

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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**St John Rigby  
Roman Catholic  
Sixth Form  
College**

**February 1997**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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

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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 11/97

## ST JOHN RIGBY ROMAN CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

### NORTH WEST REGION

Inspected August-November 1996

#### Summary

St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College in Wigan aims 'to provide quality education in a context of Christian values and within a caring environment'. It offers a wide-ranging curriculum. Links with Roman Catholic partner high schools are strong, but 40 per cent of the students are drawn from other schools. Teaching is of a high standard. In most subjects, staff and students use computers and a wide range of software effectively in lessons. GCE A level examination results are good. Well-qualified and experienced staff offer high levels of guidance and support to students. Arrangements to ensure staff receive the training they need to do their jobs are effective. There is a strong community spirit based on Christian values and beliefs. Governors are committed to the college and its mission but they and senior managers are not concentrating sufficiently on strategic issues. There is a lack of reliable statistical data which governors and managers can use to set targets and evaluate performance. Insufficient market research hinders the successful development of courses for adults. Weaknesses in existing marketing strategies need to be rectified quickly if the college is to meet its enrolment targets in future. In order to continue to improve the quality of its work the college should: raise retention rates; improve GCSE examination results; improve the quality of group tutorials; rectify shortcomings in the existing quality assurance system and develop it further; and ensure that there are enough computers and study areas available to students at times when they want to use them.

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	2
	accommodation	2

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science	2	English, modern languages and classical civilisation	2
Mathematics and computing	3	History, geography, religion and philosophy, physical education	2
Business	2	Psychology and sociology	3
Art and design including performing arts	2		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 The inspection of St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College in Wigan took place in three stages during the autumn term 1996. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the end of August and the beginning of September, specialist subject areas at the end of September and the beginning of October, and aspects of cross-college provision in November.

2 Thirteen inspectors visited the college for a total of 54 days. They observed 100 classes, examined students' work and scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the college's mission statement, strategic plan and self-assessment report. They attended a meeting of the full governing body and held discussions with governors, the governors' clerk, senior managers, other staff, the college chaplain, parents, and students. Meetings were also held with the head teachers of three partner high schools and one special school; the former chair of Wigan secondary head teachers' group; an employer and representatives from METROTEC (Wigan) Ltd, which is the local training and enterprise council (TEC); the careers service; an institution of higher education and a training organisation.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

3 St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College was the first Roman Catholic sixth form college to be established in England. It takes its name from and is dedicated to the memory of a local man who was martyred at Southwark in 1600. The college was formed in 1972 as part of the reorganisation of Roman Catholic secondary education in Wigan at a time when Wigan was part of the county of Lancashire. After local government reorganisation in 1974 and the creation of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan, the college continued as the recognised provider of Roman Catholic sixth form education to parts of Lancashire, although there were no longer formal links with the education authority. The college is now a designated college of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

4 The college occupies a large, attractive site of 10 hectares in a semi-rural location to the west of Wigan. It has extensive playing fields. Most of the buildings were constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s to house a boys' grammar school under the trusteeship of the Congregation of Christian Brothers. New laboratories, a sports hall and music block were added in 1984 and existing buildings were remodelled to create a library which includes an open learning centre and 140 study spaces. A substantial Victorian building is currently used for offices and staff workrooms.

5 Sixty per cent of the college's students are drawn from seven Roman Catholic partner high schools in Wigan, Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. The remainder come mainly from high schools in Wigan and west Lancashire. The college competes for students with other post-16 providers of

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education and training. These include two 11 to 18 high schools, a sixth form college and a general further education college in Wigan, a tertiary college in Skelmersdale, and a Roman Catholic sixth form college and a general further education college in St Helens, which is about six miles away. The percentage of students continuing in full-time education after the age of 16 varies across the college's catchment area but averages about 63 per cent. Most employment opportunities in the area are in the service sector and in light industry. There is a significant horticultural industry around Ormskirk.

6 The college grew steadily until 1995 but in the last two years there has been a fall in student enrolments. In November 1996 there were 817 full-time students on roll, of whom 777 were 16 to 18 year olds. Fewer than 2 per cent of the college's students come from minority ethnic groups which reflects the percentage in the local population. The majority of students follow general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses. Most of the others take courses leading to general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs). Student numbers by age, by level of study, and full-time students by curriculum area, are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

7 There are 53 full-time teaching staff including the principal and two vice-principals. Eleven other teachers hold fractional teaching posts. A further 21 staff provide support in finance and administration, learning support and site supervision. The college also employs two foreign language assistants and engages peripatetic teachers from the local education authority to provide tuition for students who play musical instruments. A full-time staff profile is shown in figure 4.

8 The mission of the college is 'to provide quality education in the context of Christian values and within a caring environment'. The college works primarily with young people in the 16 to 19 age group and seeks to provide a curriculum which meets the needs of young people of varying abilities. At the same time, the college is sensitive to the need to serve the wider community. It is committed to meeting the needs of its students as individuals and places a strong emphasis on pastoral support.

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

9 The college offers a wide-ranging curriculum. Students are encouraged to select and combine courses, units of courses and subjects at different levels to build up programmes of study suited to their individual needs. The structure of the timetable allows many combinations to be accommodated. The portfolio of courses includes:

- 36 GCE A level subjects of which 16 are also available as GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects; about half the courses are modular
- 22 GCSE subjects

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- foundation, intermediate and advanced GNVQs in business, health and social care, leisure and tourism, art and design and science
  - an art foundation course leading to higher education
  - short courses in criminology and journalism
  - additional studies which span a broad range of interests including sport, music and drama, information technology and work experience.

10 Two-year GCE AS/A level courses are well subscribed and, with advanced GNVQs, account for about 90 per cent of enrolments. Not all advanced and intermediate GNVQ courses are running; in 1996, the college failed to recruit sufficient students to form viable groups in art and design and science. Many students take mixed programmes of GCE A level and GCSE subjects. Only 47 students are taking a full-time programme of GCSE subjects and only 38 students are following courses leading to intermediate or foundation GNVQs. Numbers in most GCSE classes are small, and only one group of students is aiming for foundation GNVQs.

11 Most students follow a broad and balanced curriculum. In addition to their main programmes of study, they take short courses or additional studies and have a weekly general theology class. Courses in criminology and journalism are popular as are those in sport and recreation. Some additional studies courses are linked to extra-curricular activities. For example, a range of college teams regularly participates in sporting fixtures on Wednesday afternoons. At the time of the inspection, staff and students mounted a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. The quality of such enrichment activities attracts some students to the college.

12 There has been a cautious approach to introducing courses which might appeal to a wider community than traditional sixth form students. To date, efforts to broaden the range of students enrolled at the college have attracted comparatively few students. Sixteen students on a training scheme designed to prepare them for national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in care attend the college for one day each week to cover theoretical aspects. Courses are also provided for small groups from two schools and one adult centre which cater for students with severe learning difficulties. There are few courses designed specifically for adults and a low number of adults attend existing daytime provision. An evening programme of study units accredited by the open college federation of the north west, was offered in the past and recruited a small number of students. Classes have been discontinued pending a review and restructuring of the programme. There are few learning materials which would allow adults to study by themselves at home with guidance and support from college staff. The college does not have a portfolio of short courses to offer employers, although it has expertise in relevant areas such as modern languages, business and information technology.

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13 The college promotes Christian values and beliefs and welcomes students from Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic backgrounds. Students and their parents are invited to family mass in the college twice a year. These services attract about 100 people and are valued by those who attend. The college satisfies the requirements of sections 44 and 45 of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* by making provision for a collective act of worship. Mass is celebrated in the college chapel once a week and on Holy Days. Services are usually taken by the college chaplain. Attendance is voluntary and rarely rises above 10. The chapel is also available at other times for quiet meditation and prayer. For example, the final lesson of a study unit in the general theology programme may be a period of reflection in the chapel.

14 Attendance at general theology lessons is poor. The form and content of the course has not been reviewed by governors since designation in 1993, although the articles of government place an obligation on them to do so from time to time. The role of the college chaplain is loosely defined. He spends the equivalent of two days in college and has no teaching commitments. Although he is well known to some students such as those who choose to attend retreats or weekly 'hunger lunches', he is not systematically introduced to the wider college community.

15 Inherent in the Christian and caring ethos of the college is an awareness of the importance of equal opportunities. Although there is an equal opportunities policy, there is no system for monitoring its implementation and effectiveness. A few subject areas have taken appropriate action to try to correct gender imbalances.

16 Links with local schools, particularly those which are perceived as Roman Catholic partner high schools, are strong. In the past, the college played an active part in a consortium set up by the local education authority (LEA) to support the technical and vocational education initiative and these links have been maintained. Most activities focus on the recruitment of students. There is one link course with a Roman Catholic high school which enables about 90 students to attend the college one afternoon a week to participate in a range of activities and to use resources which are not readily available in their own school. The college also hosts days when school pupils can meet people from industry. A few departments have developed curricular links with schools to try to provide continuity between students' studies at high school and at the college. For example, the college offers a particular syllabus for GCE A level mathematics examinations because it builds upon most students' prior experience.

17 Individual departments within the college have established some fruitful links with universities and other providers of higher education. For example, each year college staff from a range of departments act as mentors to about 12 teacher trainees. The scheme has been running for the last seven years and the quality of input from the college is valued highly by the higher education institutions. There is no particular

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requirement for departments to forge links with higher education providers and a minority have few contacts with such establishments.

18 The college is respected by the local TEC as a reliable partner, willing to participate where it can in training initiatives. Work experience for students, industrial visits and visiting speakers have enabled the college to build up links with employers though, as yet, these are not extensive. Only about 20 per cent of the student population enjoys the benefits of work experience. The recent appointment of a member of staff to co-ordinate the work-related curriculum has raised awareness amongst college staff of existing industrial links but has not yet led to the monitoring of their effectiveness nor to an action plan to develop further or extend them. Individual departments have taken initiatives in seeking sponsorship from local industry. For example, the science department has obtained industrial sponsorship to take biology students on an innovative field trip to Kenya later this year.

19 Marketing activities focus mainly on the recruitment of students from schools which are perceived as partner high schools. The two vice-principals and subject teachers have devoted many hours to devising and implementing liaison programmes tailored to meet the needs of such schools. These activities have not yielded the growth in student numbers for which the college had hoped, nor have they been fully evaluated to find out to what extent they are cost effective. Within the existing marketing plan, there are proposals for a number of initiatives such as one to improve students' access to the college by providing specially-arranged transport. There is not enough emphasis on setting enrolment targets for the recruitment of students from individual schools and on devising and implementing strategies to meet them. There is little evidence of the exploration of new markets to find out how the college might best respond to the needs of the wider community within the context of its mission. The college is missing opportunities to promote its students' achievements, its courses, and the services it offers.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

20 The governing body has 19 members, five of whom are women. Eleven are foundation governors appointed by the trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and three are independent governors. Five of these 14 governors have recent experience of working in business and commerce, four are priests, one with an archdiocesan responsibility for finance and development, four used to work in schools or higher education institutions but are now retired, and one teaches in a local partner high school. The remaining places on the governing body are taken by the principal, a parent who is a teacher, a member of the teaching staff, a member of the support staff and a person nominated by the local TEC. At the time of the inspection the place for the TEC's nominee was vacant. There is no provision for a student governor and no formal mechanism for governors to communicate with students. The professional

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expertise of governors is mainly in finance, and industrial and educational management though three individuals have backgrounds in marketing, engineering and building trades, respectively. The college has employed a clerk to the governing body who is a retired head teacher of a local Roman Catholic high school. He has a clear job description. A comprehensive governors' handbook includes the instruments and articles of government, and the code of conduct adopted by the governing body in March 1996. All governors have copies of the handbook. Pertinent documents from the FEFC and other bodies with an interest in further education are regularly sent to governors to help them to understand their roles and responsibilities but governors have only recently identified their own training needs and planned a programme of training events.

21 Governors are committed to the college and its mission. They care about staff and students and most devote a great deal of time and energy to college business. Meetings of the full governing body take place every half-term according to a timetable. Usually they are well attended but there were two occasions earlier this year when meetings were inquorate. There are four subcommittees of the governing body: audit; finances and premises; remuneration; and staffing. The finance and premises subcommittee usually meets on the same days as the full governing body and at other times according to need. The other subcommittees meet only when it is necessary to do so. When major issues requiring urgent attention have arisen, the governing body has used its subcommittees effectively to prepare and recommend courses of action. For example, the failure to meet enrolment targets in September 1995 meant that governors had to make substantial savings to ensure the college's future financial viability. Governors and senior managers worked well together to devise and implement a recovery plan. They dealt with the situation sensitively and succeeded in reducing staffing levels with the minimum of disruption to students. However, failure to meet enrolment targets again in September 1996 indicates that underlying problems remain.

22 Governors are not sufficiently active in asking for information and using it to determine a strategic course of action which could lead to growth in student numbers and units of funding. At meetings of the full governing body, they are too concerned with operational details and sometimes spend time considering items which could be dealt with in subcommittees. In the past, they have not received regular reports to enable them to monitor the extent to which the college is on course to meet strategic objectives identified in the annual operating statement. They do not receive sufficient information to judge the quality of existing provision. They have only a partial view of students' achievements. Retention rates are not reported and the format in which data are presented does not allow immediate comparison of examination results in individual subjects and courses from year to year. The governing body has begun to evaluate the effectiveness of its work. Recently a group of governors considered a report from an external consultant whom they engaged to help them in this.

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23 In the last year, the management structure has changed to take account of reductions in staffing levels. Subject departments are now divided between two faculties: arts and humanities; and science and social science. Each faculty is managed by a vice-principal assisted by a senior tutor. A third senior tutor has particular responsibilities for student guidance but has been absent for several months because of illness. Vice-principals and senior tutors have cross-college roles as well as faculty responsibilities. They and the principal form the senior management team. Each faculty has 11 or 12 subjects within it. Two or three subjects in each faculty are grouped together to form nine clusters. Since September 1996, each cluster has had a curriculum co-ordinator but heads of departments and teachers in charge of subjects continue in their posts. All staff except the vice-principals have job descriptions.

24 It is too early to judge the effectiveness of some aspects of the new management structure. The role of curriculum co-ordinators is still developing and is not yet well understood by staff. Clusters of subjects are not yet working as cohesive units; most departments continue to work in isolation from others in their cluster. Heads of subject, curriculum co-ordinators, senior tutors and vice-principals all have some overlapping responsibilities for staff and curriculum development and it is unclear how the various strands will be brought together to provide a college-wide perspective. The principal and vice-principals have an impressive grasp of operational details and close involvement in day-to-day management of the college. This way of working makes their considerable workloads heavier still, and limits the time they can devote to their strategic management and leadership roles.

25 The process of strategic planning is well co-ordinated. Staff have opportunities to contribute to the process and the plan itself is firmly based on departmental activities. The annual operating statement identifies detailed objectives, target dates and persons responsible for ensuring tasks are implemented. Senior managers monitor and review progress towards the achievement of these objectives at least three times during the year. In most cases, departmental plans are realistic and reflect college-wide objectives. In a few areas such as art and design and performing arts, long-term planning takes place but is not recorded formally. Cross-college policies and procedures are well understood by most staff but procedures to monitor their implementation and evaluate outcomes are insufficiently developed.

26 Teaching staff are carefully deployed to ensure their expertise is used to maximum effect. In determining their work load, account is taken of the number of students they teach and the time spent on preparation and marking. Course documentation is usually comprehensive. For example, GNVQ programmes are co-ordinated by one of the senior tutors and use common systems of documentation and assessment, and a common approach to teaching key skills. Most departments are well managed and there are many examples of staff working effectively in teams to plan,

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deliver and review courses. However, for mathematics there are two few agreed procedures and standards to ensure consistency in the way student groups are taught.

27 Channels of communication across the college are effective. Senior managers are easily accessible and deal with immediate issues promptly. Staff attend weekly briefing meetings and receive regular bulletins and papers from senior managers which help the flow of college-wide information. A planned programme of meetings at all levels is supplemented by effective informal networks. Working relationships between staff are friendly and productive, and there is a strong community spirit.

28 Systems for allocating and controlling departmental budgets are open and effective. Heads of department bid annually for funds to cover recurrent and capital expenditure. Allocations take account of student numbers but are based on perceived needs rather than the application of any formulae. A contingency fund assists departments which recruit beyond expectations. Budget allocations are published. Staff understand the budgeting process and are satisfied that curricular needs are supported. Budget holders receive monthly reports of their spending and management accounts are circulated to governors. The college's average level of funding for 1995-96 was £19.73 per unit; this figure equated with the median for sixth form colleges. In 1996-97, the college's average level of funding is the same. The median for sixth form colleges in 1996-97 is £19.36 per unit. Only about 2 per cent of the college's income comes from sources other than the FEFC. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1997 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

29 College managers make insufficient use of performance indicators to set targets and to monitor and review progress. Although there is computer hardware and software to provide an appropriate management information system, staffing levels are inadequate to make best use of it. Reliable information on numbers of enrolments, retention rates and students' achievements covering the last three years was not readily available to inspectors. Often essential details had to be collected directly from departments rather than from the corporate database. There were occasions when the college could not provide the information requested or had difficulty in reconciling conflicting figures. Unit costs at course or departmental level are not measured. Managers make effective use of the financial control system which operates separately from the student record system.

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

30 A variety of recruitment activities enables prospective students and their parents to receive helpful information and impartial advice about the college and its courses. Liaison programmes are well established with the high schools which have traditionally worked closely with the college. College staff attend school parents' evenings, careers conventions and

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give talks to groups of students. Specially-arranged events allow many students to come into college and sample courses before they make their choices. In 1995-96, about 1,300 students from 14 schools participated in such events. Students who express an interest in coming to the college are usually interviewed in school by a vice-principal who offers initial guidance about choice of course and subjects. Careful records are kept of these interviews.

31 Enrolment is well organised and well managed. The process is carefully carried out and students are made to feel welcome. Using records of earlier interviews and examination results, vice-principals and other staff help individuals to finalise their programmes of study. Most interviews are of high quality. Staff refer to students' records of achievement, offer impartial advice, and make effective use of specialist colleagues and staff from the careers service to clarify points raised during interviews. Most students express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of pre-enrolment and enrolment interviews. This was confirmed by a small number of parents who spoke to inspectors. Students sign a learning agreement at enrolment. This does not allow students time to reflect on their choices during the induction period before confirming their programmes of study.

32 To familiarise new students with college-wide procedures and practices, there is a well-structured induction programme which is spread over the first six weeks of the year. Students are provided with a detailed students' handbook which includes essential information about college routines and facilities as well as a copy of the college charter. On the first day of term, they follow part of their normal timetables so that they meet most staff who will be teaching them. Some students felt during the induction period they had too much free time and did not know how to use it productively. Course and subject staff devise their own induction programmes but there are no college-wide guidelines to indicate what should or should not be included. The better introductory lessons had clear learning objectives and offered students an interesting range of activities. Other sessions were dull and failed to excite students. Students would benefit if the good practice observed in areas such as science was shared with other departments.

33 Students find staff approachable and willing to devote time to helping and supporting them. Guidance and support of students are the overall responsibility of a vice-principal and nine guidance tutors. Each guidance tutor works closely with a team of four or five group tutors and has responsibility for between 80 to 100 students who are allocated to group tutors at enrolment. Each group comprises students from a cross-section of courses within the same year. There is a separate group for students who have returned to college to resit GCE A level examinations. Students meet their group tutors daily for registration and weekly for a tutorial period. Links with external agencies allow the college to refer students who need specialist help to appropriate counsellors. Students may also

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ask to talk to the college chaplain but, in practice, this rarely happens. The college might consider ways in which the chaplaincy might be more closely involved with the pastoral support of students.

34 The programme of group tutorial activities is well structured. Relevant topics are introduced at appropriate stages during the year to prepare students for forthcoming events. For example, at the time of the inspection, second-year students took part in an exercise to develop their interview skills before attending interviews for jobs or entry to higher education. A useful pack of resources is issued to group tutors to ensure consistent coverage of topics. However, in most tutorials observed by inspectors the activities lacked pace and dynamism and the work petered out well before the end of the session. Not all students were punctual and, in most groups, some students chose not to attend even though they were in the college. Most students said they found group tutorials too long.

35 Careers education and guidance is readily available to students. Guidance tutors are closely involved in advising students about their choice of degree courses and entry routes to particular occupations. The college receives a good level of support from the careers service from west Lancashire and a good working relationship with careers officers in Wigan. Careers officers contribute effectively to the group tutorial programme. They work mainly with students who hope to go directly into work when they leave college. They are also available at specified times during the week to interview students. In 1995-96, careers officers recorded 242 appointments but college students turned up to only 45 per cent of them. Interviews are arranged only for students who ask for them, sometimes on the advice of group or guidance tutors.

36 Students' progress is carefully monitored. Subject teachers' comments and students' self-assessments are collated by group tutors who interview students individually at prescribed times of the year. Students are encouraged to identify targets for improvement and to develop their own action plans. Full and detailed records help guidance tutors to build up a picture of the students in their care. The quality of references written by group and guidance tutors for students applying to universities is high. Written reports and parents' evenings keep parents and guardians regularly informed of their children's progress.

37 It is college policy that subject teachers are not initially informed of grades achieved by students in GCSE examinations at school. Screening tests to identify students who may need extra support are not used. This year, for the first time, students and their teachers completed questionnaires which aim to discover students' competencies in literacy, numeracy and information technology, and the extent to which further support is necessary for students to cope successfully with their courses. At the time of the inspection, the outcomes of this exercise were not known. Much work is done informally to support students who struggle with their courses. Teachers who realise that students are in need of help either

provide it themselves or consult colleagues and senior staff so that appropriate support can be offered. There are no special workshops where students can go for help with literacy and numeracy without making prior arrangements. Many students spoke appreciatively to inspectors about the amount of extra help they receive from teachers outside lessons. The college works closely with local high schools to make sure it can provide appropriate support for students with known learning difficulties and/or disabilities when they begin college courses. This year 27 students have been identified and are well supported. For example, a note-taker works with two students who are dyslexic.

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

38 One hundred teaching sessions were observed. Of these, 77 per cent had strengths that outweighed weaknesses. This is 14 per cent higher than the average for all subjects recorded in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. The weaknesses outweighed the strengths in 6 per cent of sessions; this is 1 per cent less than the average for all subjects in 1995-96. Attendance rates in the classes inspected averaged 83 per cent and ranged from 72 per cent in mathematics and computing to 92 per cent in art and design, including performing arts. Attendance at GCSE classes was poorer than for other courses. The following table summarises the grades awarded to the sessions 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	24	8	3	0	65
GCSE		5	6	6	2	0	19
GNVQ		6	2	2	1	0	11
Other		2	2	1	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

39 Most teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and set high professional standards. In the main, lessons were well planned and conducted in a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere. Students experienced a range of learning activities which were often challenging but not daunting. Practical and theoretical work were carefully integrated so that one was in step with the other. Teachers used audio-visual and other learning aids efficiently and flexibly. In weaker sessions, the teaching lacked rigour and pace or did not take sufficient account of the spread of ability within the group. In a few lessons, teachers missed opportunities to reinforce key points before introducing fresh topics.

40 Science lessons were carefully planned and well managed. Teachers provided a variety of resources to stimulate students' interest and to encourage them to think for themselves. Students were expected to carry out investigative work on their own or in small groups, and to report their

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findings to the whole class. Such activities were well received by students. They worked competently and safely, and made effective use of information technology to analyse their results. Homework was set regularly. Teachers marked and graded written work accurately. Words of encouragement as well as pointers for improvement were offered to students. A programme of field trips, visiting speakers from industry and project work provide appropriate enrichment activities but more science students could benefit from relevant work experience placements.

41 The use of information technology as a mathematical tool was effectively integrated with the teaching of GCE A level mathematics. In one lesson, students used appropriate software to explore a range of mathematical functions and identify some of their characteristics. As the students used the software, the teacher moved from group to group, questioned students about their findings and suggested ways in which they might extend their investigations. In the last part of the lesson, students shared their findings with the rest of the class and the teacher recorded the key points on the board. Not only did students leave the lesson with a good understanding of the topic but they also had a useful set of notes for future reference. In mathematics and computing, the progress of individual students during classes was carefully checked by most teachers but there were wide variations in the quality of marking and record-keeping. Feedback to students usually failed to indicate specific steps which students might take to eradicate weaknesses in their work. Whereas some teachers recorded marks for every piece of homework which students handed in, others only recorded results in tests taken when topics were completed. The teaching of GCSE students often failed to take into account the needs of individuals. During the inspection, attendance at GCSE classes was poor.

42 The teaching of business studies was underpinned by clear course documentation and effective arrangements to ensure consistent assessment procedures. The development of information technology skills was well integrated with schemes of work for courses leading to GNVQs but needed to be more systematically integrated with the GCE A level course. Most of the teaching was of high quality. Teachers encouraged their students to work independently and to make full use of resources in the college and elsewhere. In one lesson, GCE A level business studies students learnt how to review literature to extract key pieces of information. The teacher planned to follow up this activity by taking students to a major lending library so that they could use its resources to undertake research for particular assignments. There were a few occasions when students were not sufficiently challenged or their responses to questions were not fully used by teachers to further students' understanding.

43 Teachers of art, design technology, media studies, and performing arts were energetic and communicated their enjoyment of these subjects. Many students valued and benefited from visits to art galleries, theatres and concerts which teachers organised for them. Most schemes of work

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were well prepared and focused on the acquisition of skills as well as knowledge. However, subject specialists have not always capitalised on each other's expertise to devise programmes of study which offer students a broad range of experiences. For example, the aesthetic dimension of courses in design technology was weak. Most teachers used imaginative methods to develop students' personal and social skills whilst extending their knowledge and understanding of course topics. For example, theatre studies students were asked to remember a situation in which they had behaved badly and knew that there would be dire consequences if their actions were discovered. By working in pairs, and then as a group, they expressed and explored their feelings about these occasions. This activity effectively related students' own experiences to the underlying theme of a play which they were rehearsing. Some teachers were skilful in asking probing questions to help students to grasp difficult concepts and principles. In a few lessons, teachers did too much of the work and did not allow students to express their opinions or participate fully. In all areas except for design technology, assignments lacked clear aims and objectives and failed to identify the criteria used in assessments.

44 In English, classical civilisation and modern languages, teachers planned courses and lessons thoroughly. Schemes of work included imaginative suggestions about how to approach topics. Lessons were well prepared and each lesson related to the previous one. Students liked this logical and structured approach. Most teaching was of high quality and engaged students' interest. In a GCE A level English literature class, second-year students were studying the monk's tale from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Students and the teacher read short sections aloud and almost everyone relished the language. Students responded enthusiastically to questions on meaning, inference, character and literary devices. They were willing to explore their own responses to the work and defend their points of view when challenged by others. The session was conducted in an atmosphere of scholarship and enjoyment, and succeeded in bringing literature to life. In weaker sessions, some students were unco-operative and were allowed to be so; teachers did not check students' understanding of new vocabulary or concepts systematically. In all subjects, the use of information technology was not integrated sufficiently with other aspects of work.

45 Most teaching in history, geography, and religion and philosophy was good. For example, first-year GCE A level history students were provided with an extract from the memoirs of one of King Louis XIV's men-in-waiting and asked to work in small groups to determine how the king spent his day. Students were fascinated by what they discovered and keen to discuss a range of points. The teacher skilfully used their findings to demonstrate and develop the notion of divine kingship. Staff were realistic in their expectations of students. Some teachers responded well to issues which developed during lessons. In a class of 19 first-year GCE A level religion and philosophy students the teacher adroitly handled a lively

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discussion about a contentious philosophical concept. He succeeded in drawing out from students some exceptional contributions to an intellectual argument. There were occasions when teachers did not make enough use of direct questioning to ensure all students understood the work or where teachers did not adapt their teaching to take account of individuals' needs. Text and reference materials were not used sufficiently in classes and teachers did not draw students' attention often enough to further sources of information in the library. Schemes of work were comprehensive and in geography, for example, appropriate pages were shared with students at the beginning of a new topic. The development of information technology skills in history needs to be strengthened.

46 Physical education lessons were carefully structured, well managed and enjoyed by students. Teachers used a variety of activities and resources to explain theoretical aspects of the course. In one class where students were learning about the structure of vertebrae, the teacher used a skeleton and wall charts effectively to illustrate key points in the lesson. Students then felt each other's vertebrae and compared their findings. The teacher encouraged students to use correct terminology to explain unusual features. In sports activities, teachers focused on the development of students' skills and paid attention to health and safety issues. Students understood the criteria which were used to assess their work.

47 In psychology and sociology lessons, teachers tended to spoon-feed their students and did not train them to record and discover information for themselves. There was not enough emphasis on the development of higher-level skills to enable students to interpret, evaluate and criticise what they see, hear and read. For example, in one class, students were asked to read a piece in their text book and answer questions listed on a worksheet. Many students simply copied out large sections of the text because the questions asked for factual information only. In the plenary session which followed, they were unable to explain what they had read and to respond to questions which were not included on the list. Marking of students' written work was not closely linked to the requirements of examination boards and often failed to correct grammatical errors and the use of everyday words instead of accurate terminology. Little clear advice was given as to how students could improve the quality of their written work.

### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

48 Most students responded well to their teachers and took pride in their work. They enjoyed talking about their studies and were prepared to develop and defend their ideas and opinions. Written and practical exercises were usually carried out carefully and some projects were imaginative and of a high standard.

49 Results in GCE AS/A level examinations have improved steadily over the last three years. In 1996, students aged 16 to 18 entered for the GCE AS/A level examinations scored, on average, 5.2 points per entry (where

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grade A=10 points, E=2). This places the college in the top 10 per cent of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, according to the data published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Corresponding scores for 1995 and 1994 were 4.9 and 4.3, respectively. In both these years the college was among the top third of colleges in the further education sector. A scrutiny of GCE A level examination results over the last three years shows:

- pass rates of 100 per cent in performing arts, music, further mathematics, art, classical civilisation and German in at least two of the years
- pass rates of at least 90 per cent in theatre studies and physical education in each year
- increases of at least 15 per cent in the pass rates for chemistry, psychology, sociology, economics and geography
- a gradual decline in the pass rates for computing, media studies and English literature.

50 In 1996, there were 1,012 entries for GCE A level examinations in 30 subjects. The average pass rate at grades A to E was 88 per cent, 4 per cent higher than the 1995 national average for 18 year olds in sixth form colleges. Analysis of the results shows:

- pass rates at or above corresponding national averages in about two-thirds of subjects
- pass rates of 90 per cent or better in just over half the subjects: chemistry, physics, further mathematics, business studies, art, performing arts, music, design technology, theatre studies, French, German, classical civilisation, religion and philosophy, economics, psychology and physical education
- pass rates at least 10 per cent below national averages in media studies, government and politics and English literature.

51 Pass rates at the higher grades of A to C in 1996 GCE A level examinations were variable:

- in further mathematics (two students), art (54 students) and economics (10 students) almost every student achieved higher grades
- in classical civilisation (12 students), French (31 students) and music (12 students) at least three-quarters of the students achieved higher grades
- in half the subjects the percentages of grades A to C were at least 10 per cent higher than 1995 corresponding national averages for 18 year olds in sixth form colleges
- in English language, English literature, geography and history, each of which had 45 or more entries, the percentages of grades A to C were below corresponding national averages by at least 10 per cent

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- in media studies (28 students), German (10 students) and government and politics (seven students), the percentages of higher grades were below corresponding national averages by at least 20 per cent.

52 The college subscribes to an independent, external service which provides an analysis of the value added to students' achievements by comparing their actual performance at GCE A level with their predicted performance based on GCSE achievements. The report for 1996 indicates that:

- students did significantly better than predicted in English language and literature, French, physical education, art and economics
- students performed significantly below expectations in geography, English literature and German.

53 Most GCSE subjects attract small numbers of students. The exceptions are biology and physical education which usually enrol at least 20 students, and English and mathematics which many students choose to resit to try to improve the grades they achieved in schools. The college's GCSE results for the last three years form a mixed picture:

- in information systems, English, Spanish and media studies the percentages of students gaining grades A\* to C have consistently been equal to or above corresponding national averages for 18 year olds in sixth form colleges
- in business studies, geography and psychology, the percentages of students gaining grades A\* to C have improved significantly while those in German and mathematics have steadily declined
- in biology, chemistry, art and French, the percentages of students achieving grades A\* to C have always been well below corresponding national averages
- in 1994 and 1995 more than 60 per cent of students who were entered for four or five GCSE subjects achieved no more than one grade A\* to C.

54 In 1996, there were 326 entries for GCSE examinations in 17 subjects. Over half the entries were for English and mathematics. Ten subjects had 10 or fewer entries. Analysis of the results shows:

- the proportion of students achieving grades A\* to C was 43 per cent as compared with the 1995 national average for 18 year olds in sixth form colleges of 48 per cent
- in over half the subjects the proportion of students achieving grades A\* to C were above corresponding national averages: in Spanish (seven students) and geography (six students) all students achieved these grades, in psychology (11 students) and information systems (11 students) the proportions were over 70 per cent

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- in mathematics (114 students), biology (19 students) and human physiology (12 students) pass rates at grades A\* to C were 25 per cent or lower
  - of the 16 students who took four or five subjects, only seven achieved at least three grades A\* to C.

55 Ninety-four per cent of students, aged 16 to 18, in their final year of study on the vocational awards included in the DfEE's 1995 performance tables were successful. This placed the college in the top 10 per cent of institutions in the further education sector on this performance measure. Analysis of results for the last three years shows that students' achievements in the full range of vocational courses range from good to poor:

- in business, pass rates in the national diploma and its replacement, the advanced GNVQ, have been consistent and well above national averages and pass rates for the intermediate GNVQ course have steadily improved from 60 per cent to 78 per cent
- in health and social care, most students who completed their intermediate or advanced courses were successful in gaining their GNVQs and on the foundation course, in each year, three students who completed the course gained the full award
- in leisure and tourism, less than half the first cohort of advanced GNVQ students gained the full award within the standard timescale and while pass rates for the intermediate GNVQ course varied considerably from year to year they were higher than national averages in 1996.

56 Students have achieved notable successes in other areas. One student was selected to play for the Great Britain under-eighteens' rugby league team, and three students were selected to play for regional volleyball and netball teams. Two students successfully completed a voluntary police cadet scheme and three students were awarded places at the same prestigious school of speech and drama.

57 The college has not set a target retention rate for the college as a whole. It was unable to provide enrolment figures for students who began two or more GCE A level subjects in 1992, 1993 and 1994 to enable inspectors to analyse retention rates for each cohort. Data relating to students who began programmes of study leading to four or five GCSEs show retention rates above 75 per cent in 1994 and 1995 but no higher than 50 per cent in 1996. Data held by departments enabled the college to calculate retention rates for individual subjects and courses for the last three years and revealed the following:

- most one-year vocational courses have retention rates of at least 85 per cent
- retention rates for advanced GNVQ in health and social care have never exceeded 70 per cent

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- on GCE A level courses in 1996, retention rates were higher than 95 per cent in seven subjects and below 85 per cent in 10 other subjects
  - in 1996, retention rates were below 70 per cent in 10 GCSE subjects.

58 Most students who complete GCE A level courses proceed to higher education. At the time of the inspection the college was still collecting information about the destinations of students who completed courses in 1996. Data for 1995 show that of the 300 GCE A level students who completed courses in 1995, 66 per cent went on to higher education, 14 per cent continued in further education, 8 per cent found employment, 8 per cent pursued other activities and the destinations of 4 per cent were unknown. Data for 1994 show a similar profile. About half the students who complete one-year courses return to college to continue their studies. In many cases, they begin another intermediate course. For example, in 1995 out of 14 students who completed programmes of study made up of GCSE subjects, seven returned to begin intermediate GNVQ courses.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

59 Commitment to providing education of high quality is central to the college's mission statement. Staff are aware of quality assurance issues and have been closely involved in developing the key components of the quality assurance framework. These include surveys of students' views, annual course review and evaluation, staff appraisal, classroom observation and the development of quality assurance standards. The latter are written in a common format and, where appropriate, cross-referenced to students' experience of the college, before they enter, at entry, during their courses and when they leave. They have only recently been agreed with departments. Quality assurance standards for college organisation and structure, human and physical resources, policy, governance and management are not yet as fully developed as those which relate to services to students and are not operational.

60 The separate components of the quality assurance framework do not form a coherent whole. Responsibilities for implementing each component are too vague. It is unclear how each activity fits in with the others and there is no timetable to indicate when emerging issues are drawn together to form a college-wide perspective. College reports covering outcomes from implementing each aspect of the framework are not routinely generated to inform future planning.

61 The college charter is linked effectively to the quality assurance standards. Students receive a copy at enrolment and explore its significance during a group tutorial period. The extent to which the college is meeting its charter commitments is not yet fully monitored. The complaints procedure is described fully in a separate booklet. A notice in the library draws attention to a special form which students can obtain

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from reception and complete if they have a complaint against the college. However, at the time of the inspection, this form was not available. Most students prefer to take problems to their guidance tutors and few make use of the formal complaints procedure.

62 Evaluation of the days when students can sample college courses, enrolment, induction, and open evenings is thorough. Staff are asked for their comments and students' views are surveyed to find out what they liked and did not like about the events. Some improvements have taken place as a result of these surveys. For example, there are now more signs to help people find their way round the buildings, and enrolment interviews have more time allocated to them to reduce the numbers of people waiting.

63 The process of reviewing and evaluating courses is well established. Departments have the freedom to devise their own instruments to find out what students think about their courses as long as they focus on the areas of induction, teaching and learning, and assessment. Most departments use questionnaires. In about two-thirds of subjects, these questionnaires have proved effective in bringing about improvements to courses. For example, in geography, students said that they would like more emphasis on the development of oral communication skills in their lessons. Individuals or small groups now have the opportunity to make presentations to others in their class; in some cases, these are recorded on video so that students can judge their performance. Some departments need to review the questions they ask students in their surveys to elicit clearer responses which will help them to improve the quality of provision. Annual departmental reports are not written in a common format but must include a commentary on students' achievements in the previous year, statistical data, feedback from moderators, a summary of course evaluations and priorities for action. The reports and their action plans vary in quality. Most do not give enough attention to statistical data and fail to include sufficient information to enable managers to monitor whether or not actions are taken and problems resolved within a reasonable timescale. It is difficult for college managers to draw out key messages emerging from course reviews and evaluations when there are such wide variations in the content of questionnaires, and in the structure and content of departmental reports.

64 The college's appraisal scheme was devised in March 1993 and is intended to identify teachers' professional development needs. It includes classroom observation and is being implemented slowly. At the time of the inspection, only seven staff had been appraised and others did not know when their appraisals would take place. As a separate initiative to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, the college implemented a pilot scheme of classroom observations which started in December 1995. All teachers have been observed by either a line manager, a colleague from their subject area, a governor or a head teacher of a local high school. Observers were given criteria for assessment and used specially-designed forms to record their findings. Most teachers received helpful feedback

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which allowed them to set targets for their own development. The college intends to develop and extend the pilot scheme but to keep it distinct from appraisal.

65 Staff development and training is steered by a clear policy and managed effectively by one of the vice-principals. She works with the staff-development group, which is made up of a cross-section of teaching and support staff, to identify priorities for staff development and to formulate a coherent plan to meet training and development needs. The investment in training amounts to 0.5 per cent of the staffing costs for 1995-96. Additional funding is provided from education contracts and grants. Almost every member of the teaching staff participated in training activities in 1995-96. For example, curriculum co-ordinators attended specially-arranged events to train them for their role. There is a clear system for recording who attends which training activities. Evaluation procedures focus only on the extent to which training meets its objectives rather than the needs of the college. Procedures for inducting new teachers and support staff are well developed and effective.

66 The college's self-assessment report was written by senior managers using the headings listed in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. It drew on information from departments and included grades for each aspect of cross-college provision. It was not sufficiently self-critical. It emphasised what had already been achieved and often overstated strengths while failing to include most of the weaknesses identified by inspectors. The college's grades were usually at least one grade higher than inspectors' judgements.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

67 There are sufficient, well-qualified and experienced teachers to teach the range of courses on offer. Of the 53 full-time and 11 fractional postholders, over 90 per cent are graduates and 95 per cent hold teaching qualifications. Approximately half the staff are practising Roman Catholics; apart from the posts of principal, vice-principal and head of theology, appointments are not dictated by candidates' religious affiliations. Good progress has been made in training teachers for their GNVQ responsibilities. Twelve out of 19 staff have training and development lead body assessor qualifications and another three are undergoing training. Only two staff hold the internal verification qualifications and both of them teach on health and social care courses; four others are working towards this award. Few staff have recent industrial or commercial experience. The college has attempted to compensate for this by arranging for teachers to be attached to local firms on a short-term basis.

68 Teaching is supported by a competent, enthusiastic and appropriately-qualified team of technicians, librarians, administrative and finance staff. The majority are employed in term-time only, including

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two part-time librarians and the information technology technician who also has responsibilities for operating the college's management information system. Staffing levels are inadequate to support the numbers of students who use the library and the computing facilities in the open learning centre. For most of the day, only one librarian is available to help students. Only 30 per cent of the information technology technician's time is devoted to working in the open learning centre. The booking system which allows students to reserve a computer in the open learning centre at a particular time of day is not running smoothly because staff are not there to operate it.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

69 The quality of general classroom and specialist equipment is good. There are enough blackboards and whiteboards, overhead projectors and audio-visual facilities to satisfy teaching requirements. Laboratories are well equipped and chemicals are labelled and stored correctly to comply with safety regulations. Language laboratory facilities are adequate. There is a suitable range of equipment in the gymnasium and other rooms used for physical education. Specialist equipment to support work in textiles, printmaking and photography is insufficient. Policies to replace and purchase equipment are well developed.

70 There are enough computers for the number of students in the college. At present the college has 97 workstations available for students' use; this gives a ratio of one machine for every eight students. At least three-quarters of the machines are linked to a college-wide network on which each student has a personal file. A wide range of modern commercial software is available for general use and for specialist work. Most departments have access to computer hardware and software in their teaching areas. The college's participation in the national schools on-line project has enabled over 100 science students to gain access to a wide range of information using the Internet. There are not enough computers available for students to use at times of their own choosing. There are only 20 workstations in the open learning centre and access to other machines is restricted.

71 Resources in the library are adequate to meet the needs of most students. Currently, there are approximately 12,000 books and a comprehensive range of magazines, periodicals and journals as well as encyclopedias and newspapers on compact disks. They supplement resources held in departments. There is also a comprehensive careers library. Surveys conducted by librarians indicate that the library is used mainly as a place to study and look up references. College figures show that fewer than 70 books each week are issued on overnight loan. Cataloguing systems within the library are not computerised but details of books held in the library and in departments are entered on cards to provide a central record. Students expressed frustration at having to use a manual system and were sceptical of its reliability. Nevertheless,

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librarians were able to locate books and reference materials for students quickly. There is no electronic security system in the library; the college estimates that it loses 1 per cent of books annually. Students are not allowed to take bags into the library. This measure is unpopular. Some students are not prepared to leave their bags in places where they cannot see them.

### **Accommodation**

72 The quality of accommodation generally reflects the age of the buildings and the extent of refurbishment. Essential repairs and maintenance, identified in a survey by external consultants, have been completed and a 10-year maintenance programme has been developed. Most teaching areas are pleasant places to work in. Cramped working conditions were observed in only a few classes. The sports hall, drama theatre and music and video recording studios are of a high standard and used for extra-curricular activities as well as for teaching. There are adequate storage and preparation areas adjacent to teaching rooms, and generous provision of workspaces and offices for staff. Generally, the college is clean and tidy. Students' work and learning materials are displayed around the college and in classrooms and help to create a stimulating learning environment. Access to rooms in different buildings for wheelchair users is difficult and sometimes impossible without help from others. The college is prepared to relocate classes to enable students with restricted mobility to gain access to specialist facilities.

73 There are not enough workplaces in the library and open learning centre for the numbers of students who want to use them. Often these areas are overcrowded and noisy; their layout makes it difficult for staff to supervise students. The decor and some of the furniture is beginning to look shabby and in need of refurbishment. There are no other identified rooms to which students can go to study quietly. There is a shortage of social areas where students can congregate. The refectory is too small to accommodate all the students who use it at peak times. Many students said they found the refectory unattractive and tried to avoid purchasing food from it because of the congestion.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

74 The strengths of the college include:

- the wide-ranging curriculum
- governors who are committed to the college and its mission
- a pervasive community spirit based on Christian values and beliefs
- the links with local schools, particularly the Roman Catholic partner high schools
- the high levels of guidance and support offered to students both formally and informally

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- teaching of a high standard
  - good GCE A level examination results for the last three years
  - effective arrangements to ensure staff receive the training they need to do their job
  - well-qualified and experienced teachers who work hard and care about students
  - enough computers and a wide range of modern commercial software which are used effectively in most subject areas.

75 If the college is to grow and continue to improve the quality of its work it should:

- identify and explore new markets so that it can plan courses to meet the needs of adults and employers accordingly
- rectify the shortcomings of its marketing and publicise its students' achievements with greater vigour
- review its subcommittee and management structures so that governors and senior managers can concentrate on strategic issues
- generate reliable statistical data about students' enrolments and achievements so that governors and managers can use the data to set targets and evaluate performance
- improve the quality of group tutorials
- raise retention rates
- improve GCSE results
- continue to develop the quality assurance framework and ensure that the separate components form a coherent whole
- bring together findings from the quality assurance process, so that governors and staff have a college-wide perspective of areas which need further improvement and can plan accordingly
- ensure that there are enough computers available to students at times when they want to use them
- provide alternative study areas for students so that the library is not overcrowded
- consider providing more social areas for students to avoid congestion in the refectory.

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## FIGURES

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

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

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  - 3 Full-time student numbers by curriculum area (as at November 1996)

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  - 4 Full-time staff profile (as at November 1996)

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  - 5 Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1997)

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  - 6 Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1997)

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

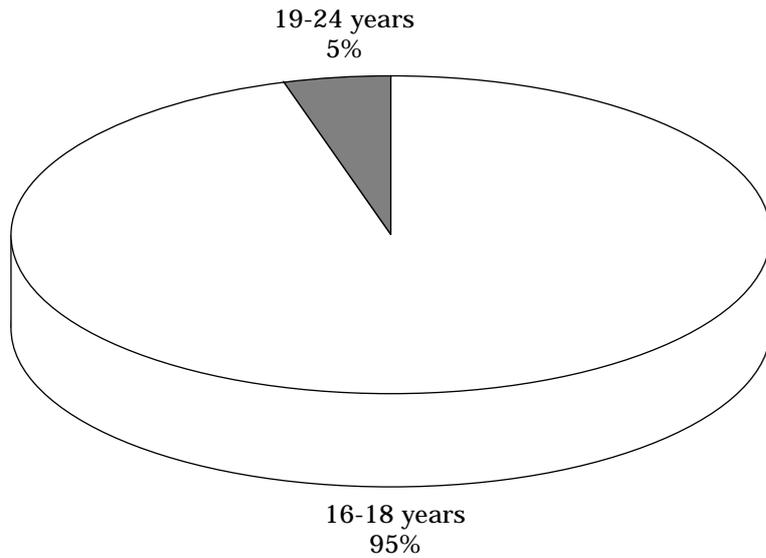
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**Figure 1**

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**St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1996)**

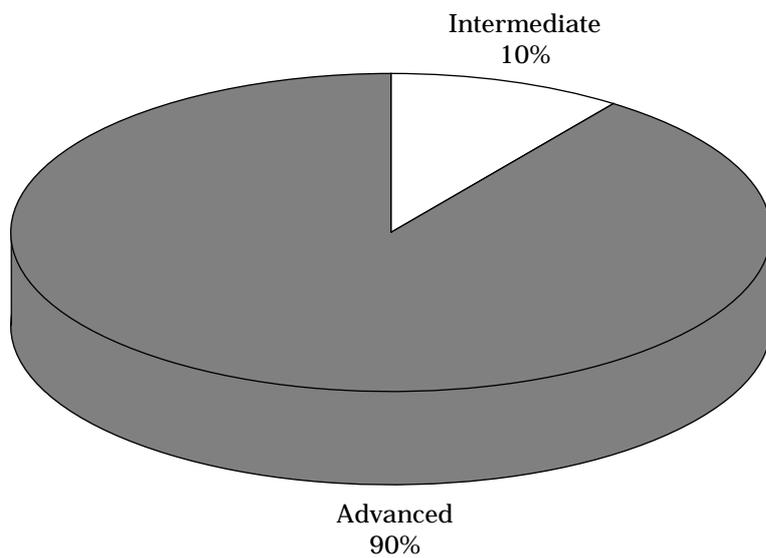


Student numbers: 817

**Figure 2**

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**St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1996)**

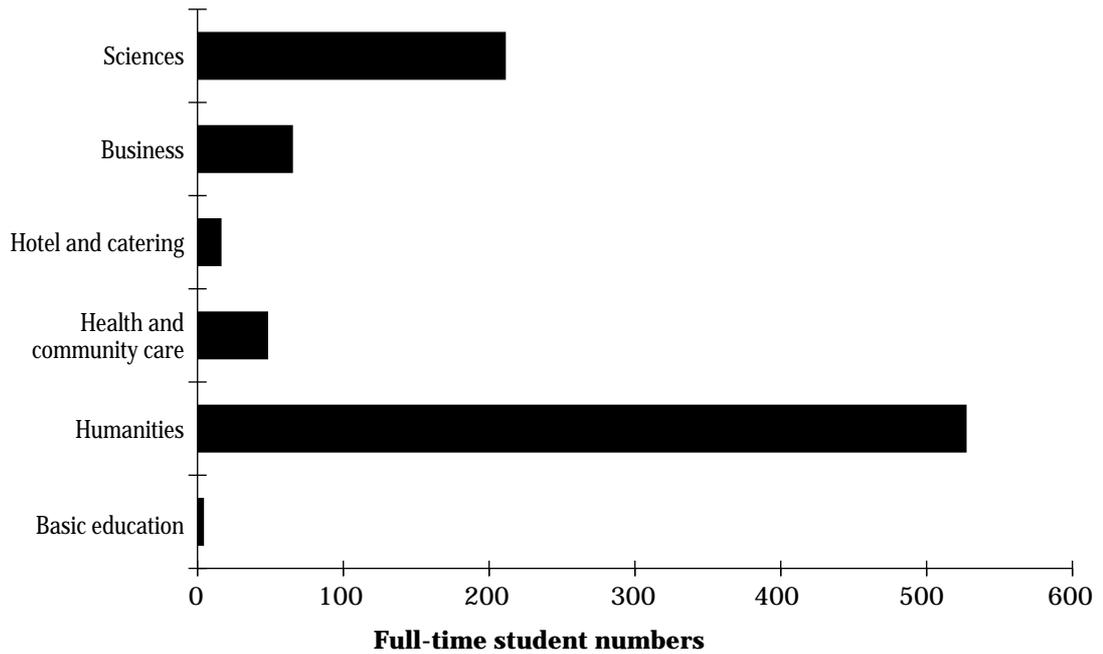


Student numbers: 817

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**Figure 3**

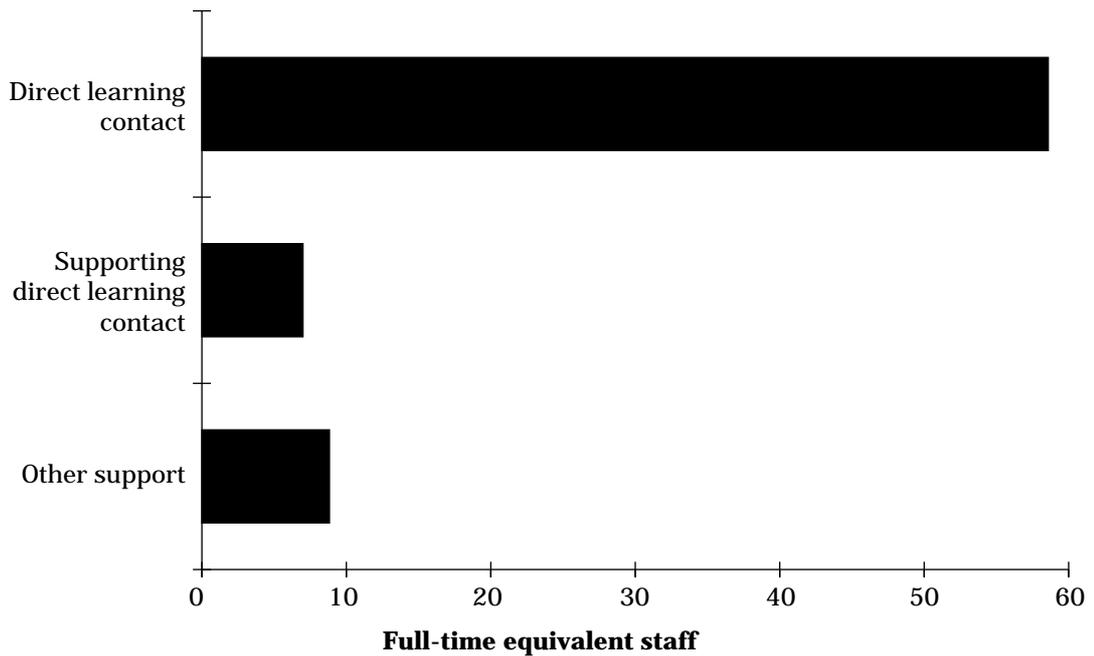
**St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College: full-time student numbers by curriculum area (as at November 1996)**



Full-time student numbers: 817

**Figure 4**

**St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College: full-time staff profile (as at November 1996)**



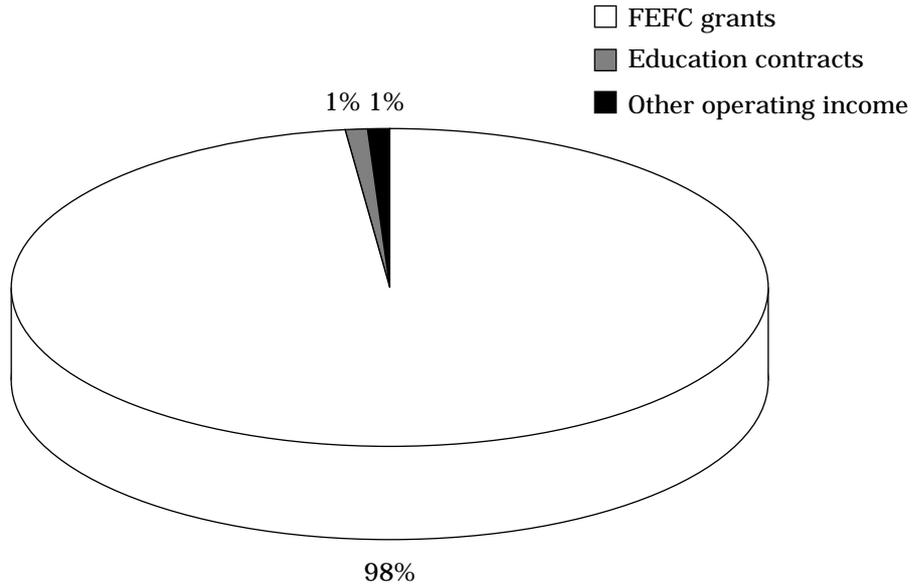
Full-time equivalent staff: 74

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**Figure 5**

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**St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1997)**

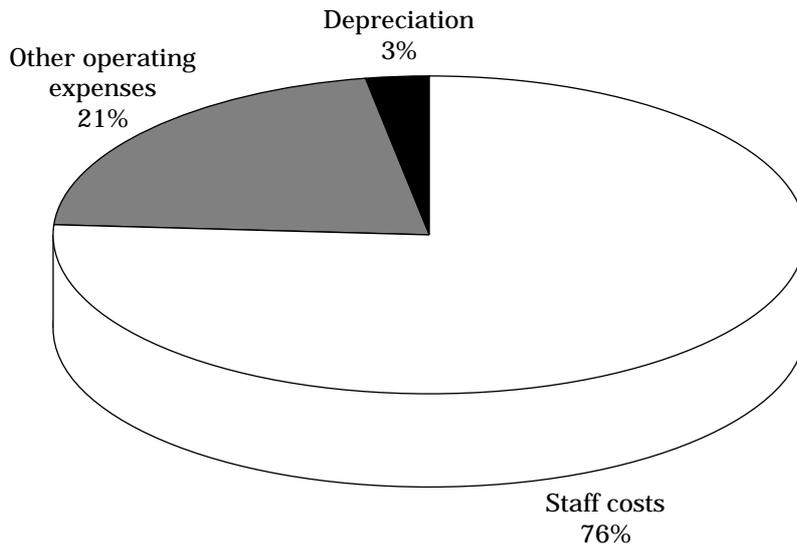


Estimated income: £2,508,267

**Figure 6**

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**St John Rigby Roman Catholic Sixth Form College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1997)**



Estimated expenditure: £2,502,964

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