

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Arnold and Carlton College**

**January 1995**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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## **THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

### **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

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

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**FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 1/95****ARNOLD AND CARLTON COLLEGE  
EAST MIDLANDS REGION  
Inspected November-December 1994****Summary**

Arnold and Carlton College has a main site in the north eastern suburbs of Nottingham and a smaller site in the city centre. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time programmes to school leavers and adults. It has well-developed links with local schools, community groups and the Greater Nottingham Training and Enterprise Council. The governors make an effective contribution to the work of the college. The college management is energetic, committed, self critical and responsive. Strategic planning is strong. More effort should go into ensuring that new policies are implemented effectively. The planning process for staff development is well developed and the Investors in People award has been achieved. A comprehensive quality assurance procedure is being implemented. Examination results are modest overall and poor in some areas. Systems of support are being introduced to improve the basic skills of students. Full-time teachers are well qualified. Most areas of work have sufficient equipment and materials to support learning but there is no planned strategy for the maintenance and replacement of capital equipment. The accommodation is generally suitable for its purpose.

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	2
accommodation	3

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Mathematics	2	Art and design	2
Science	3		
Engineering	3	Social sciences	3
Business and office administration	2	Adult basic education and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Public services	2		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Seventeen inspectors visited the college for 56 inspector days between 11 April 1994 and 7 October 1994. They observed 104 learning sessions involving 1,900 students and examined samples of students' work. Discussions were held with staff, students, college governors, and representatives from industry, the local community and the Greater Nottingham Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The college's strategic plan and other supporting documents were used in determining the success with which the college was progressing towards the targets it had set itself.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Arnold and Carlton College opened in September 1960. It is one of five general further education colleges within the Nottingham conurbation. There is also a tertiary college and two sixth form colleges. Within the immediate catchment area of the college there are five secondary schools offering post-16 provision, mainly General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses. The college aims to work closely with other providers, through franchise and partnership arrangements, to develop a comprehensive range of courses for the area.

3 The population of the Nottingham conurbation is 607,506, and is expected to grow by a further 20,000 before the end of the decade. Minority ethnic groups account for 5.8 per cent of the population. The number of entrants to the labour market and the number of young workers are both projected to decline between now and 2001. The area has been affected by the closure of seven Nottinghamshire pits in addition to those which closed in the recent past. Two of the seven are in Greater Nottingham and a third is only a short distance away. Approximately 6,000 mining jobs and a further 5,000 jobs in companies associated with the coal industry have been lost since 1992. To mitigate the impact of these, additional government support has been put into the area to provide education and re-training for those affected by the closures.

4 Arnold and Carlton College is based on two main sites. Digby Avenue, the larger of the sites, is in the centre of a suburban area to the north-east of Nottingham. The other site, Bath Street, is in the city centre. In addition, the college provides study opportunities and support for learning at several outreach and community centres in Nottingham and in the borough of Gedling. The majority of students attending courses at Digby Avenue live within a three mile radius. The majority of those attending courses at Bath Street are recruited from the greater Nottingham area. There are 50 teaching rooms at the Digby Avenue site and 18 at Bath Street. Ninety per cent of the college staff are based at the Digby Avenue site.

5 In the academic year 1993-94, there were 175 full-time equivalent staff (figure 1). The senior management team, referred to as the college management group, comprises the principal and three directors. A new

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post of vice-principal has recently been advertised, and the person appointed will join the college management group. The group is supported by three assistant directors who have cross-college functional responsibility for premises, information systems and human resources. The teaching is managed through eight teaching sections with support staff grouped into a further 11 sections. There are also seven middle managers with cross-college responsibilities.

6 The college's mission is 'to provide quality in education, opportunities for effective learning and a welcoming environment'. The mission statement commits the college to provide impartial and realistic information about options available in post-16 education, to value previous learning, to involve students in planning their learning programmes and to provide personal and academic support for students. The college is working towards strengthening its relationships with local communities. It is also committed to supporting business and the wider community in working towards the national targets for education and training.

7 Arnold and Carlton College experienced a 25 per cent growth in full-time student numbers between the academic sessions 1991-92 and 1992-93, and a further growth of 24 per cent in 1993-94. During 1993-94, there were 7,348 students on roll, of whom 1,752 were following leisure and recreation courses. There were 5,596 students following vocational and general education courses: approximately 25 per cent were studying full time and about 50 per cent were over the age of 19. Seventy per cent of the full-time students and 65 per cent of the part-time students were enrolled on vocational courses and approximately 5 per cent were students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Enrolments by age, level of study, mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 2-4.

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

8 The college is responding to government policies for a more skilled workforce. The strategic plan contains a commitment to extend vocational programmes and identifies how the college is working towards the national targets for education and training. The range of courses is being extended and courses offered through a variety of study routes. The number of General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes offered are being increased. Other recent curriculum initiatives include the development of a timetable which allows students to mix vocational and academic programmes, the introduction of distance learning in engineering to meet employers' training needs by reducing the time which employees spend away from the workplace, and increase in opportunities for members of the local community to use the college's learning resources.

9 There is a positive working relationship between the college and the local TEC. Examples of the college's involvement with the TEC include the Coalplan project, which provides funds for retraining those affected by pit

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closures; the skillchoice programmes to raise qualifications in the mature workforce to a minimum NVQ level 2; and the delivery of courses for those affected by the closure of Calverton Colliery through a programme called 'Calverton's Route to Education' and the training for employment programme.

10 The good relationships between the college and the local 11-18 schools are improving student choice. For example, a post-16 Gedling consortium comprising the college and eight secondary schools, organises GNVQ intermediate level programmes in leisure and tourism, business and finance, and art and design for each of the consortium schools. The college has supported the consortium by providing staff development, by jointly staffing classes in the schools, and by providing assessor training for 25 school staff. The college also contributes to schools' careers conventions.

11 There is close co-operation between the college and the local education authority (LEA). The college contracts with the LEA to provide adult education classes and the LEA provides consultancy services to the college through its inspection service staff.

12 Links with higher education institutions increase the education opportunities of students in the area. The college offers accredited access courses through the North East Midland Access Partnership and also offers the foundation year of a Sheffield Hallam University engineering degree. A senior member of Nottingham Trent University is a governor of the college.

13 The college is responding to the training needs of local employers. The links are mainly in engineering and caring. There is room in other subject areas to strengthen existing contacts with employers. Employers who were interviewed described the college as responsive, flexible and a provider of quality education. The college has tailored courses to employers' needs, including delivering courses at the time and place required by the employer. Employees who have been away from education for many years are treated sensitively. The college's enterprise unit is developing its systems to provide a more responsive service. The unit is not always aware of the resources that can be provided across the whole college. It should identify existing strengths and build on these.

14 The college staff have a sound knowledge of the labour market which is founded on effective research. It is used to good effect in bidding for European social funds and TEC funds where the ability to produce a quality bid in a short time scale is often necessary. Good knowledge of the available European funds has enabled the college to attract substantial income from this source. The gathering of information is not restricted to employment needs but extends to researching the needs of local communities and those who would not usually have thought about studying in a further education college.

15 Excellent relations have been developed with community groups and a range of successful projects undertaken. Community access programmes

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now account for 15 per cent of the college's full-time equivalent students and courses are mounted at a variety of locations throughout the City of Nottingham. Particular examples include three courses run at the Nottingham women's centre, and courses at the African-Caribbean nationals' association centre. The college is working with five other Nottingham colleges and the economic development department of the county council to deliver the 'Fast Forward' programme in the community to provide the long-term unemployed, and those who do not usually undertake further education, with training and the opportunity to get a job.

16 A commitment to equality of opportunity is included in the college's mission statement. There is an equal opportunities policy approved by the corporation, which is known to staff and students.

17 The college has developed links with Europe which offer opportunities for students to make exchange visits. For example, in business studies there is an exchange with Italian students which has worked well for a number of years: projects are undertaken which are of educational value to the students and of practical value to the local communities.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

18 The governing body has made a strong and effective contribution to establishing the corporation. The governors act as advocates for the college in the community. The governing body has a good spread of interests and expertise. This expertise has been used well in the interests of the college. There are nine independent governors, including the chairman and vice-chairman, two nominated members from community groups, one business member nominated by the local TEC, one co-opted member with special expertise in adult education, one member nominated by the staff of the college, and the principal. A working group has been set up to review procedures for the replacement of governors.

19 Governors operate at an appropriate strategic level. They were closely concerned with the formulation of the mission statement and the strategic plan. The governing body has a distinct corporate identity which results in lively but non-partisan debate. Residential training weekends have helped this open working relationship to develop. Governors also spent a day with the college management group working on the strategic plan. Board meetings are run effectively and the cycle of corporation meetings meshes well with the strategic planning cycle and the financial year. The governing body has approved the college equal opportunities policy. Health and safety policy has been discussed and referred for further development. Policies which relate to finance are in place.

20 Governing body subcommittees have a clear remit, procedural rules and delegated authority. There are finance and general purpose, property, staffing, audit and remuneration subcommittees. They were appropriate for the initial development of the corporation and encouraged maximum



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participation by governors. However, some important decisions are now being delayed as they are passed between the subcommittees and the sequence of meetings is difficult to organise effectively. The board has recognised these problems and the current structure is to be reviewed. A promising development is the use of short-term, task-centred groups. The governors have yet to develop a range of performance indicators to monitor their work.

21 The academic board has a large membership which comprises voting and non-voting members but attendance at meetings is patchy. The current purpose of the academic board is not clear and it is not carrying out the remit given to it by the articles of government. Some of its subcommittees, such as premises and equal opportunities, have provided a useful input into the development of the college but others, such as student services, have been less effective. Students are represented on the academic board but the relative ineffectiveness of this body, and the lack of an alternative forum in which they can present their views, means that they have little opportunity to be involved in the formulation of policy. The need for a review of the academic board has been recognised by the college management group who are currently considering different models prior to consultation on changes.

22 The college management group is a cohesive team with a shared view of issues affecting the whole college. The college has been led through a period of rapid change and expansion with drive and commitment. The planning process is effective. The strategic plan is comprehensive and coherent. It is linked clearly to the mission statement and the review of the previous year's operating statement. It has a relevant mix of strategic and operational objectives and these are clear and appropriate. The plan is used to inform capital equipment bids and staff development plans. Targets are set which relate to the college's prime objectives of growth, efficiency and effectiveness. Easily-measurable indicators of progress in these areas realistically reflect objectives. The directors report monthly to the principal on progress made towards the strategic objectives and these reports are summarised for the governing body. There is a commendable flexibility of response and self-critical awareness amongst the senior managers. However, this willingness to change course can sometimes lead to confusion in implementing planned developments, particularly when responsibility for the detail of implementation has not been clearly delegated. Minor operational hitches, such as the communication of room changes or consistency in published times for events, detract from otherwise successful developments.

23 The recent reorganisation of the teaching sections had clearly defined aims but it needs time to become established and for the section heads to develop their role. The directors act as line managers to the section heads and the relationship is valued by the section heads at this stage of their development. Curriculum manager posts have been introduced to support

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section heads in their management role. Generally, the management structure, and the roles and responsibilities within sections are clearly understood. Staff who do not have college management responsibilities are not always clear about how their work contributes to college development.

24 The business support sections report to a director or assistant director according to function. The sections include marketing, the playgroup, the refectory, the library, personnel, and the enterprise unit. This organisational structure has been introduced recently. It has increased the status of the business support staff in the college and reflects the contribution that they make to the corporate objectives. The separation of sections which have functional links to each other causes some confusion in decision making and in the flow of information. Resolution of this problem is particularly important for the efficient implementation of plans for marketing and student services.

25 Cross-college managers have responsibility for areas such as student services, and staff development. The cross-college managers have recently been included in the management meetings which curriculum directors hold for heads of teaching sections. This has been helpful in improving cross-college communication during a period of change. Clear frameworks and back-up systems are needed to support those cross-college managers who represent the college to the community and other external organisations. The college is over-dependent on the expertise and commitment of particular individuals.

26 The management information system is developing rapidly but requires further improvement if it is to give effective support to the decision-making process. Middle managers require more training if they are to make good use of the data that are available. There are a number of standard reports on, for example, recruitment and retention. The turn-around time on enrolment information is rapid and this enables college managers to react to, and influence, the enrolment process. Monitoring of the retention of students should be strengthened. Reasons for students dropping out of their course before completion are frequently recorded at course level but the information is not acted upon consistently.

27 A disciplined approach to expenditure has been developed within the organisation. The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £20.19 per unit. This compares with a median figure of £18.17 for all general further education and tertiary colleges. Budgets to academic sections are allocated by a formula based on a unit for each full-time equivalent student modified by various weighting factors. The allocation covers consumable items and equipment repair or replacement up to about £500 value. Many section heads calculate unit costs of individual courses. The finance section supplies clear monthly monitoring statements. There is a good understanding of the need to deploy staff efficiently. Capital allocation is through bids to the college management group. These bids are supported

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by evidence from the strategic plan or inspection. Income and expenditure for the 16 months ending in July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

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

28 There is an admissions unit which, with the help of a group of teaching and support staff, provides course information throughout the year. Broader coverage during the summer would improve the service and staff are being trained to help achieve this. All students are offered guidance interviews. Admission and enrolment procedures have been much improved over the past year. There is now a 48-hour response time following the receipt of an application to enrol. Information is available to monitor applications and enrolments throughout the year. Some course entry requirements in the prospectus are not clear.

29 The college has a scheme for the accreditation of prior learning and information on this is given in the prospectus and in the student handbook. Students are informed of the scheme at induction and referred to the co-ordinator, if relevant, for a free initial interview. There is an accreditation of prior learning representative in each teaching section. A TEC project, 'Skillchoice', funds the development of assessment plans for some students. Overall, the number of students taking advantage of the opportunity to accredit prior learning is small.

30 A revised induction programme was introduced for the academic year 1994-95 and has proved generally successful. Details of the support available to help students with their learning are set out in the student handbook. The member of staff responsible for the support has some nominal time allocated for learning support from within the teaching timetable and grant funding will provide additional time for development work in the current year.

31 The success of a record of achievement pilot programme has resulted in the college being awarded accreditation for two years for 11 specified programmes. Action planning, under which students in consultation with tutors, set their own learning objectives, has been introduced this term for all full-time students. There is associated staff training, and development of the process will be monitored by section heads. A learning agreement is made between the college and the student and a detailed document is included in the student handbook. Part-time students are not part of this formal system but will be encouraged to produce their own records of achievement.

32 Changes to the tutorial system operating from September 1994 have broadened the range of support offered to students. Much of the staff training to implement the changes has yet to be provided. The effectiveness of the new procedures will be monitored by section heads. The tutor information pack contains much valuable information but should be developed further into a working document which is useful in tutorial periods. Some staff need assistance with the organisation and control of

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tutorials. A few of the tutor groups have more than 20 students, which makes them too large to be effective. In some tutorials there were poor levels of attendance.

33 There is a full-time counsellor and a part-time welfare officer who offer counselling on demand and there are effective links with external agencies. The use of the college's reception area for booking counselling appointments is less than ideal and there is no area set aside for the display of welfare information. The full-time counsellor has considerable expertise and greater use could be made of these skills to train tutors in basic counselling skills.

34 There is a careers agreement with Nottingham County Careers Service which enables students at the college to receive specialist advice. The college also employs a part-time careers officer to support the college co-ordinator. Drop-in sessions are available at lunchtime and appointments can be made at other times. There are careers libraries at both college sites. Careers software is also available. Personal tutors have received little staff development in careers counselling.

35 Funds for the support of students are administered efficiently and sensitively with published criteria in the student handbook. There are good playgroup facilities on both sites. Eighty per cent of the places used by students are at no cost to the student. The playgroup at Digby Avenue has been increased in size recently to meet the planned expansion in the numbers of adult students.

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

36 Fifty-five per cent of teaching sessions had strengths which outweighed the weaknesses. The distribution of grades is shown in the following table.

##### **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		2	8	4	1	0	15
GCSE		2	6	6	0	0	14
GNVQ		0	0	2	0	0	2
NVQ		1	10	6	1	0	18
Other		7	22	22	4	1	56
Total		12	46	40	6	1	105

37 Programmes of study are well planned and well structured. In public services, the programmes of study provide an interesting and relevant mix of activities over the academic year. In science, the aims and objectives of the courses are clearly stated, are appropriate and are known by students. In adult basic education, students are given individual learning

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programmes to improve their basic skills and most of the teaching allows them to progress at their own pace. In engineering, full-time courses have appropriate programmes of study; a notable feature is an exchange with a French institution which allows students to spend a fortnight in each others' country studying and participating in work experience. The computer-aided design provision in engineering is strong. Courses are fully subscribed and students benefit from learning materials which allow them to work at their own pace.

38 Schemes of work are generally available although the level of detail varies. In adult basic education, schemes of work are available for all courses and some are well written with scope for individual differentiation of students' abilities. In public services, students have many opportunities to develop their skills, but the lack of overall work schemes means that there is no systematic challenge to, and improvement of, individual student progress. In science, schemes of work are appropriate and up-to-date. In social sciences, schemes of work are available for all tutors, but the majority of these are lists of the content to be covered and there is no indication of intended teaching and learning methods, student activity or assignment schedules. In engineering also, the schemes of work lack sufficient detail.

39 In some cases, the aims and objectives of individual learning sessions are identified. In social sciences, sessions have clear learning objectives which relate well to previous learning. In science, most individual lessons do not have their aims and objectives described by the teacher and in adult basic education the aims and objectives of learning sessions are not always clear.

40 The quality of teaching varies. In adult basic education, the better teaching is imaginative, and effective in involving and extending students who represent a wide range of ability. Occasionally, there is too little variety in the range of techniques used. In public services, the teaching is generally effective, although in some lessons there was too much dictation and copying of notes from the overhead projector or white board. Art and design teaching allows students to develop their skills through studio projects which are developed in agreement with staff; a variety of media is available and certain groups are able to work on large-scale projects. In many science lessons, there is little variety in methods of teaching and some teachers made little attempt to sustain students' interest. Good science lessons provide examples of various strategies, including the use of hand-out material, group exercises, class discussion and extensive question and answer techniques. The NVQ programmes and secretarial subjects in office administration are well taught and there is a high level of student involvement. Engineering workshop practicals on the craft courses are well organised but other engineering subjects have an overly-theoretical approach and lack the necessary grounding in laboratory work. In some engineering classes the pace of the teaching is too slow. Most mathematics classes are well planned and delivered and the teaching methods are appropriate for the groups being taught.

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41 Assignments are generally of an appropriate standard. Homework is set regularly and it is normally marked and returned within an agreed timescale. Tutors' comments on written work are generally helpful and supportive.

42 There is effective monitoring of students' progress. It is particularly strong in science, and in public services.

43 Relationships between staff and students are good and teachers display a sound knowledge and understanding of their subjects.

#### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

44 In 1992-93, the overall pass rate in the GCE A level subjects was 68 per cent. This is below the national average of 77 per cent but is marginally above the average for general further education and tertiary colleges of 66 per cent. The average points score for those 16 to 18 years olds taking two or more subjects was 6.8 points (where A=10, E=2 points). This places the college in the lowest third of all institutions within the further education sector. For students aged 16 to 18 years taking fewer than two GCE A levels the average points score was 2.6 which is close to the national average of 2.7 points. Results in psychology are particularly good with 93 per cent of the students gaining a pass grade. They are weakest in biology, business studies, chemistry, and mathematics. The proportion of students obtaining a pass grade in AS examinations is low. Entry policies for AS courses should be reconsidered.

45 In 1992-93, the number of students gaining A-C grades in the GCSE examinations varied from 35 per cent in mathematics to 76 per cent in sociology. A-C pass rates are above national averages in art and design, English literature, French, history, and religious studies, and below national averages in biology, chemistry, English language, and mathematics.

46 In 1992-93, the percentage of 16-18 year old students gaining a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) or City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) qualification was 74 per cent which was below the national average of 81 per cent. The results booklet published by the college shows that the percentage of all students gaining a BTEC qualification is 66 per cent and the percentage of students gaining a C&G qualification is 69 per cent. On BTEC courses the national certificate in electrical/electronic engineering had a 100 per cent pass rate but there were poor results in the first diplomas in the public services and caring, and in the national diplomas in public services, caring and computer studies. On C&G courses there are a number of courses with 100 per cent pass rates including basic welding skills, computer-aided draughting, carpentry and joinery craft, principles of art and design, and the initial certificate in teaching basic skills, but there are poor results in mechanical production competences part 2 and part 3, fabrication and welding competences part 3, electrical installation competences part 1, and motor

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cycle mechanics. Of the 21 students who completed the social work course for entry to higher education, 18 gained a certificate.

47 Generally students appear to enjoy their studies. They are developing appropriate levels of knowledge and skills. The standard of written work is similar across all subject areas; the better work shows good subject knowledge, an orderly approach to problem solving and good levels of understanding. In the sessions observed, practical work was carried out safely and competently.

48 In most subject areas, students have opportunities to work as members of a group. On the public services national diploma course, there is an emergency disaster planning exercise which provides a realistic exercise in team work skills. In social sciences, students work effectively and co-operatively on group tasks which consolidate student understanding. There is little group work in science.

49 Learning programmes generally support the development of study skills, and mathematical and information technology skills. All full-time students are screened to determine their level of numeracy and literacy skills. If further support is needed they are interviewed and a course of action identified. Other students are referred by their tutors or volunteer themselves. Following the results of last year's screening, the development of numeracy and literacy skills is now built in to some courses. All full-time students can receive support to develop their core skills as an extension of their study programme. This enhancement is based upon the GNVQ core skills programme and may be accredited independently. In business studies, students take part in a young enterprise scheme which promotes an understanding of business principles. Social sciences students have well-organised files which contain a good range of notes and handout material. Computing and information technology are not integrated into the science courses and students display limited skill in these areas.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

50 Staff were aware of the Charter for Further Education but there were varying degrees of familiarity with the college charter which was, at the time of the inspection, complete but unpublished. The college charter and student handbook have specific references to ensuring the quality of teaching and learning.

51 The college produced a self-assessment report for the inspection which provided a useful focus for the principal's report to governors at their autumn meeting. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and clearly linked to strategic objectives. It has shortcomings in its analytical rigour but clear action points are identified to take the college forward.

52 The college's mission statement has the aim of providing 'quality in education'. The strategic plan identifies improvements in quality as a key objective. The college policy document on quality is in its second draft. Responsibility for quality is identified at three levels: the college

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management group, middle management and delivery teams. Each responsible group will set targets and define monitoring procedures for their own area of work. They will also draw up action plans as a result of the review process. These action plans feed into the planning cycle.

53 The review process is co-ordinated by the college management group. A common structure has been set for annual review. This structure follows the learning process and consists of 'on entry', 'on course' and 'end of course' stages. The whole review process has yet to be implemented fully. One cycle of the 'on-course' stage was successfully completed during 1993-94. The resulting action plans contributed to curriculum planning for 1994-95. Student surveys have been carried out as one element of the review process. The results of these surveys have been used to inform decisions such as the changes to the Digby Avenue refectory.

54 In 1994-95, the college intends to extend the full review process to include the business support sections as well as the academic sections. Entry review, on-course review, and end-of-course review will start in November and finish in May. The quality statement and the performance indicators have to be agreed prior to the entry review. A proposed quality statement from the playgroup was seen during the inspection which sensibly picked up key points from the mission statement and also included five further statements with associated performance indicators.

55 The monitoring of quality on the courses franchised to local schools is being considered. An inaugural meeting of the consortium management group has been held to discuss this. Most academic sections have experience of the quality procedures demanded by outside bodies but the sharing of this experience has been limited. The college has to satisfy the demands of several external validating bodies. There is good practice on the review and evaluation of the social science access course through the North East Midlands Access Partnership; BTEC courses have common quality procedures, and NVQ programmes are developing a common verification strategy. It is not clear how the college review system will integrate with the procedures required to satisfy external bodies.

56 The strategic plan for 1993-96 identifies 14 staff-development objectives. The modified plan for 1994-97 has a section on staff development which identifies a target budget increasing to 2 per cent of the college budget by 1996-97. The section on human resources also identifies staff-development issues to be addressed over the next three years. The planning process for staff development is well developed and this has been recognised by the college achieving Investors in People status. College-wide training on the analysis of needs has been undertaken for managers, for teaching staff, and for support staff. Staff development is open to all staff. The part-time lecturers' handbook includes a guide to the staff-development process and copies of the relevant forms to be completed. On completion of staff development activity an evaluation form is completed in conjunction with the line manager. The college



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management group minutes indicate that there is regular reporting on staff-development activities and effective monitoring of the qualifications gained and the training completed.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

57 Generally, staff are well qualified, enthusiastic and effective. Most full-time teachers are graduates and have a teaching qualification. Many have further degrees and professional qualifications. Part-time teachers have industrial and commercial experience and are appropriately qualified.

58 All new full-time staff receive induction into the college's working procedures and are assigned to a mentor for six months. Recently-appointed staff spoke appreciatively of the arrangements to introduce them to the college working environment and the support they received from the mentors. Teaching staff are provided with a tutors' handbook which includes a useful summary of the key objectives in the college strategic plan and the implications of these objectives for tutors and teachers.

59 The college has recruited some staff from minority ethnic groups. They now form 4 per cent of the college's full-time staff. Women form 60 per cent of the full-time and part-time staff. There is a good representation of skills, expertise, gender, age, ethnicity and cultural background on the governing body and among staff generally. All staff on appointment and recruitment panels receive training in fair selection procedures and the procedures for interview and selection are clear and open. There are codes of practice to help staff to be effective in their conduct.

60 The college deploys its staff effectively. It has carried out an audit of staff qualifications which is to be linked to a strategy to increase efficiency and job effectiveness. The college is participating in a project to identify a reliable benchmark of performance in the management and deployment of resources including staff. The staff to student ratio is 1:17 and the average class size is approximately 20 students.

61 The college is increasing the proportion of part-time staff it employs as a way of increasing expertise and relevant experience. It is also deploying staff in a more flexible way. The college has taken steps to involve part-time teaching staff in course-team planning and course meetings by paying an allowance for attendance. Many part-time staff are employed to provide specific industrial or commercial experience which is not found among full-time staff. For example, on the public services course, serving police officers give presentations on drugs abuse, and practising artists and designers are employed as part-time staff in art and design. In some areas, the reliance on a high proportion of part-time staff is placing pressure on the full-time staff.

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62 There are not enough technicians. The present arrangement under which technician time is allocated to sections sometimes restricts the opportunity for technicians to work on tasks which are not sectionally based.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

63 Generally, there is sufficient equipment and materials to support learning. However, there are some inadequacies at the Bath Street site in the range of resources to support the curriculum areas based there. There has been a substantial investment in engineering equipment recently. There is no planned strategy for the maintenance and the replacement of capital equipment based on its expected life and cost.

64 At the Digby Avenue site, the library offers a range of learning materials relevant to the curricula on offer. There is a good reference section, and the book stock is adequate to support the courses offered. There is access to computer equipment, compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases, and a loans service that is linked into regional library and inter-library loans systems. The library at Bath Street is small for the courses it is expected to support.

65 Over the past two years, the college has made significant progress in upgrading computing facilities, in replacing worn out and redundant equipment, and in expanding access to computing facilities. Nevertheless, the computer facility at the Bath street site is unreliable and offers poor support for programmes with information technology elements.

66 The college has a well-equipped technicians' workshop which provides teachers with a range of services to support teaching and learning.

### **Accommodation**

67 Accommodation is a key issue for the college. The detailed accommodation strategy is consistent with the objectives of the strategic plan. It includes a planned maintenance programme, modifications to existing buildings, and proposals to acquire another sizable site to accommodate the existing and projected growth in student numbers.

68 The site at Digby Avenue is pleasant, clean and well maintained. There is adequate car parking with special zones for drivers with a disability. The reception area and other public areas are welcoming and there are appropriate signs giving directions to essential services. Some teaching rooms, and rooms used for meetings and group work, have been tastefully refurbished and decorated. A learning resource centre has been developed in a spacious area and ramps have been provided on the ground floor of the main block to allow students using wheelchairs to use ground-floor facilities. There is no access for wheelchair users to the first floor where the library and the science laboratories are accommodated, but there are plans to overcome this problem. Areas used for storage, for example corridors and stairwells, lend an untidy look to the general appearance of the site. There is a general problem with storage in many

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staff work rooms and teaching rooms and the teaching staff work room has a shortage of working space.

69 The Bath Street site was originally a Victorian primary school. It contains classrooms, a learning resource centre, general office space, refectory, toilet and foyer space. The college's motorcycle workshop is in an outbuilding constructed about 10 years ago. This building has been identified in the Hunter survey as being in need of considerable repair. There is a lack of large rooms, library accommodation, and social space for students. The access for persons with physical and sensory disabilities is poor and there is a need to upgrade the external lighting to provide a more welcoming environment.

70 On both sites, there are teaching rooms which are well furnished and which are adaptable for a variety of activities including group work. About 50 per cent are equipped with white boards. At least 30 per cent have fixed furniture which inhibits their more flexible use and many teaching rooms would not easily accommodate groups of more than 20. Some courses have no identifiable base room. Several mobile classroom units provide an unstimulating teaching environment. Study spaces in the libraries are insufficient for the present student population and to meet projected growth; there are 40 places at Digby Avenue and 25 places at Bath Street.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

71 The college is making good progress towards its mission. Particular strengths are that:

- the governing body has made an effective contribution to the work of the college
- college management is energetic, committed, self critical and responsive
- the college is responding well to the needs of local communities
- significant developments have taken place in the provision of student services to ensure greater consistency of service to all students
- the planning process for staff development is well developed and the Investors in People award has been achieved
- there have been improvements in the learning environment in line with the objectives of the strategic plan.

72 In order to progress further, the college should:

- ensure that agreed policies are carried into practice effectively
- improve retention rates and examination results in those areas where they are well below national averages
- implement quickly the proposed quality assurance review and extend it to business support services as well as academic services

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- train staff for their role as tutors and ensure that the effectiveness of the tutorial system is monitored
  - establish a programme for the maintenance and replacement of capital equipment.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)

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  - 2 Percentage enrolments by age (1993-94)

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  - 3 Percentage enrolments by level of study (1993-94)

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  - 4 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)

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  - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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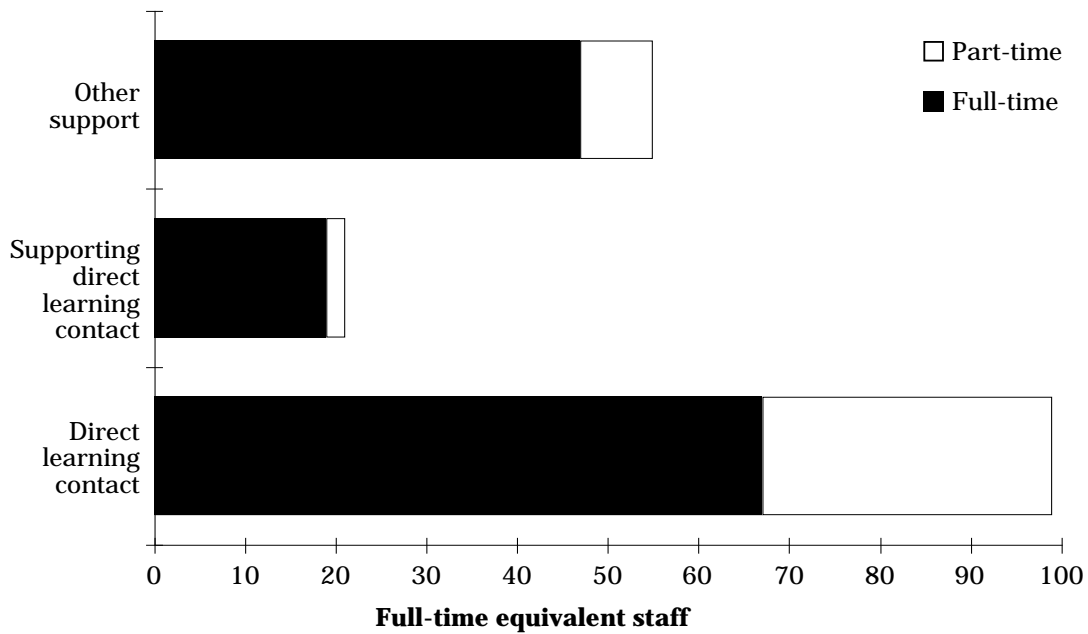
**Note:** the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

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**Figure 1**

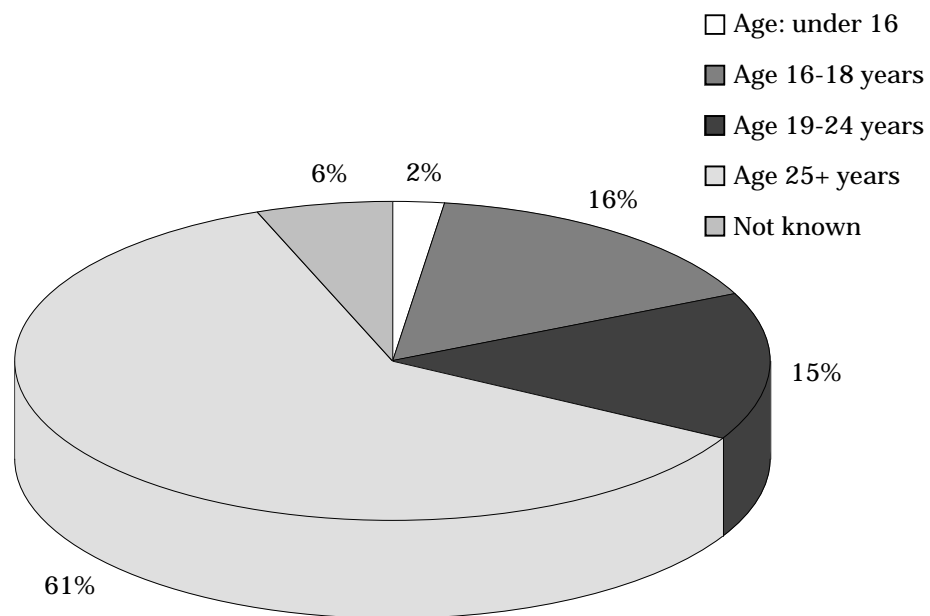
**Arnold and Carlton College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)**



Full-time equivalent staff: 175

**Figure 2**

**Arnold and Carlton College: percentage enrolments by age (1993-94)**

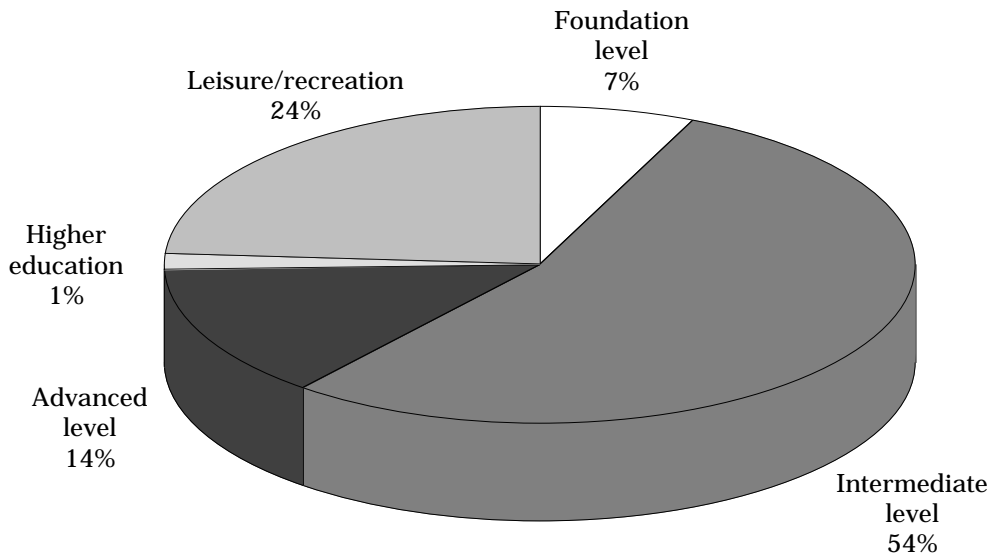


Enrolments: 7,348

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**Figure 3**

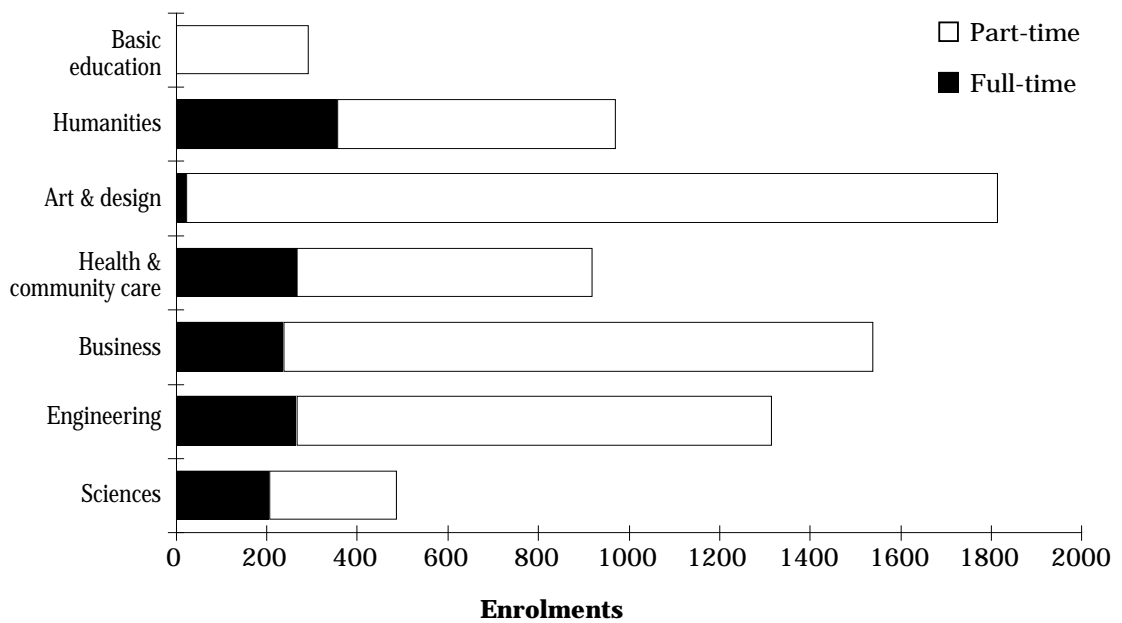
**Arnold and Carlton College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1993-94)**



Enrolments: 7,348

**Figure 4**

**Arnold and Carlton College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)**



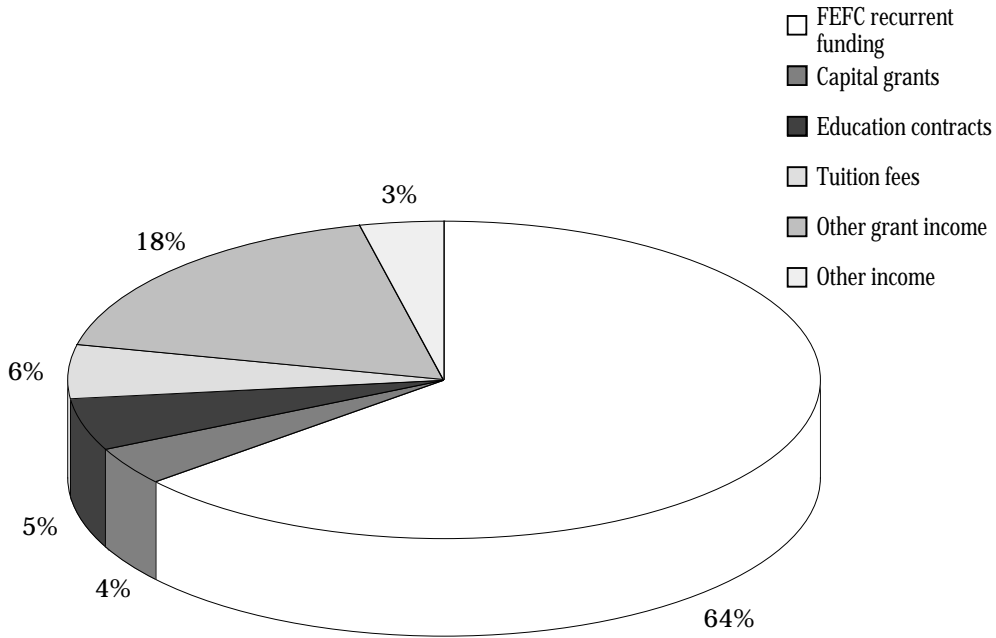
Enrolments: 7,348

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**Figure 5**

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**Arnold and Carlton College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)**

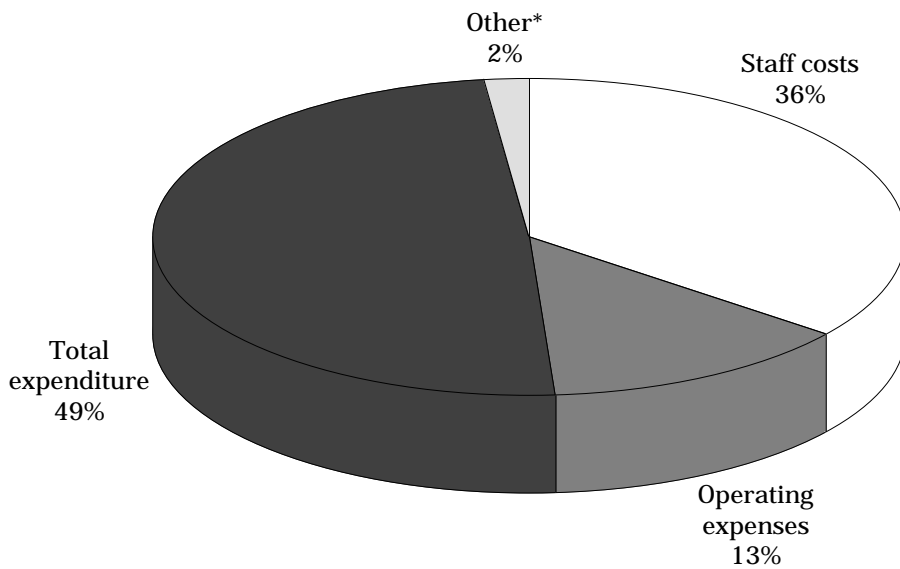


Income: £7,397,000

**Figure 6**

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**Arnold and Carlton College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)**



Expenditure: £6,450,000

*\*Other includes depreciation and interest payable*



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