

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Thomas Danby College**

**September 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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## **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 124/97

**THOMAS DANBY COLLEGE**  
**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION**  
**Inspected November 1995-June 1997**

## Summary

Thomas Danby College, Leeds, has strong community links, and it responds well to the needs of groups which are not well represented in further education. There is strong promotion of equal opportunities. Links with employers, schools and the local authority are productive. Considerable improvements to governance have been made since the college's financial crisis in 1995; a financial recovery plan is being successfully implemented and financial controls tightened. A consultative and detailed strategic planning process is linked to the quality review cycle. The college makes a strong commitment to the provision of high-quality support and guidance to students. Standards of teaching and levels of achievement are good in some curriculum areas, for example, baking and childcare, but examination pass rates are below average for the sector in some subjects. Other strengths include: an established framework for quality assurance; sound procedures and practice in staff development; appropriately qualified staff and some good levels of specialist equipment and accommodation. In order to build on these strengths, the college should: make the academic board more effective; address the weaknesses in management information systems and aspects of curriculum management; ensure that levels of tutorial support are consistent across the college; raise levels of students' achievements, especially in humanities and community education; further develop and refine aspects of its quality assurance system; and address some of the poorer aspects of equipment, learning resources and general classroom accommodation.

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

| <b>Aspects of cross-college provision</b>                         |                              | <b>Grade</b>  |              |
|---|------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Responsiveness and range of provision                             |                              | 1   |              |
| Governance and management   |                              | 2   |              |
| Students' recruitment, guidance and support                       |                              | 2   |              |
| Quality assurance   |                              | 3   |              |
| Resources:  | staffing                     | 2   |              |
|   | equipment/learning resources | 3   |              |
|   | accommodation                | 3   |              |
| <b>Curriculum area</b>  | <b>Grade</b>                 | <b>Curriculum area</b>  | <b>Grade</b> |
| Science, mathematics and computing                                | 3                            | Arts and media  | 2            |
| Business  | 3                            | Humanities  | 3            |
| Leisure and tourism   | 2                            | Adult basic education and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | 3            |
| Hospitality and catering  | 2                            |   |              |
| Childcare   | 2                            |   |              |
| Health and social care, including hairdressing and beauty therapy | 2                            |   |              |

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Thomas Danby College was inspected in several phases. Leisure, tourism and sport studies were inspected separately in November 1995. Enrolment and induction procedures were inspected during September 1996. In May 1997, 13 inspectors spent 44 days inspecting curriculum areas. They visited 213 classes and examined students' work and documentation relating to the college and its courses. In the week beginning 16 June 1997, five inspectors spent a further 25 days examining aspects of cross-college provision. During this period they held meetings with governors, representatives from the Leeds Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), the Leeds Careers Guidance Service, Leeds City Council and the local education authority (LEA), head teachers, local employers, parents, other members of the wider community, students, college managers, and teaching and support staff.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Thomas Danby College is one of nine further education colleges in Leeds. It was named after Captain Thomas Danby who was the first mayor of Leeds, following the granting of the city charter by Charles II in 1661. The college has its origins in the mid-1950s, becoming Thomas Danby College in the early 1960s and moving into purpose-built premises in 1977. Historically, the college was one of a number of Leeds monotechs, and specialised in hospitality and food manufacture, hairdressing and childcare. In addition to its main site, the college uses some 34 schools, community centres and training centres in east Leeds for the delivery of its programmes.

3 Leeds has a population of approximately 750,000. The city's economy is based on a wide variety of industrial and commercial activities which include clothing, engineering, financial services, distribution, hotel and catering, and leisure and tourism. Service industries have expanded in recent years, now employing over 70 per cent of the workforce. The unemployment rate in Leeds is 7.3 per cent. However, the college is located in the inner city close to the population centres of Harehills and Chapeltown, where unemployment is over 14 per cent and where a high percentage of those who are unemployed come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The experience of this community has been one of low educational achievement. It has been a policy of the college to try to attract students from this community and to provide a supportive learning environment as part of its aim to widen participation.

4 At the time of inspection, 10,454 students were enrolled at the college. Of these 1,453 were on full-time courses and 9,001 were studying part time. Thirty-two per cent of students were male. Approximately 80 per cent of students were over the age of 19; 64 per cent were over the age of 25. Eighty-six per cent of college students were resident in Leeds and 36 per cent came from the inner-city wards within a five-mile radius of the college. Approximately 27 per cent of students come from minority ethnic

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backgrounds compared with 6 per cent of the population of Leeds and 49 per cent of the population of the two postal districts closest to 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.

5 The college currently offers programmes in: science and food technology; information technology; business and management; hospitality, catering and baking; leisure, tourism and sports studies; health social and childcare; hairdressing and beauty therapy; arts and media; humanities; and adult basic education. These curriculum areas are grouped into five schools and a sixth school covers the cross-college area of student support. Nine cross-college managers are responsible for: training and development; finance; facilities; human resources; business development; marketing; the computer network; management information systems; and the college's Farthings restaurant. The senior management team comprises the acting principal, and the directors of academic affairs and resources. This team, together with the heads of school and cross-college managers, form the college management team. There are currently 405 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 33 per cent are part time. Forty-nine per cent of staff are engaged in direct learning contact. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

6 A significant number of collaborative partnerships have been developed with industrial and commercial concerns. Many of these, especially in hotel and catering and food manufacture, involve college staff delivering training and assessment on employers' premises. The recently revised draft mission of the college is 'to provide quality education and training, supportive of individuals and responsive to the needs of our local and wider community'. The college is committed to maintaining a community ethos and to attracting students from groups which have not in the past entered further education, whilst at the same time valuing the mix of ages, cultures and backgrounds as an important ingredient of the learning experience offered by the college.

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

7 A broad range of courses is offered from foundation to undergraduate level. Some full-time courses, such as the national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 3 in craft baking, the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diplomas in chocolate and sugar technology, and in leisure (outdoor pursuits) are highly specialised. There is in addition an extensive portfolio of part-time courses, including courses providing access to further and higher education, delivered both on the main site and in outreach centres. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses are provided in over 20 subjects which include community languages. Since incorporation, the college has extended its range of provision. For example, 41 new courses at a range of levels have been introduced during the current academic year, including NVQs in management at levels 3, 4,

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and 5. Student numbers have grown by 26 per cent over the last three years and there have been substantial enrolments in some of the new areas of provision. In business studies, for example, the number of students has increased from 85 to over 1,000 during the last three years. A significant number of courses, however, especially those in humanities and community education, attract only small numbers, and the college has withdrawn general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) provision in manufacturing, retail and distribution owing to low recruitment.

8 Good progress has been made in developing modes of study which support more flexible patterns of attendance. For example, many vocational programmes have entry points in September, January and April; and the access courses are offered on both a full-time and part-time basis, with daytime and evening provision on different sites. Course modularisation is at an advanced stage on many college programmes. In childcare, for example, all major courses are modularised. In hairdressing, individual learning programmes are devised to meet the needs of different students. A new modularised programme at pre-foundation level has been introduced for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, providing more effective progression into mainstream NVQ and GNVQ provision. An enrichment programme which includes a range of activities such as sports, art, languages and counselling skills was introduced for the first time this academic year. Currently, about 10 per cent of full-time students take part. Opportunities to study at weekends and during the summer months are less well developed, both at the main site of the college and in community centres.

9 The college has productive links with many of the city schools. The schools' liaison manager co-ordinates the provision of advice and guidance to prospective students. College staff attend careers events, parents' evenings and 'industry' days in the schools. There are 'taster' events at the college and other visits from pupils to the college. A prospectus especially designed for school-leavers provides comprehensive information. There is some successful collaborative provision with schools, including GNVQ introductory courses in six vocational areas, part 1 GNVQs in business, health and social care and food manufacturing, and NVQ programmes in hospitality, sports and recreation. Extensive links with special schools are well established. Close links with higher education institutions include the delivery of teacher training programmes in collaboration with the universities of Leeds and Huddersfield, and a popular hospitality management programme run in partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University.

10 The mission of the college is promoted through extensive community partnerships which include links with the city council, the LEA, the youth service, social services, local community groups, the TEC and other bodies. The college has been successful in developing a wide ranging community programme across centres in east Leeds and beyond. There are specific initiatives to involve the African-Caribbean and Asian communities as well



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as a number of rural communities affected by mining closures. Courses for Asian women, for example, are delivered at a local Bangladeshi community education and training centre. A successful partnership with the city council has resulted in the recent establishment of the East Leeds Family Learning Centre, designed to provide lifelong learning opportunities in the surrounding community. Within a short period of opening, the centre has recruited 1,600 students, 49 per cent of whom are attending adult education classes for the first time. The college is promoting provision which encourages students to progress from outreach to mainstream courses.

11 A European dimension to the curriculum is supported by a college-wide policy and centrally co-ordinated by an officer specifically appointed for this purpose. The college has active links with 16 institutions in six different countries and there has been a steady increase in the numbers of students and tutors taking part in visits and work experience in European countries. In 1996-97, 44 students and 23 teachers were involved in a variety of projects which included visits to Spain, Germany, France, Portugal and Crete. In total, these projects attracted £43,000 of European funding. Reciprocal arrangements are also in place with approximately 70 students and over 20 staff from European countries. The college has been involved in a further project to identify good practice across Europe in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Grants from the European Social Fund to support college provision totalled nearly £200,000 during the last academic year.

12 Links with employers are strong, particularly in hairdressing, and care and hospitality where advisory groups have been established and courses adapted to meet current industrial and commercial needs. Some programme areas, for example computing and information technology, have no formal advisory groups. Links with industry are also underdeveloped on full-time business courses. There is extensive collaboration with employers in the school of hospitality and food manufacture. Training and assessment for NVQ qualifications is delivered by college staff across a large number of employers' premises in the north of England including some major hotel and bakery groups. In response to the needs of the confectionery industry, the college provides the only national course in chocolate and sugar technology. The college also has a high reputation regionally for its programmes in meat preparation and baking.

13 The college has established a business and training services division to promote full-cost work and consultancy for industry. So far this academic year, it has achieved an income of over £300,000. Relationships with the Leeds TEC are good; the total value of contracts for youth training and modern apprenticeships amounts to over £100,000. In many areas of the college, for example, in care, hospitality and hairdressing, there is extensive and well-organised work experience provision. Opportunities are more restricted in business and media, and there is no central

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co-ordination of this activity. The college recognises the need to develop and co-ordinate its employer and external agency database which is currently fragmented.

14 The college marketing manager liaises closely with marketing co-ordinators in each school and with the business and training services division. A fully-costed marketing plan has been aligned to the college's strategic objectives; recent labour market intelligence reports contain action points relating to areas of potential college activity. There is a range of attractive, high-quality marketing materials. Two prospectuses promote courses to school-leavers and adults, respectively, and there are additional booklets covering part-time, community-based provision. There is little material written in minority ethnic languages and few publications are produced in a form easily accessible to students with lower levels of literacy.

15 There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity: a comprehensive set of policies, which have been recently reviewed, encompasses disability, gender and race. A cross-college steering group meets regularly and there is an extensive, rolling programme of staff training to support equal opportunities. Students are made aware of equal opportunities issues during their induction and through college literature. Creche facilities are not available on the main college site but are provided in a number of the community centres. Students and parents speak positively of a distinctive, caring ethos at the college, especially towards those students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

16 In April 1995, it became apparent that the college was in serious financial difficulty. Its budget was overspent by £1.7 million. In May 1995, the college notified the FEFC that it could no longer operate within its financial memorandum, and the director of finance resigned. In the same month, the governors appointed an acting principal to supervise the management of the college. The existing principal, who retired in October 1995, was absent from the college on long-term sick leave. As part of its recovery plan, the college undertook a major restructuring exercise which has resulted in 58 staff redundancies and early retirements; the number of senior managers was reduced from eight to three. The acting principal was appointed on a temporary contract during November 1995. The corporation is currently seeking exemption by the secretary of state for education and employment from the instruments and articles of government of further education colleges, which require that a vacancy for a permanent principal be advertised nationally. The governors, acting principal and college managers have effected major improvements in the college's financial position over the last two years, and the college is successfully implementing its recovery plan. In 1994-95, it incurred a deficit of £3 million, including restructuring costs; in 1995-96, it achieved an operating surplus, once loan repayments had been made. It is on target to achieve an operating surplus for 1996-97. The college has exceeded its unit targets in each of the last three years.

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17 The financial crisis in 1995 led the governing body to review its composition, function and operations, and considerable improvements have been made. It established a finance committee in February 1996, on the advice of FEFC auditors; previously, governors believed that they would serve the college better by considering financial matters at full board meetings. The committee structure has been reviewed, and five committees now have responsibility for: employment/policy; finance; audit; remuneration; and nominations to the board. There is, in addition, a joint consultative committee, to provide a channel of communication with college staff. The full corporation meets every two months. The finance committee also meets every two months, between corporation meetings. The board has enlarged its membership by a third; six new members have been appointed since June 1996, to include those with financial and legal backgrounds. The governing body now has 18 members, including two vacancies. It currently comprises eight independent members, a TEC nominee, two members of the college staff, a representative from the local community, three co-opted members and the acting principal. There is no student representative. Five governors are women and two are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The board has established a register of interests and a code of conduct, and undertaken a self-assessment exercise to evaluate its performance. The chair of governors appraises the principal.

18 The corporation receives comprehensive information to enable it to monitor the work of the college. For example, it receives regular and detailed financial information, an annual report on quality assurance including students' achievements, an annual health and safety report, and updates on the implementation of equal opportunities. The employment/policy committee has conducted a review of major college policies and brought them to the full board for approval. A revised equal opportunities policy was approved in November 1996 and a revised health and safety policy in May 1997. However, the board has not established a schedule of policies with timescales and responsibilities for their review, nor has it determined a schedule of reports on their implementation. Governors reviewed the college charter in May 1997 and are currently consulting with staff on a revised mission statement for the college.

19 The governors joint consultative committee provides an effective channel of communication between staff governors and other members of staff. It reports to the full board to ensure that staff concerns are aired. At present, it is exploring ways of improving the low level of contact between governors and staff. Although some governors undertake training to help them in their role, and some training events have recently been held, the board has not identified governors' training needs and there is no established programme of information and training events. New governors are briefed by the clerk, and receive a comprehensive governors' handbook, but there is no structured induction programme for new governors.

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20 Clear leadership and effective management are now providing the college with a firm sense of purpose and direction. Members of the senior management team have recently held a series of 'open forums' to enable staff to question them about aspects of the college's management. The grouping of curriculum areas into a reduced number of schools has resulted in increased dialogue and sharing of good practice between staff from different curriculum areas. The creation of over 20 cross-college groups, with staff representatives from different areas, has improved cross-college communication and co-ordination. Attention has been given to effective and efficient communications, and a communications policy which requires schools to review and improve their channels of communication has been established. A college newsletter has recently been introduced. One of the declared aims of the communications policy is to maintain an open management style throughout the college. This approach has done much to foster and preserve good relations with staff. Despite the recent difficult period, staff morale is high in most parts of the college.

21 Some elements of the college structures still require further development, and the college has begun to address these. The provision delivered in the community is insufficiently integrated with that on the main college site. In this area of the college's work, links between staff from related curriculum areas are non-existent or poor, and lines of responsibility and accountability are unclear. At college level, the academic board has two subcommittees for quality assurance and validation and standards. Although the subcommittees work effectively, the academic board itself has been ineffective. It ceased to meet during 1995-96, and was reconstituted, holding its inaugural meeting in March 1997. In its self-assessment report, the college acknowledges the need to review the relationship between the academic board and college management.

22 The strategic planning process is consultative and detailed, and linked to the quality review cycle. A strategic planning flowchart gives governors, managers and staff a clear outline of their respective roles in the production of the three-year development plan, which is updated annually. The plan consists of a summary and a series of operational objectives. Schools and cross-college resource units link their annual objectives to those in the college development plan. Most are clear and precise and include measurable objectives. In some, however, links with the college development plan are unclear, individual responsibilities for monitoring action or progress are not identified, and the timescales for action are insufficiently precise.

23 There is variable practice in the day-to-day management of curriculum areas. The new middle managers have received training in management, including leadership and team building. Despite the newness of the structures, teams have settled down well and there is a good level of co-operation and teamwork. Management is clearly structured and supportive, meetings are held regularly, and

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communications are good. Inspectors noted a number of individual weaknesses in different curriculum areas, however, including a lack of rigour in the collection and use of statistics, some inefficient management of resources, and some ineffective monitoring of teachers' performance. In some areas, the planning of teaching and learning is poor: for example, some teams have no established policy on the function, format and content of schemes of work.

24 The college's average level of funding for 1996-97 is £17.04 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £17.97. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The college delegates budgets to schools and functional units. The 20 budget holders are provided with good support: they receive a budgetary control handbook and monthly monitoring reports which are accompanied by a commentary. They discuss their budgets regularly with members of the college's finance unit. Governors and managers receive detailed monthly financial reports, and the college uses a series of financial performance indicators to monitor its financial position. The college compares its financial performance with that of other colleges. Detailed financial regulations were approved by governors in May 1997. A system for the individual costing of each course has been developed and piloted, and is being used in the planning for 1997-98. The delegation of budgets has not been without problems: one area overspent its budget significantly in 1996-97. Some managers are inexperienced in financial management, and the college has identified the need for further training.

25 Computerised management information systems are providing an increasing amount of support to managers. They are used for monitoring and planning in relation to curricular and financial management, and for the completion of returns to the FEFC. These returns have been consistently timely and accurate. The potential for the use of management information has been limited, however, by inadequate software, particularly for recording students' achievements and attendance. Although confidence in the system is growing and the number of reports available is extensive, many staff keep their own records, duplicating college systems. Inspectors noted a number of discrepancies between the data kept by tutors and those produced by the management information system, particularly in relation to community education. There is a time lag in the recording of student withdrawals, and the collection and recording of data from the college's outcentres is slow. The monitoring of destinations is poor. An information systems focus group, representing the various users of management information, has been established, and it has drawn up a comprehensive action plan for improvement.

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

26 The college is strongly committed to the provision of high-quality support and guidance to a diverse range of students. A series of policies

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sets out students' entitlements at each phase of their contact with the college. Staff are assisted by comprehensive documentation. The school of student support co-ordinates five cross-college services. These are: guidance services; admissions; learning support; support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and learning resources.

27 Prospective students are well informed about the college and its courses. Personal, telephone and written enquiries from prospective students are dealt with by guidance services staff. They use a well-documented system which enables them to track the progress of an enquiry, record the action taken, and log the outcome. Guidance staff are prepared appropriately for their role. They know when to refer an enquiry to a subject specialist, making the necessary interview arrangements. The college prospectus is clearly presented, but is considered by some students to lack the detail required to make well-informed decisions. At interview, not all teachers make sufficient reference to the students' record of achievement in order to inform discussion about the choice of course.

28 Care is taken to ensure that guidance addresses the needs of part-time students, including those who belong to groups which have not usually entered further education. The college has obtained financial support from the local TEC to fund the employment of two community advice and guidance workers. They provide effective advice in the community on courses, finance, and welfare. They also support students through the enrolment process. Close links between college tutors and Leeds adult training centres ensure that the learning needs of potential students are matched to appropriate courses. Contact with local employers is good; teachers visit companies to provide information on courses to managers and employees. The college has a service for the accreditation of students' prior learning although it is currently underused. Prospective students wishing to have their prior learning accredited first contact the guidance and information centre which provides them with an explanatory leaflet on the accreditation process. They are also entitled to a free initial guidance interview.

29 Enrolment procedures are generally well planned. All staff are briefed about the enrolment process, and an enrolment steering group monitors procedures. Students can enrol at different points throughout the year. There is a clear policy for the induction of students into the college, and for the most part, it is successfully implemented. Students receive a college handbook, which is clearly written. The college's charter is also given to all students at induction. Course teams provide subject specific information in course handbooks. At the end of induction, students, together with their tutor, consult an induction checklist to ensure that all important issues have been covered. Procedures are in place to facilitate transfer between programmes where appropriate. Not all students who transfer or join courses late receive an induction, and course teams adopt inconsistent approaches to meeting the needs of these students.

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30 All full-time students, and an increasing number of part-time students, are given an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills during induction. Learning support staff liaise with course teams to ensure assessment materials are appropriate to the needs of students and are vocationally relevant. Students identified as needing additional learning support are offered extra tuition, which takes place in the learning centre. This year, of the 174 full-time students identified as requiring additional support, 165 took up the offer of extra tuition. Staff monitor attendance at support sessions and review students' progress every six weeks. Course tutors are provided with regular feedback on their progress. The college conducts an analysis of the achievements of students who receive support. Over 85 per cent of students who received support during 1995-96 achieved the qualifications for which they were aiming. Support for students with physical disabilities and sensory impairments is given a high priority and managed well. The learning support assistants provide effective personal care, mobility support, and support in class. They have undergone awareness training in deafness and blindness. Visually impaired students are provided with learning materials in large print. Additional support is available through effective links with those agencies whose clients are major users of the college's programmes.

31 Students generally appreciate the quality of pastoral support offered to them by staff. All full-time students have a personal tutor. The tutorial system is managed by the heads of school and co-ordinated by student support services. A tutorial policy emphasises the need to monitor and review students' progress through group tutorials and regular one-to-one interviews. A programme of activities covers personal and social education, and is supplemented by termly individual meetings at which tutors and students review progress and plan future work. Some of the tutorials arranged for student and tutor to check whether there are any outstanding problems are very brief. In some group tutorials there were no schemes of work and no clear objectives. The college encourages students to develop their records of achievement; it has set a target of 95 per cent completion by full-time students, and 20 per cent by part-time students for 1996-97. There is no college policy to determine how 16 to 19 year old students' progress should be reported to parents, and no policy for tutorial support for part-time students. In the latter case, this has resulted in variable practice between courses in the provision of tutorial support. There is insufficient monitoring of the use of tutorial time to ensure effectiveness and consistency.

32 The counselling and welfare service is well publicised. Two part-time qualified counsellors provide confidential personal counselling four days a week, which includes a service to students located at the community centres. A wide range of other welfare and guidance services is offered to students and a recent 'health fair' on HIV/AIDS, and drugs awareness has helped to raise the profile of this area of support. The college has an access fund which helps to support students with financial

difficulties. Students generally receive well-planned careers education through the tutorial programme and the college's full-time careers adviser. The college has a service level agreement with the Leeds Careers Guidance Service. In 1996-97, officers from the service were involved in 14 group sessions and 235 individual interviews. Every two months, the guidance centre produces a careers newsletter and this is much appreciated by students. A guidance services noticeboard keeps students informed of employment and accommodation opportunities. School administration officers work with tutors to monitor students' attendance and to record any action taken. In most cases, the monitoring of attendance is effective.

33 The college supports the students' union, which organises a variety of social events, and encourages students to express their views about the college. Despite the college's financial position, it has funded a sabbatical year for the current students' union president who has regular meetings with the acting principal. Students may attend course team meetings, and are represented on many committees. Their views are respected and the college attempts to address the concerns they raise.

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

34 Of the 213 teaching sessions inspected, 57 per cent had strengths which outweighed weaknesses. This is below the average of 63 per cent in 1995-96 for all colleges in the further education sector recorded in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. In 11 per cent of the teaching sessions, weaknesses outweighed the strengths. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected (67 per cent) was less than satisfactory. It ranged from 81 per cent in childcare classes to 55 per cent in adult basic education and 52 per cent in business. The following table gives the grades awarded to the sessions inspected.

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

| <b>Programmes</b>                      | <b>Grade 1</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
|--|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| GCE A level                            | 1              | 6         | 6         | 1         | 0        | 14            |
| GCSE                                   | 1              | 5         | 3         | 1         | 0        | 10            |
| GNVQ                                   | 6              | 5         | 11        | 2         | 0        | 24            |
| NVQ                                    | 6              | 19        | 10        | 3         | 2        | 40            |
| Access to further and higher education | 1              | 4         | 7         | 1         | 0        | 13            |
| Basic education                        | 1              | 2         | 15        | 0         | 0        | 18            |
| Other vocational                       | 20             | 31        | 10        | 10        | 0        | 71            |
| Other*                                 | 8              | 6         | 6         | 2         | 1        | 23            |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>44</b>      | <b>78</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>213</b>    |

\*includes higher education classes.



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35 In the better sessions, teachers used well-structured schemes of work and their lesson plans contained clear aims and objectives. The pace of learning was well managed and teachers regularly checked to ensure that students understood what was being taught. Teachers provided students with a variety of suitable learning activities which engaged their interest. Where appropriate, they related theory to current commercial and professional practices. Teachers marked students' assignments and other work fairly, and returned it to them promptly. In the less successful lessons, the teaching was not sufficiently imaginative and challenging. Lesson plans and schemes of work lacked sufficient detail on teaching methods and learning resources.

36 In science, schemes of work ensured a thorough coverage of the syllabus, and there were schedules for the regular setting and marking of work. In the best sessions, teachers used suitably varied teaching and learning strategies and teaching aids. In an access course for Asian women, which was designed to help them participate in further education, the teacher was able to discuss some of the more difficult material in the students' own language. Group work was well organised. Assessments were appropriate. Written feedback on students' work, however, was sometimes too general. It did not always help students to correct their mistakes. Where lesson plans lacked detail, sessions were frequently poorly organised and teachers failed to maintain the interest of students. There were no effective strategies for dealing with the late arrival of students or absence from classes. Teaching in mathematics and computing and information technology was generally sound. Lessons were well planned and had clear objectives. Teachers used a range of activities which sustained the motivation of students. In mathematics, some of the part-time staff made effective use of good-quality worksheets. In computing and information technology, practical work was appropriately linked to theory, and assignments were carefully planned. The use of information technology by teachers in the teaching of mathematics was underdeveloped. Students' attendance at mathematics classes was often poor.

37 Teachers enjoyed good working relationships with students on business programmes and, in many sessions, the quality of teaching was high. In administration classes, which were part of the community education programme, the learning manuals used were informative and well designed. Appropriate extension activities were provided for those students able to work at a faster pace and good levels of support were provided for the adult students. In a number of the full-time programmes, and, particularly on the higher level programmes some of the tasks set for students were not sufficiently challenging. Some early morning classes did not start on time, and attendance at some of the workshop sessions was poor. On GNVQ programmes there were very few visits away from the college and students were offered no work experience. On one programme of study delivered through open learning, there were

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significant deficiencies in procedures for monitoring and reviewing students' progress.

38 Teaching on hospitality, catering and butchery programmes was sound; on bakery courses it was of a particularly high standard. The teaching of theory was good on the Hotel and Catering International Management Association and GNVQ courses. A strong feature on GNVQ courses was the skill with which teachers developed students' key skills in an industrial context. Assessment of students' achievements on full-time programmes was thorough. Written feedback was detailed and supportive. The support and guidance provided in a number of the hospitality and catering sessions, conducted in realistic work environments, was less consistent. Culinary techniques and methods, and the quality of the food produced, were sometimes less than satisfactory. Instructions to students lacked detail, and very few demonstrations of appropriate techniques took place. Most teaching in leisure, tourism and sports studies was good. Some lessons were of a particularly high standard. Many lessons were well planned. Teachers used their knowledge and experience to help students gain insights into the requirements of the industry. Question and answer techniques were appropriately used to check students' progress and understanding. The use of the college travel shop as a realistic working environment for students was not sufficiently integrated with other aspects of the programmes of study.

39 Varied methods of working were used to good effect on health and social care courses. Teachers prepared students well for work experience, which formed an integral part of all courses. They monitored students' progress through regular assignment work and provided effective support and guidance to students whilst they were on their work placements. Assessment schedules identified assignment deadlines. Students confirmed that marked work was returned promptly, and with comments that enabled them to improve their work. In a number of observed lessons, teachers talked to the class for too long a period, and failed to allow students to ask questions, or to present their own ideas and did not check that students understood what was being taught. Occasionally, teachers failed to take adequate account of the different abilities of students. Childcare lessons were well prepared and the teaching well organised. Good use was made of well-prepared handouts and overhead projector transparencies. In one class, the simple diagram of a ladder was used to illustrate the small steps appropriate for teaching specific skills to children with disabilities. Work placements were well organised, and students made good use of the professional knowledge they had gained on their return to college. Assessment tasks were clear and appropriate, although the feedback given to students was not detailed enough to enable students to see how their work might be improved. In some lessons, teachers failed to vary their teaching methods enough to sustain students' motivation and interest. In many sessions, teachers did not effectively review learning outcomes with students at the end of sessions.

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40 On hairdressing and beauty therapy courses much of the teaching was highly effective. In the best sessions, teachers began the lesson by referring to work previously undertaken and then extended students' knowledge and skills to enable them to deal with new situations. Teachers often set work which stretched students' understanding and encouraged them to reach for higher standards. They asked probing questions, taking account of the students' varying abilities, and made good use of their responses to reinforce learning. Appropriate use was made of teaching aids. Assessments were of an appropriate standard, and were fairly marked. In some hairdressing and beauty therapy lessons there were not enough clients early in the week to enable students to complete their NVQ assessments.

41 In art and design, performing arts and media, learning activities were suitably varied and the students well motivated. Carefully structured lessons reflected the aims of the course. Curriculum planning was particularly effective on second-year media courses. Teachers displayed enthusiasm for their specialisms and enjoyed good working relations with their students. The quality of written feedback on students' assignments was variable. In art, there was an appropriate emphasis on the development of drawing skills. The GNVQ programme, however, sometimes lacked the necessary vocational focus.

42 The best lessons in humanities were well prepared and the work was supported by an appropriate range of learning materials. The teaching of English language was particularly good; teachers make effective use of audio-visual aids and appropriate documentation. In modern European and community language lessons, little use was made of teaching aids where these would have been useful in developing students' understanding. In classes with small numbers of students, teachers did not always adopt the most appropriate teaching methods. Students' lateness for classes generally went unremarked by teachers. The teaching of basic education was sound, though sometimes unimaginative. At the start of courses, teachers assessed the needs of students and planned an appropriate individual programme for each of them. The quality of feedback to students on their assessed work was good and teachers regularly reviewed individuals' progress. In some of the less successful lessons, teachers failed to provide work which extended the students sufficiently or used learning materials that were not relevant to students' experiences. Sometimes, there was too much emphasis on individual learning in workshops, and too few opportunities for students to take part in discussion or group activities.

43 The planning and organisation of teaching for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was appropriately related to effective forms of assessment. Relationships between staff and students were positive and productive. High standards were expected and, where the learning took place in a real work environment, they were often achieved. Teachers sometimes failed to provide students with written feedback on their

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performance. Teaching and learning materials were not always available in suitable forms. The poor quality of information technology resources restricted the range of learning opportunities for students and reduced the opportunities for staff to develop materials best suited to students' differing needs.

### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

44 On many courses, students showed an ability to work effectively in groups or as members of a team. To some extent, however, the opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to develop these social and interpersonal skills were limited by the undue emphasis placed on working individually. Adult, part-time students, many of whom were in employment, made productive use of their workplace experience in classroom discussions and practical work. In practical work, most students were aware of, and observed, safety regulations. However, there were occasions when students were dressed inappropriately, had unsuitable footwear, or wore an excessive amount of jewellery.

45 On GNVQ programmes, students' information technology skills were much in evidence in assignment work. For example, on intermediate business courses students' made good use of spreadsheet data. In media studies, students were using desktop publishing creatively in the production of an insert for a local newspaper. Students frequently demonstrated good oral skills in their contributions to work in class. For example, students in health and social care were articulate in relating their practical experiences to theory and in hairdressing, communication between students and their clients was mature and effective. Students' numeracy skills were generally less evident and there were a number of sessions, particularly in science, where students' lack of arithmetical skills hindered their progress.

46 The technical skills of many of the bakery and catering students were of a high order. For example, in the cake decoration wired flower classes, students produced work which was delicate and imaginative in design and use of colour. Students' kitchen skills were less well developed. For example, students sometimes displayed poor knife-work skills, made sauces which were too thick and lacked presentational skills.

47 Written work, particularly on higher level courses, was often of a good standard. On management programmes, for example, students' portfolios demonstrated a broad range of evidence drawn from work-related tasks and responsibilities. There was evidence of students seeking to use and apply a range of reference materials. For example, assignments in health and social care were well organised and students were able to demonstrate effective research skills and the ability to display information clearly. Work in hairdressing was neatly presented and portfolios were assembled systematically.

48 Of the 187 students aged 16 to 18, entered for advanced vocational qualifications in 1996, 76 per cent were successful according to tables

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published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). This places the college in the middle third of colleges in the sector on this performance measure. Only 25 per cent of the 87 students entered for intermediate vocational qualifications were successful; this places the college in the bottom 10 per cent of colleges nationally according to the DfEE tables. Only 55 students aged 16 to 18 were entered for one or more GCE A level in 1996. They scored on average 1.8 points per subject entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2) which again places the college in the bottom 10 per cent of colleges nationally on this performance measure.

49 Achievements in science are variable. Pass rates on short courses leading to qualifications validated by the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene were good. All students passed two such courses in 1996. The pass rate on courses designed to provide access to higher education has been less consistent, varying from 20 to 92 per cent over the last two years. Out of 16 students who began the course leading to a GCE A level in human biology in 1995-96, none passed. Many courses have had poor retention rates. For example, only one-third of the students on the BTEC national diploma science (technology of food) completed the course in 1995. The principal mathematics qualification offered by the college is at GCSE level; the majority of students taking this qualification are over 19. There were 104 entries in this age group in 1996, only 25 per cent of which were awarded grades C or above compared to 32 per cent the previous year and a national figure of 48 per cent. Results on full-time and part-time courses in computing and information technology are mainly satisfactory, sometimes good.

50 There are high standards of achievement on supervisory management courses in the business programme area, where there have been 100 per cent pass rates. Pass rates on the accounting technician courses are also above national averages. Results were good on the GNVQ advanced business programme in 1995; however for the cohort due to complete in 1997, over half have already left the course. The pass rate on the NVQ 3 administration course in 1995-96 was nearly 90 per cent but it was much lower on the level 2 programme. There were some poor pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate retail distribution course and on the GCE A level programmes in accounts and business studies in 1996. The unreliability of data for the community education programmes makes it difficult to make an informed judgement about success rates on many of the administration courses.

51 Students' achievements in catering are generally good. For example, full awards in NVQ 2 hospitality and catering consistently exceed 80 per cent and those in baking, 90 per cent. In the last two years, pass rates on the intermediate GNVQ in hospitality and catering have been 100 per cent. In 1995-96, three results were poor: the NVQ 2 programmes in the service of food and drink for bar, restaurant and reception. For reception, the pass rate was only 11 per cent. Retention rates ranged from 100 per cent on the NVQ 2 food preparation programme to 38 per cent on the service of

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food and drink-bar course. Retention rates are satisfactory or good on most bakery courses. Recording of students' achievements for the off-site provision is not sufficiently developed to allow accurate judgements to be made, particularly since achievement is not measured against any time frame for the completion of a qualification.

52 Results on the advanced and intermediate GNVQ leisure programmes are above national averages; the 1996 intermediate pass rate, for example, was 82 per cent. In addition, there were 100 per cent pass rates on some courses, including courses leading to the national certificates in outdoor pursuits and leisure. The foundation GNVQ pass rate (27 per cent) was unsatisfactory and there was a poor level of achievement on the access to higher education course in 1996. On many advanced programmes in leisure poor retention between years one and two has been a problem.

53 Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate health and social care courses are well above the national average of 49 per cent. In 1995-96 for example, 76 per cent of those who completed the course achieved the full award and over half of the students gained a merit or distinction. Over 90 per cent of students who completed the access to social work course were successful; 83 per cent achieved at merit grade or above. Retention is a significant problem on some courses however; over 70 per cent of students on the national certificate health studies course, for example, failed to complete. National diploma and certificate awards in nursery nursing and Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education courses on the main site are sound. Pass rates are often over 90 per cent. There are, however, a number of short courses, mainly community based, which have poor results. Although pass rates on many hairdressing and beauty courses are satisfactory, success rates on some courses are low because of the high number of withdrawals. Only 50 per cent of students who enrolled on the NVQ 3 course in hairdressing and 33 per cent on the national diploma in beauty therapy course, successfully completed their courses in 1996.

54 Pass rates in art and design are good for students who complete their courses. In 1996, for example, they were close to 90 per cent on the two-year advanced GNVQ course and the national diplomas in media and performing arts. Results in 1996 were also good in GCSE film studies and GCE A level art, although in both cases retention was close to 40 per cent. Retention is below 70 per cent on the two intermediate programmes in media and art and design. There is some good individual achievement. One performing arts student last year won a scholarship to drama school and, whilst still on the course, toured with a theatre company based at the Leeds Playhouse to give performances in New York.

55 In humanities, completion rates are disappointing and some levels of achievement are particularly poor. Aggregated college statistics for example, show that on the lower level language courses, out of the 162 who enrolled in 1995, there were only eight successful completions in

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1996. GCSE results are better, and closer to national averages. The City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) teachers certificate programme enjoys high success rates, but outcomes on most other programmes, including GCE A level, are unsatisfactory. A high proportion of students on adult basic education programmes do not complete their courses. Of those who do, pass rates are only just satisfactory; for example, only 66 per cent of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students achieved a qualification in 1995-96. Large numbers of students are not aiming for a qualification. Records for these students sometimes comprise a description of their learning rather than competences acquired. A new accreditation framework has been developed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but it is too early to gauge the results of this.

56 The college records the destinations of all students, whether or not they leave the college. In 1996, the largest proportion of students, 37 per cent, were categorised as 'continuing existing programme'; the next largest, 35 per cent, were recorded as 'not known'. Of the remainder, 9 per cent started a new programme at the college, 7 per cent continued in current employment, 5 per cent entered new employment, 3 per cent progressed to higher education and 1 per cent to other further education. Three per cent are shown as 'other'. Some course statistics provide evidence of good rates of progression, for example on intermediate GNVQ health and social care courses, 77 per cent of students in 1996 went on to study advanced programmes. In other areas of work, for example adult basic education, there was no reliable information about destinations.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

57 The college charter has undergone a process of continuous revision in each of the last three years. It is currently published in two main versions, the community and the main-site editions. There is an additional, shorter, summary document which is also available in Braille and on audiotape. A charter review group, with student representation, is revising the current versions which are seen by the college as containing too much information, lacking pictorial stimulus and difficult for some students to understand easily. There is no explicit monitoring of charter performance and some important standards are missing; for example, the employers' section contains no reference to preparing students appropriately for work experience. The college makes available an annual summary of students' views, as recommended by the *National Charter for Further Education*.

58 The nucleus of the quality assurance framework, the course review and evaluation system, is well established and has been refined over a period of time. Reviews are undertaken at three stages: pre-entry, entry and induction; on-programme; and at the end of the academic year when the annual report is produced. Course team annual reports are amalgamated into a programme area review, and schools, where appropriate, produce a composite summary report covering all their constituent courses. A substantial number of the reviews, for example

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those in hospitality and food manufacture, social care, business, arts and media, are detailed. They include a high level of self-critical comment and action points whose achievement can be measured against agreed criteria. Some reviews are less satisfactory. Many of the reviews in humanities and community education for example, were either missing, incomplete or superficial, and contained few, if any, action points. Childcare reviews were also incomplete in relation to agreed deadlines, and those for leisure and food technology contained little analysis of statistical data. The 1996 review of off-site provision in hospitality and food manufacture was not sufficiently analytical, and action points did not indicate responsibilities for action or deadlines. In this area of work, action had not been taken to meet all the comments made by external verifiers.

59 Academic schools set improvement targets for performance in relation to enrolments, retention and achievement, using past outcomes as a benchmark. There is also analysis of the student profile in relation to gender and ethnicity. The school of hospitality and food manufacture has routinely collected and interrogated performance indicators over a number of years. Some of the achievement data, however, were found by inspectors to be unreliable, thus limiting the effectiveness and accuracy of the benchmarking exercise. The college has set overall targets for success, based on 80 per cent annual retention and 65 per cent achievement; there was some confusion amongst staff as to whether the latter figure was a measure of achievement against enrolments or course completions. There are no targets for students' destinations and the college is only now considering the development of value-added measures. A college-wide student questionnaire was introduced for the first time in 1996 to gauge students' perceptions of their programme and, more recently, to collect views about the pre-entry, entry and induction phase of the current academic year. Rates of return, however, have been poor, at 6 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, for the two questionnaires. In addition, results cannot be disaggregated to programme level, so that a number of course teams still use their own customised questionnaires. The college is starting to use surveys of employers' perceptions, although so far, the response to these has been disappointing.

60 The college quality manager chairs the validation and standards working group and the quality assurance working group. Both groups are active, the former meeting termly and the latter monthly. Whilst there are established systems for new course approval, the validation and standards group reported recently that 'many programme leaders were not responding to the requirement to submit new and some current programmes for internal validation'. The quality manager analyses in some detail all course and programme area reviews and, in addition, all external verifier reports. Comments are reported back to appropriate programme managers and heads of school, and these are also discussed at meetings of the quality assurance group. This group has developed an audit function and audits have been undertaken in relation to a number of themes, for example, course portfolios and the design of, and support for,



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students' assignments. There have, however, been no in-depth curriculum audits as part of a planned review programme. There is also no observation of teaching and learning, other than a pilot scheme in hairdressing and beauty therapy, to inform judgements about the quality of teaching.

61 Cross-college service teams produced annual reports in 1996, most of them for the first time. The majority were informed by surveys of users' views, and all have been analysed by the quality manager. Service agreements have been developed for all the main functional areas. Some, for example those in student support, are well established; others are more recent, for example, those relating to schools liaison and human resources which were offered for the first time during this academic year. Cross-college practitioner groups have been established for GNVQ, NVQ, BTEC and more recently GCE A level courses. There is evidence of these groups improving the quality of curriculum delivery. For example, the BTEC group has developed a standard set of student assessment packages and for GNVQ, a college-wide key skills booklet has been produced.

62 A college information file, which exists in computerised form and hard copy, acts as an effective vehicle for recording the standards and procedures which apply to different aspects of the college's operations. It is widely available throughout the college and used by all staff as a reference. The quality assurance instruments for the recently-established outward collaborative provision, principally in the business programme area, are not yet fully integrated with the college systems. Whilst a 'control audit document' checklist is used to monitor the quality of provision, training providers do not subscribe to the three-stage review and evaluation process, nor do they routinely supply records accounting for the guided learning hours actually delivered to students.

63 A policy and comprehensive procedures for staff training and development were produced early in 1996. About 1.5 per cent of the staffing budget is allocated to training and development and some funds are aimed at meeting strategic objectives. For example, £12,000 has been used this year to promote European initiatives; other college priorities include training for assessor awards and equal opportunities. A training needs analysis exercise last summer formed the basis for the internal programme for this academic year and activities are publicised in three termly booklets; external events are promoted in weekly newsletters. The evaluation and dissemination of the outcomes of external activities is a condition of acceptance for training. A number of training activities qualify for a credit accumulation and transfer scheme which leads to a professional certificate validated by Leeds Metropolitan University. Currently, 89 staff are registered on this scheme. Support staff and teachers confirm that a wide range of well-organised activities are offered and that in some areas, levels of participation are high. So far, for example, a total of 214 staff have attended equal opportunities training sessions this academic year. In recognition of its commitment to staff development, the college was awarded Investor in People status in May 1997.

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64 The college's internal verification procedures are currently underdeveloped. On the off-site hospitality provision, for example, only six out of the 17 assessors have relevant training and development lead body qualifications. This has adversely affected the establishment of an internal verification system including the sampling of students' assignments and the monitoring of students' progress towards achieving vocational awards. There are inadequate numbers of qualified internal verifiers in some other vocational areas, for example, hairdressing, art and design and business. There is currently no cross-college internal verification group.

65 The college-wide programme for the induction of all new staff is supported by an induction checklist. The induction process at school level, particularly for newly-qualified teachers, is less consistent. A 'personal development and review' system has recently been re-introduced, following the college's recent restructuring. It is line managed, applies to all full-time staff, and is based on a consideration of the fulfilment of job description statements. There is an elective system for part-time staff. Currently, and partly because of the newness of the system, only 99 of the 270 full-time staff have been appraised.

66 The college quality manager has produced annual quality reports in different formats for a number of years. They have not, however, followed the format of the FEFC inspection framework as described in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, and have not been written in the form of a college self-assessment report. Such a report was produced specifically for the inspection in 1997. It is comprehensive and evaluative, and contains a separate appendix linking judgements to evidence. Too much emphasis was placed on strengths in relation to weaknesses and a number of weaknesses identified by inspectors were not mentioned in the report. There were few quantifiable data in the report to support the judgements reached.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

67 Although none of the college's senior management team of three are women, there are eight women among the 15 heads of school and resources managers. Nine per cent of teaching staff are from minority ethnic groups. The majority of teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Eighty-two per cent of full-time teachers have a formal teaching qualification. Sixty-five per cent are qualified to first degree level or its equivalent. Most other staff have relevant craft, technical or other specialist qualifications, and many full-time and part-time teachers have significant relevant vocational experience. A number of teachers hold, or are working towards, assessor qualifications, although progress in some areas, for example in mathematics and computing and in catering, has been slow. Some teachers working with students who have learning difficulties and/or

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disabilities, and in adult basic education, do not have appropriate specialist qualifications, and in art, there is insufficient textiles and design expertise. Some teachers lack recent, relevant industrial experience, and others have inadequate information technology skills.

68 The college benefits from well-qualified and experienced support staff. A good level of information technology support is provided, and appropriate technician support is available in many of the vocational workshops. Learning support assistants offer valuable guidance to students who have particular learning needs. Effective administrative support is provided to the college schools. The college is well served by central building and domestic services staff, who provide maintenance, cleaning, catering and security services. Support staff are well integrated within the college: many contribute to college committees, and others attend curriculum area team meetings and support the course planning process.

69 The approach to staffing issues during reorganisation has been sensitive and supportive. The recent reduction in staffing levels, following a systematic appraisal of staffing requirements, has been achieved with the co-operation of staff and trade unions. Ninety-five per cent of full-time teachers have signed new contracts. Some effective personnel policies and procedures have been introduced. A number of employment-related policies, for example on recruitment and appraisal, have recently been updated. All staff have a job description which reflects their current roles and responsibilities. The human resources planning process requires further development. For example, the college has not monitored qualifications and skills on a regular basis at college level, or systematically evaluated the staffing profile to identify members who might succeed to more senior positions as current postholders retire. A draft human resources strategy has recently been completed.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

70 Levels of equipment and materials in classrooms are generally good. Most rooms have an overhead projector, screen and white board, and there is adequate access to audio-visual equipment. There are good standards of specialist equipment in many vocational areas. There is a range of modern specialist equipment in catering, including meat processing machinery, baking equipment and a chocolate bath, and a well-equipped food technology laboratory. Performing arts and media facilities include a digital editing suite and sound mixing equipment. A range of high-quality commercial products is used in hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are some good levels of equipment for outdoor pursuits courses. Some significant weaknesses exist in some areas. For example: there is little equipment to support the study of three-dimensional art and design; there are shortages in small equipment on some catering courses; and the quantity of nursery equipment for childcare nurses is low. Many of the resources available to community

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education students are old, outdated and in need of replacement, and some community centres lack audio-visual equipment.

71 The college has an attractive suite of five computer rooms, each containing 18 machines with an appropriate range of computer software. Twenty-nine computers are provided in the learning resource centre, and there are a further 19 in the media studies department. There are no information technology facilities dedicated to other programme areas. Some community centres, for example TechNorth, have a good level of information technology, although provision is poor in many others. The five information technology workshops on the main site are used extensively for group teaching, and this limits access for self-directed study. The ratio of one computer to 19 full-time equivalent students is insufficient to meet current demand. The overall specification of some machines is below industrial standards; a number of computers in the learning resource centre are unable to accommodate the latest software packages. The college has recognised the need to invest further in information technology provision for both students and staff, and a steering group has recently produced a college-wide strategy.

72 The learning resource centre provides a comfortable and friendly learning environment. It is well managed and well organised. The library is staffed by four full-time, professionally-qualified librarians, supported by a full-time administrator and four part-time assistants. Library staff also contribute to a number of cross-college committees. There are some effective links between library staff and staff in curriculum areas. In health care, for example, a librarian has regular meetings with teaching staff to identify new resources which are required, and is given a schedule of students' assignments to ensure that resources can be made available and monitored. There is a wide range of books and other materials for some subject areas, such as catering and hospitality, child development and management studies. The range of books and materials for other subject areas, for example business studies, beauty therapy and humanities is less satisfactory. The number of compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) software titles is limited. The total number of books and related items in the learning resource centre is 21,200, an allocation of eight items per full-time equivalent student. The amount spent on books and related items during 1995-96 was approximately £40,000, an allocation of £16 per full-time equivalent student. There are 135 study spaces, giving a ratio of one space to every 18 full-time equivalent students. Most of these indicators are below national guidelines for college libraries.

### **Accommodation**

73 The accommodation strategy, prepared in 1993, was based on the development of surplus land adjacent to the college to form an extension to the main building. The strategy is being revised in light of the financial constraints imposed by the recent college deficit and the subsequent recovery plan. A space utilisation survey revealed inefficiencies in the use

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of accommodation, and the match between the size of teaching groups and the size of rooms is poor. The thrust of the new strategy is to conduct further internal alterations and refurbishment at the main site, and to bring about a reduction in the number of sites currently used in the community. A space management committee is responsible for developing clear targets for space utilisation and providing recommendations for space reallocation.

74 A building works and refurbishment programme has been carried out in the past two years, and the college has produced a 10-year planned maintenance programme, based on a condition survey carried out by external consultants. There is well-furnished specialist teaching accommodation in a number of curriculum areas. For example, the Farthings training restaurant and conference suite provide a high-quality working environment, as do the bakeries, butchery, and retail shops for meat and bakery products. Hairdressing salons are spacious and commercially realistic, and there is a travel shop in the main entrance to the college. The poor quality of some accommodation, however, has an adverse effect on teaching and learning. For example, many of the general classrooms lack stimulating wall displays and a number of rooms are in need of more appropriate furniture. Some accommodation in the outreach centres lacks adequate furnishings and is poorly decorated.

75 The management of the site is professional and effective. Rooms and corridors are clean and well maintained, and the site is free of litter and graffiti. The college entrance is spacious and welcoming, signposting around the site is clear, and all parts are accessible to wheelchair users. There is secure parking for 180 cars, and additional on-street parking is available. Sports and social facilities are restricted on the main site. However, there is a small aerobics gymnasium in the main building and students have access to a sports hall, two squash courts and playing fields at the nearby Ramgarhia Sikh Centre. The college is engaged in a bid for lottery funding to develop adjacent local authority-owned grassland as additional recreational space. Students currently lack a no-smoking common room. A spacious refectory close to the training restaurant is popular and well run. Appropriate attention is paid to security around the college and its environs. A college health and safety committee has implemented clear policies for the control of substances hazardous to health, although a programme to update risk assessments has still to be completed.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

76 Thomas Danby College is making good progress towards achieving its mission. The strengths of the college are:

- strong links with the community it serves, especially in its response to the needs of minority ethnic groups and other groups which have not usually been involved in further education

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- good practice in promoting equal opportunities to staff and students
  - an expanding range of provision extending from foundation to undergraduate levels
  - productive links with employers, schools, the local authority and higher education institutions
  - strengthened governance since the financial crisis of 1995
  - the successful implementation of the financial recovery plan and the introduction of more stringent financial controls
  - a consultative and detailed strategic planning process linked to the quality review cycle
  - the provision of high-quality support and guidance to students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
  - some good standards of teaching and achievement, for example, in baking and childcare
  - an established framework for quality assurance
  - sound procedures and practice in staff development
  - appropriately qualified staff and some good levels of specialist equipment and accommodation.

77 In order to build on these strengths, the college should:

- ensure the academic board becomes more effective
- address the weaknesses in management information systems and aspects of curriculum management
- ensure that levels of tutorial support are consistent across the college
- raise levels of students' achievement especially in humanities and community education
- further develop and refine aspects of its quality assurance system to include the observation of teaching and learning and surveys of students' opinions
- address some of the unsatisfactory aspects of equipment, learning resources and general classroom accommodation.

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

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  - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 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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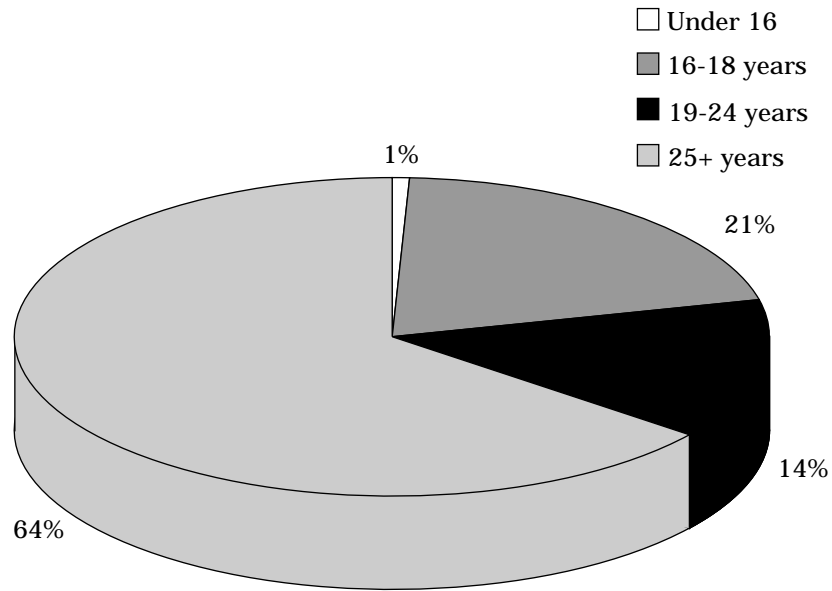
**Note:** the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

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**Figure 1**

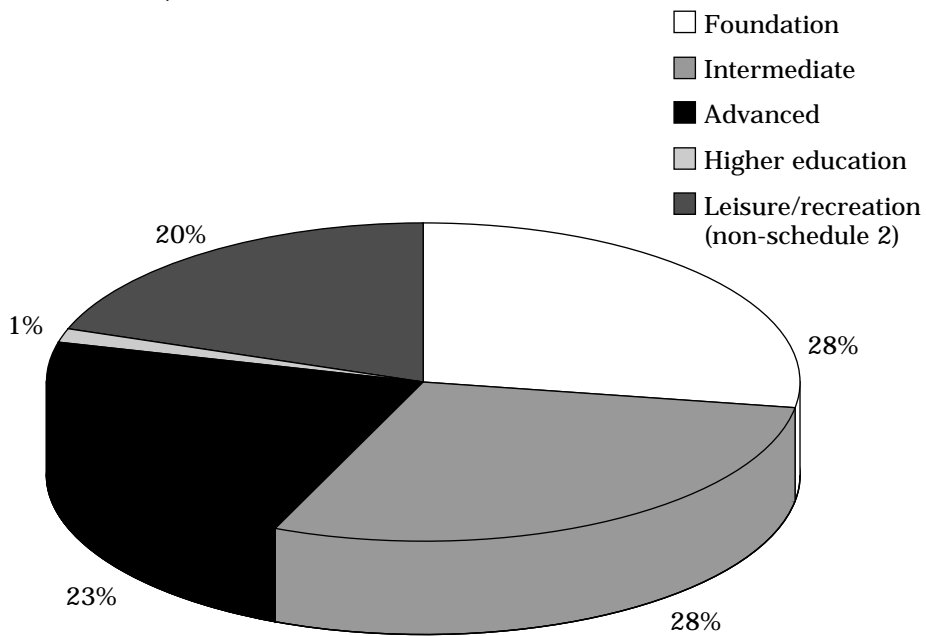
**Thomas Danby College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1996)**



Student numbers: 10,454

**Figure 2**

**Thomas Danby College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1996)**



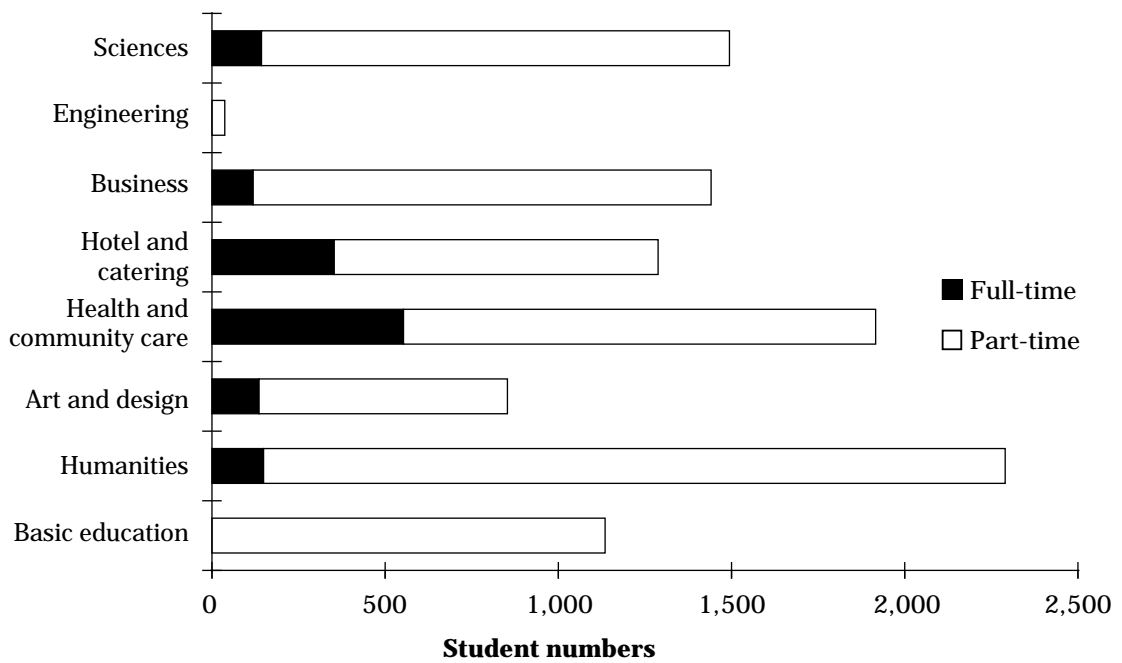
Student numbers: 10,454



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**Figure 3**

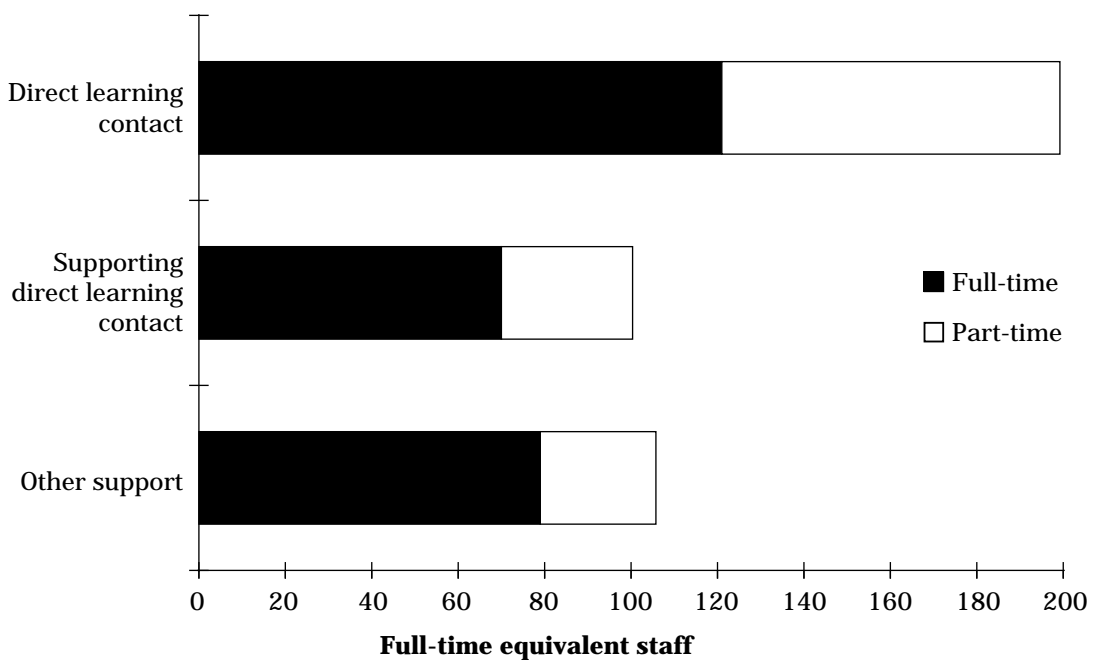
**Thomas Danby College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1996)**



Student numbers: 10,454

**Figure 4**

**Thomas Danby College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)**



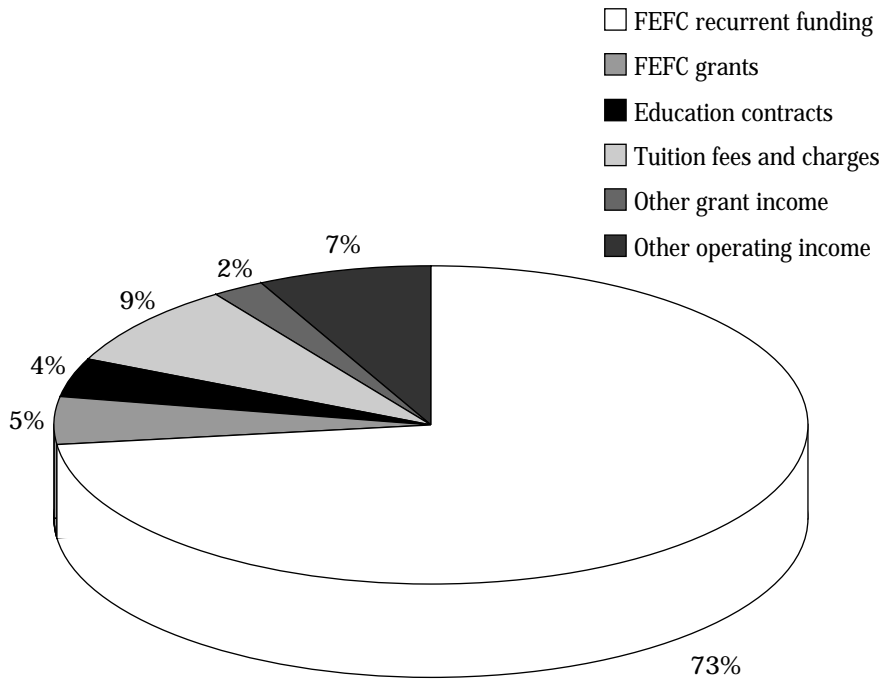
Full-time equivalent staff: 405

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**Figure 5**

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**Thomas Danby College: income (for 12 months to July 1996)**

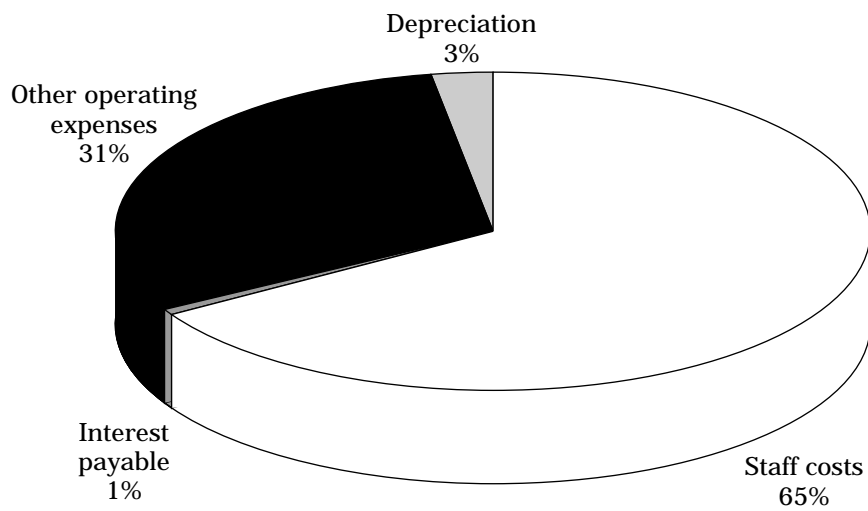


Income: £10,444,000

**Figure 6**

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**Thomas Danby College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Expenditure: £9,720,000

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