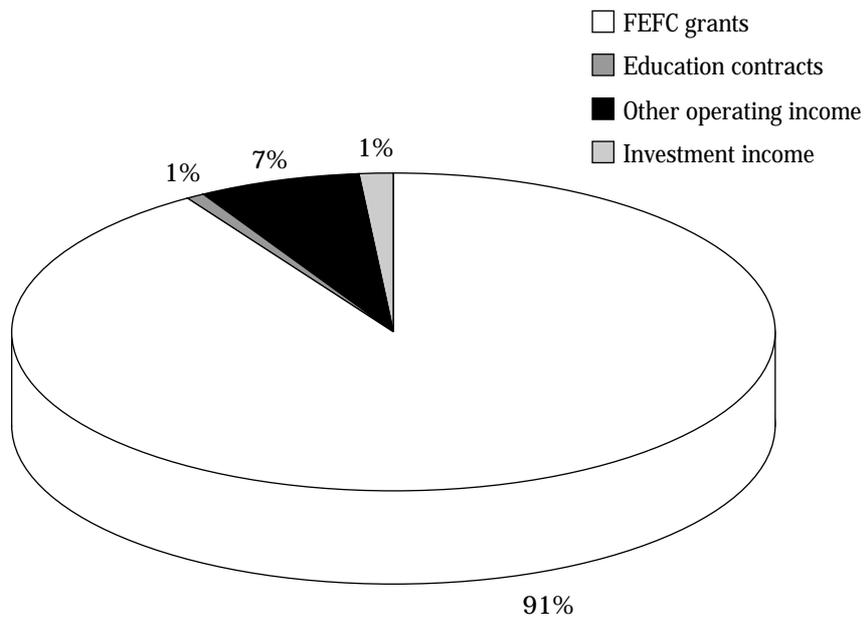
Full-time equivalent staff: 152

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**Figure 5**

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**Solihull Sixth Form College: income (for 12 months to July 1996)**

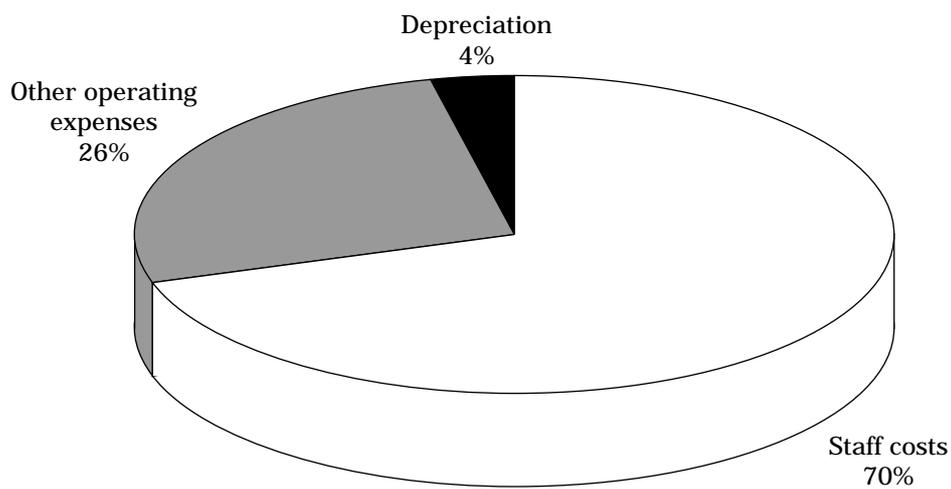


Income: £5,352,000

**Figure 6**

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**Solihull Sixth Form College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Expenditure: £5,131,000

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Published by the  
Further Education Funding Council  
March 1997