Basford Hall College

THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL

The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has a statutory duty to ensure that there are satisfactory arrangements to assess the quality of provision in the further education sector. It discharges the duty in part through its inspectorate, which inspects and reports on each college in the sector every four years. The Council's inspectorate also assesses and reports on a national basis on specific curriculum areas and advises the Council's quality assessment committee.

College inspections involve both full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have specialist knowledge and experience in the areas they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member from outside the world of education and a nominated member of staff from the college being inspected.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are described in the Council Circular 93/28. In the course of inspecting colleges, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also summarise their judgements on the balance between strengths and weaknesses using a five-point scale. 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.*

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 44/94

BASFORD HALL COLLEGE
EAST MIDLANDS REGION
Inspected September 1993 – March 1994

Summary

Basford Hall College in Nottingham is a specialist centre for construction and care courses and a designated regional centre for furniture studies. Links between the individual curriculum areas and their clients are good but better co-ordination of these links would promote more effective use of the college's facilities by employers, the community, and individuals. The management executive group is initiating change effectively and is well supported by an efficient college information system.   There are opportunities for students to influence the operation and policy of the college. In the majority of areas the quality of teaching and learning is high. Examination results in vocational programmes are good. The governors support the work of the college well. Issues to be addressed are the formation of a strategy for the use and resourcing of the three college sites, the effective co-ordination of student support services, the retention and attendance rates on some courses, and the further development of newly-established quality processes.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Computing	3	Child care & education	2
Building services	2	Social work & social care	2
Building technology	2	Foundation studies	2
Business & management	2	Access courses	3
Administration & secretarial	3		

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INTRODUCTION

1   Thirteen registered inspectors visited the college for 50 inspector days between 14 September 1993 and 25 March 1994. They observed 124 learning sessions involving approximately 1,900 students. Discussions were held with staff at all levels, students, college governors, representatives from industry and the local community, and from the Greater Nottingham Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The college's strategic plan and its policy and planning documents were used in determining the success with which the college was progressing towards the targets it has set itself.

2   This report is based on the inspection of 10 curriculum areas within the college and a team inspection of aspects of cross-college provision. The inspection was carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines set out in Council Circular 93/28.   The framework describes a four-year inspection cycle. When this cycle becomes fully established, colleges will have the opportunity to respond to the findings of earlier inspection visits before their quadrennial inspection and the subsequent published report. As the inspection of Basford Hall College occurred early in the cycle, the opportunity for such a response was not available.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3   The college is one of eight colleges in the further education sector in the Nottingham conurbation. There are five general further education colleges, a tertiary college and two sixth form colleges in addition to school sixth forms. The college is situated on the north-west outskirts of Greater Nottingham, two miles from the city centre, two miles from the M1 and close to the Derbyshire border.   The area covered by the Greater Nottingham TEC has a population of about 607,500, constituting 61 per cent of the population of the county. Unemployment in this area in January 1994 was 12.4 per cent compared with 13 per cent for the whole of Nottinghamshire and 11.8 per cent for the United Kingdom. Statistics provided by the TEC show that 5.9 per cent of the population of the area are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

4   Within Nottingham, each of the further education colleges has traditionally offered particular specialist vocational curriculum areas in addition to broad programmes of general education. Basford Hall College specialises in construction and care courses. The construction division provides programmes in building technologies, construction, and heating and ventilation. It is also a designated regional centre for furniture studies. The nursery nursing programmes were part of a separate specialist college, Waverley College, until 1975. Construction and care programmes range from National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 1 to level 4. The college also offers programmes in business and professional studies, computing and information technology, secretarial studies, pre-vocational studies, community education and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). General Certificate of Education advanced levels (GCE A levels) are offered in three subjects only and the number of students is small.

5   The college is located on three sites. The main site is within the city of Nottingham in Stockhill Lane at Basford. It is set in 16 acres of grounds and contains the main library, student facilities and the administrative centre for the college. A second site is in the small town of Hucknall about five miles away. A third site at Acourt Street, about two miles from the main site, is on the edge of the city centre. Adult and basic education is offered in a variety of buildings across the west and north of the city and the county.

6   At the time of the inspection, the college had a full-time equivalent staff of 169 teachers and 98 support staff (figure 1). There were 1,615 full-time students and approximately 3,000 part-time students, amounting to more than 2,000 full-time equivalents. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 2 and 3, respectively. Full-time equivalent enrolments by curriculum area and mode of attendance are given in figure 4. The college policy of widening access has led to a more varied level of student attainment on entry and to an increasing proportion of full-time students over 19 years of age. At the same time there has been a fall in the number of students on release from employment. Over 11 per cent of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly Black Caribbean and Pakistani. Fifty-three per cent of students are women, although ratios of male to female differ widely within the curriculum divisions.

7   The college is organised into three functional areas: central services, the curriculum divisions and the business support services. The curriculum divisions are each headed by an assistant principal who also has additional college-wide responsibilities. The three curriculum divisions are business, technician and academic studies; community care, health and child studies; and construction and building services engineering. Across the divisions there are 17 curriculum teams each led by a team manager. The vice-principal leads the central services which include student services, learning support, personnel and training, audio-visual aids/reprographics, and information systems. The assistant principal (finance) leads the business support services which include accounts, student records, and estates. A manager for special projects and a manager for external relations and marketing report directly to the principal.

8   The college's mission is 'to be the East Midland's centre of excellence in construction and care and to become the principal provider of business and general vocational education and training in north-west Nottingham and Hucknall'. The college plans to maintain its commitment to vocational education and training in its specialist areas. In this way it will make a significant contribution to the achievement of National Training and Education Targets.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

9   Links between individual curriculum areas and their clients are strong but a better co-ordination of these external links would promote a more

effective use of college facilities by employers, the community, and individuals. A central marketing unit is building up a database of local companies. The unit uses the database when informing companies about college facilities and monitors activities undertaken as a result. Team managers should ensure that they liaise more effectively both with employers and the college marketing unit so that contacts can be logged centrally and trends and issues monitored.

10   The construction and building services engineering division has effective liaison with employers. There is a wide range of programmes for registered unemployed, part-time, evening and block-release students, and programmes are also provided for industry-training bodies and companies. In the division of community care, health and child studies, the provision of nursery nursing and related child care education and training programmes is well established. Social and child care programmes are offered in varying attendance modes, catering for students with different study needs. The business, technician and academic studies division has a wide range of part-time and full-time programmes with appropriate entry levels. There are some links with industry, through work experience placements and a programme review team, but there is scope for these to be strengthened and extended.

11   The college's school liaison team, which includes students and support staff as well as teaching staff, organises an open day for local schools and is responsible for arranging the college's participation in schools' advice evenings and careers conventions. Enquiries from school pupils are logged in the college enquiry database and are followed up systematically. There are a number of collaborative projects with post-16 providers in marketing, joint curriculum projects and shared programmes. The college is a member of the Nottinghamshire Marketing Network group in which other post-16 providers and the local education authority (LEA) collaborate on projects such as adult learners week. There are strong links with special and high schools through which the college responds to the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college is strengthening its relationship with the TEC and is involved in a number of initiatives aimed at developing the links between education and industry and recruiting women students.

12   Links with community groups and the voluntary sector are developing well but mainly on the basis of responses to external requests. If the potential for expansion in this area is to be exploited there should be greater co-operation between divisions across the college in planning provision. There are links with community organisations such as the Nottingham City Challenge Project 'Fast Forward' in which the college provides tutors and accreditation for programmes aimed at groups traditionally under-represented in further education. The college offers an introduction to child psychology, supported by a local parents' group, and 'Stepping Stones', a foundation course for women sponsored by a local women's training group. The college is working with social services and

the health authority, through their Broxtowe Family Support Team, to provide alternatives to the day-care which is available in day centres.

13   The college provides a number of access courses: access to higher education, access to social care, and access to social work for black students. Currently, links between the access programmes are weak but the college is addressing this. On the access to higher education course, the relationship between the staff and students is supportive and the completion and progression rates are good, but the structure of the course is rigid and does not allow for the creation of individualised learning programmes or the encouragement of students to take responsibility for organising their own learning. In the social work and social care access courses, the content is relevant and stimulating.

14   The college makes suitable provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Deaf Association and the college promote the training of deaf people to work with children and a programme to support deaf students on nursery nurse programmes has been organised. A signer has been appointed as a teacher and the local deaf association also provides signers, including two with nursery nurse qualifications.   Special signs and alarms to signal a fire to the hearing-impaired are placed throughout the college.

15   The college is developing strong links with Europe. The principal is the project manager for a British Council project on technology transfer to Slovakia. Furniture and business studies are involved in a LINGUA project in Italy. Students undertake work shadowing in France. The building technology area has links with Holland. Romanian students are attending programmes in child care and orphanage management.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

16   At the time of the inspection, the board of governors comprised the principal and two staff members together with seven members from the world of business and industry and four co-opted members, representing a variety of interests relevant to the work of the college. The governors take an active interest in all aspects of the college and promote its interests particularly in the relevant vocational areas. They work together constructively but have yet to devise criteria for evaluating their own performance.

17   The board of governors took an early decision that all issues would be considered at the monthly meetings of the whole board. There are no committees other than the audit committee. Attendance at meetings has been good. A calendar of meetings ensures a regular flow of information to the board from the main college committees such as the academic board, the audit committee, the management executive group, the college management committee, and the student management board. Between meetings, the chairman and vice-chairman are kept informed on relevant matters.

18   To date, the business of the board has appropriately focused on financial and personnel issues. Papers and agenda are prepared in advance but some significant proposals lack accompanying information on the financial implications. The board requires a strategy for monitoring progress on the strategic plan. The principal takes the initiative in reporting to the board although increasingly questions and issues are being raised by board members. The assistant principal (finance) supplies a comprehensive financial report to each meeting but there is some unease amongst some board members about their understanding of the financial position of the college and training in this area would be useful. In 1992-93, the college's unit of funding for each full-time equivalent student was £2,270. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges was £2,444. Summaries of the college's income and expenditure for 1993-4 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

19   The college's strategic and operating plans are understood and supported by staff. All staff had an opportunity to make an input during the first round of planning, and met the principal and vice-principal in team groups during this round. The management structure and the lines of communication and accountability are clearly understood. The academic board has a developing role in ensuring academic quality within programmes. A student management board is playing an increasingly useful part in the life of the college

20   The management executive group is effectively initiating change to address the challenges set by the college's strategic plan. New initiatives, mainly in much needed cross-college services, are being introduced. The institution's strategy for financial allocation is clear and understood by staff. Significant savings have been achieved on budgets, especially in staffing. There has been a well-planned development of the college information system co-ordinated by the principal. Computerised administrative and management information systems have been developed over several years. Assistant principals make considerable use of the systems for monitoring a range of indicators including resource and staffing costs, staff attendance and room utilisation. Other developments include a central diary system for all senior staff and college-wide electronic mail facilities. Team managers are able to access management information using terminals in staff workrooms.

21   Enrolment targets were achieved in the community care, health and child studies division, and the construction and building services engineering division. Retention rates are variable, particularly amongst adult unemployed groups. Course teams do not undertake the effective monitoring of students which would enable problems to be identified early and for preventative action to be taken, where appropriate, before students leave their courses. There were some examples of good practice where the college had made arrangements to accommodate the study needs of students who had secured employment but wished to complete their programmes and gain accreditation. The college collects data on student

destinations but does not take full advantage of the information available from its extensive network of contacts among public and private employers, local services and community groups.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

22   Student recruitment is handled well. There is an effective and efficient central admissions enquiry service. The team has appropriate service targets which are being achieved.   There is an admissions hotline telephone; personal callers are answered promptly and courteously, and appropriate course guidance is given. More complex enquiries are passed on to the divisions through the electronic mail system. Enquiry information is increasingly being used to inform market analysis and to target publicity material, but the links between admissions, enrolments on course and learner support could be strengthened. The full-time and part-time prospectuses are informative and clearly presented, although the costs of study programmes are not always given. Employers can readily obtain quotations from the college for meeting training needs.

23   Intending students are offered a guidance service.   Guidance interviews are advertised in the prospectus as part of the applications procedure. However, in some cases these interviews are used for selection and this causes confusion to students and some dissatisfaction. The college is able to provide an accreditation of prior learning service for some areas of work. Good practice was seen in the accreditation of employment experience which enabled an applicant to gain NVQ level 2 accreditation in 11 weeks and in the 'fast tracking' of students completing a nursery nursing award to year 2 of a BTEC national course and subsequently to higher education.

24   A college-wide induction programme was started in September 1993 on a pilot basis with about 25 per cent of the students. Although generally successful, the programme would benefit from the production of a more informative and better presented college user guide.   Screening in communications and numeracy skills, using the tests from the adult literacy and basic skills unit, formed part of the programme. The results of this have been used constructively in considering the range of courses offered and in improving the accuracy with which students are assigned to appropriate levels of study.

25   Discussion of the rights and responsibilities of students formed part of the pilot induction programme. There is a college code which sets out the expectations of students' behaviour. More recently, a student-college code has been drafted which sets out rights and responsibilities to meet the requirements of the Charter for Further Education. Students have been involved in the process of drafting both the code and the associated disciplinary and grievance procedures.

26   A record of achievement is being used for the first time by the group of students involved in the pilot induction programme. It is being effectively used with return-to-learn students for career planning and with students

on a foundation level programme for charting progress in personal development. Action planning by students in the 16 to 19 age range, involving the identification of specific targets for improvement and the detailing of appropriate action, was less successful.

27   Standards of course attendance vary considerably. The computerised system for monitoring absence provides a range of reports for staff, but staff responses to student absence are inconsistent even within the same curriculum areas.

28   The changing nature of the student intake, the decrease in the number of students on release from employment and the increase in full-time and mature student numbers, have created new demands. Claims on Department for Education access funds have increased considerably and an upper limit of £100 per claimant per year on help provided towards transport, child care and course costs has had to be imposed. Limited assistance is available from a hardship fund administered through the students' union for students who do not meet the criteria for access fund support. A volunteer worker gives guidance on a limited basis to students about welfare benefits and further expert help is required.

29   The college has provision for play groups on both the main site and the Hucknall site. There is a waiting list for places at the main site and this causes considerable anxiety for students who need this facility; better information on the time scale and procedures for processing applications would help to allay this anxiety. There are plans to extend the service at the Hucknall site, for example, through a holiday scheme. The playgroup facility enables people to attend courses who would not otherwise be able to do so and hence enhances the college's contribution to the national targets for education and training.

30   Whilst there are many examples of good practice in the provision of support for individuals and groups of students, improvement is needed if the college is to provide a service of the same standard for all learners. The present services lack effective management and co-ordination. Senior managers are aware of this and developments are taking place. A further redistribution of resources is planned to strengthen middle management and to improve accommodation and staff development. The absence of key personnel has caused some slippage in achieving the objectives set for this academic year.

31   The professional counselling service provided by the college is inadequate. The room used is poorly sited and the booking system lacks privacy. Much informal support is given to students through tutors, student liaison staff and the reception staff. Reception staff are particularly important in helping evening class students. Their role could be enhanced by training for customer care and the creation of a more welcoming environment. The poor initial impression created by the student reception area is in marked contrast to the central admission unit's reception area.

32   There are support services which the college provides but which are not being fully used; for example, the careers guidance interviews provided

by local authority careers officers and the advice to students and staff from the equal opportunities officer. This appears to be the result of poor communications: many staff and students are not aware of the services available. Examples were seen of out-of-date notices, inadequate directional signing, unattractive notice boards with graffiti and poor display. However, the use of foreign language welcome notices in the prospectus and the reception area is good and the student newspaper is a valuable innovation.

33 Many students are provided with appropriate careers guidance by course tutors. There is good practice, for example, in child care and computing, and new materials are being developed in plumbing and gasfitting programmes to train students for self employment. However, the college has no overall strategy for ensuring that all students are adequately supported, particularly those wishing to change vocational direction. The careers interview room is situated too far away from the central student areas on the main site. At the time of the inspection, the college was appointing a full-time careers officer with the intention of strengthening the service to be offered to students.

34 The students' union plays an active role in the work of the college. There is sensitive and effective staff support for the union executive and senior managers are open and responsive to student opinion. There are good formal opportunities for the students to make their views known through the student management board and the programme review teams. Students have had a positive say in the work being done to develop and communicate the Basford Hall charter, and in the formulation of equal opportunities and environmental policies. The union has represented student views in discussions for securing catering provision for the Hucknall site, an enhanced careers service for students and a room for the use of Muslim students during Ramadan.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

35 Of the 124 sessions inspected, more than 60 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed the weaknesses. The distribution of inspection grades is shown in the following table.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
NVQ		0	9	1	1	0	11
GNVQ		0	1	2	0	0	3
Vocational diplomas & certificates		18	35	29	4	0	86
Other		3	9	10	2	0	24
Total		21	54	42	7	0	124

36   In general, there are coherent programmes which are meeting the needs of students. On most programmes there is a good balance of knowledge and practical skills. The better programmes extend students' skills, knowledge and understanding and some, for example building services, take good account of the different abilities of students. Most programmes are effectively documented.

37   Students generally have a clear idea of their programme objectives. In nursery nursing programmes, there is evidence of good planning and there are clear aims and objectives related to the world of work. In some programmes, for example in building services, there is little formal use of action planning, which involves students in setting their own objectives and planning the means of achieving these. However, students know and understand their learning targets. In nursery nursing programmes, at the Hucknall annex, programme planning is good and student records show well-defined routes by which students have progressed in their learning.

38   Sessions are well planned and well structured. Teachers adopt a variety of methods of teaching and learning. In business studies, the schemes of work are well-organised, information technology activities are integrated effectively with other aspects of the work, and teachers provide a good balance of activities within individual sessions. In the best lessons, theory is related to practice, and students enjoy and are actively involved in their classwork. In good nursery nursing classes, students are involved and busy, content is pitched at an appropriate level, there is a wide selection of teaching materials, and work is conducted at a good pace. In the access to social work programme, there is clear and comprehensive course documentation. The material used is relevant and stimulating; the teaching draws on students' experiences, and there is a good use of language. By contrast, the access to higher education programme schemes of work are inadequate. They are little more than a list of topics with no amplification to show how or when relevant skills are to be developed. In construction and furniture studies, most teaching activities are well planned and presented, the pace of work is generally good, and in the classroom-based activities, teachers relate easily to students and provide them with tasks which are suitably challenging. In building services, there are some work schemes available for individual lessons but students are not aware of them and there is no evidence of their use by teachers. In building crafts, there is a well-organised teaching and learning environment.

39   Staff display sound knowledge and understanding of their subject and there are good relations between staff and students. Increasingly, methods of learning are being introduced which allow students to work at their own pace. In building services, individual learning is closely monitored, particularly in practical situations. In business studies, sessions are tailored to the needs of the individual student and staff provide helpful feedback on student progress. In nursery nursing NVQ programmes, there are some good examples of individual learning plans together with suitable learning support for the students.

40   The hand-outs produced by teachers are of a variable quality. The best examples are well presented, often word processed and contain clearly explained follow-up activities. The worst examples are difficult to read and, in some cases, out of date.

41   Some of the weaker sessions seen were tutor dominated and failed to engage student interest. In some cases, the size and quality of the teaching accommodation restricted the opportunities for group-based discussion or other activities and this had a detrimental effect on the teaching and the learning outcomes. In other sessions, in which the students controlled the pace of learning, the lack of direction by staff sometimes led to an ineffective use of the time. In social care programmes, there were a significant number of absences in many of the classes and there was no strategy for dealing with latecomers.

42   There are clear criteria for the setting and marking of assignments and in the better examples these are shared with students. In social care, assignments are marked promptly and the feedback from teachers is of a high standard. In business studies, the assignments are realistic. On some building services programmes, student work is regularly set, marked and returned but assessment criteria are not always shared with students. In construction and furniture studies, assessment criteria are, in the main, available to students in a written format. In computer studies, there is a range of assignments which reinforces industrial practice.

43   The college learning centre includes drop-in workshops for communication, mathematics and information technology. The role of the centre in providing learner support requires clarification. The most widely held view amongst staff and students is that it has a remedial function for basic skills whereas the official intention, in line with some of the current practice, is for the centre to provide learning enhancement and support for all students. The information technology workshop is well used, but the pattern of its use is not monitored.   Both mathematics and communications workshops are limited in their effectiveness because of restricted opening hours and the variability in referral practice and follow up. The staff who work in these areas are extremely enthusiastic. They have done much to create an atmosphere conducive to learning, and to develop suitable materials and monitoring systems. A team of staff, with a range of expertise in dyslexia, basic education, hearing impairment and English as a second language work together to develop support for students. This is an effective way of using a scarce resource to maximum benefit. Some students gain considerable benefit from the support and extension materials but there is generally little systematic identification of learning needs across the college.

44   Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are offered a variety of accredited programmes, including RSA profiling and GNVQ foundation courses.   On GNVQ foundation programmes, students commented that the work was too easy and boring. Some staff teach too narrowly to the units rather than using them as base from which to expand

the curriculum. 'New Horizons', a specialist programme for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is at an early stage of accreditation and should develop the means for students to plan, review and record their achievement.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

45   Most students are committed to their studies and appear to enjoy their work. Students are actively engaged in their learning and work well together in group-based activities. Most mature students are enthusiastic about their studies. In general, students show that they have acquired a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and are prepared to participate in the learning process.

46   The completion rates on some programmes are low, but students who complete the programme usually achieve their qualifications. On four full-time programmes, all students successfully completed their courses. On 36 full-time programmes, successful completion rates were 60 per cent or over. Of the 94 full-time students completing BTEC national courses, 73 per cent progressed to higher education courses.

47   In business studies, students achieved the outcomes expected in their assignment work and the grades given were in line with the assessment criteria. However, some work at GNVQ intermediate level was of a poor standard and there was a lack of interest from some GNVQ foundation and intermediate students. In building services, students' responses to internal assessments were at an appropriate standard but responses to some written assessments were over-long and drawing was relatively neglected as a medium for imparting information. In office skills, the students were required to carry out tasks which were appropriate in terms of level and content, and most were able to achieve a satisfactory standard. However, there was little that was innovative or specifically related to the world of modern work. Students also expressed a desire for more time to complete practical tasks. The time spent developing shorthand was resented by some.

48   In construction and building services engineering there was some good group work on company-based programmes. Within most programmes in this area, numeracy skills were well developed but in building services, there was a lack of systematic assessment of, and support for, basic numeracy skills, especially for full-time students. Students carried out practical work safely and competently.

49   In care programmes, class work and course work was generally of an appropriate standard. Students taking BTEC programmes liked being able to work at their own pace with assignments which were used to monitor their progress. Students demonstrated that they could achieve high standards and work together as a team. The notes which students took for future reference were full and well structured. In the nursery nursing programmes, most student assignment work was of a good quality and there were some examples of outstanding project work and

observation files. Some students found difficulty in understanding the requirements of the externally-set nursery nursing assignments. They should be given more direction and support in developing study skills. NVQ candidates displayed a sound knowledge of the NVQ assessment process and recognised their own responsibilities for identifying and negotiating assessment opportunities.

50 The examination results table published by the Department for Education shows that there was a 94 per cent success rate on BTEC level 3 programmes for the 52 students aged 16-18 who completed their programmes. This compares favourably with the average of 81 per cent for BTEC programmes in England. There were also 160 students aged 16-18 studying on other full-time level 3 programmes; the success rate for these students was 79 per cent.

51 GCE A level and GCSE courses form a relatively small proportion of the college's work. Results were poor. In 1993, students sat GCSE examinations in 11 subjects. There were 425 entries, of which 97 were in the 16-18 age group. Results from the 65 full-time students aged 16-18 were poor; only 12 per cent gained an A-C pass in English and 6 per cent an A-C pass in mathematics. Results for part-time students in this age group were better: there were good results in English, where 57 per cent achieved an A-C grade, though only 18 per cent achieved an A-C grade in mathematics. In the 19+ age group, 80 per cent of the 89 full-time and part-time students achieved an A-C grade in English. Twenty-two per cent of the 28 full-time students and 31 per cent of the 54 part-time students achieved an A-C grade in mathematics. In 1992-93, the college offered only three GCE A level subjects, English, human biology, and sociology. There were 36 entries at GCE A level and eight for AS human biology. The average score for the four A level candidates under 19 years of age was 0.5 points which was well below the national average of 2.7 points for candidates taking fewer than two A levels. Those over 19 taking A levels were more successful: full-time students gained an average score of 5 points and part-time students an average of 2.4 points. The results at GCE AS level were poor, 50 per cent of the students failing to gain an A-E grade. All of those who passed obtained an E grade.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

52 The college has recently adopted a new strategy for quality assurance and the processes are at an early stage of development. The strategic plan commits the institution to planning for the highest quality within the limits of its budget. The decision has been made that all staff should share responsibility for quality. The college does not have an overall quality policy document, but there are a number of other documents which support the quality assurance process. The job descriptions of the assistant principals includes accountability for quality assurance in the teaching divisions.

53   The recently-formed programme review teams, reporting to the academic board, are the focus of the quality system. They consist of the team manager, full-time and part-time teaching staff, employer and learner representatives and, where appropriate, the relevant internal and external verifiers. The teams review the quality of provision, examination results, student and employer inputs, the effectiveness of delivery methods, and any recommendations for change. A key requirement of the process is to produce an action plan for improvement. The teams are expected to meet at least once each term and to focus successively on entry and enrolment, on-programme, exit and continuation issues. Both employers and students value the opportunity to contribute to the work of the review teams and their inclusion in the teams enables them to comment directly on the quality of the provision.

54   Programme review teams have developed their own lists of questions. These have subsequently been refined to create comparatively short check lists. The teams have held their first meetings. Outcomes have been variable. Some teams have not yet produced their action plans and many of the plans that have been produced fail to set a time scale or to identify who is responsible for implementing the required actions. Most review teams did not consider student outcomes although these have been reviewed by divisional and senior managers. Team reports and action plans are discussed with the assistant principals and, if appropriate, with the NVQ co-ordinator and internal and external verifiers.

55   Quality had not been formally monitored by the academic board at the time of the inspection, nor had the mechanisms for such monitoring been made clear. The role of the assistant principals in this process also requires clarification. The academic board is making an effective use of a task group approach to help improve quality. For example, a task group is currently investigating how the programme review teams can monitor the use of teaching and learning strategies which lead to student success.

56   Within the divisions, there are satisfactory arrangements for regular meetings of team managers chaired by the relevant assistant principal. Part of the function of these groups is to monitor and facilitate quality assurance systems in the division. Regular team meetings also take place to deal with day-to-day issues relating to individual programmes, the planning of curriculum changes, and the implementation of action plans referred to them by the programme review teams.

57   The college information system provides middle and senior managers with easy access to a range of statistical data including information on student enquiries, enrolments and retention rates. There is frequent monitoring of this data by divisional and programme managers. Effective use of statistical information by team managers should inform the future rounds of the monitoring and evaluation process undertaken by the programme review teams.

58   Support staff are committed to provide a quality service. The programme review team model used in the teaching divisions is currently

being extended to the support areas. Some staff in these areas have already identified and introduced their own service level standards and targets to improve the quality of their delivery.

59   A range of questionnaires are being developed to elicit students' views on the college provision. This activity is increasingly being managed by the external relations and marketing unit but in some cases the teaching divisions are continuing to use their own questionnaires and this is leading to some confusion and duplication of effort. Questionnaires are beginning to be analysed systematically and, where appropriate, action teams are set up to discuss the results and to recommend and implement changes.

60   An analysis of the training needs of all teaching and non-teaching staff has been carried out. Senior managers have identified priority areas for training and development to support the strategic plan. In addition, line managers are responsible for identifying the specialist needs of their staff. Staff attending training events are expected to show how the event has improved their delivery of the curriculum. There is a satisfactory induction process for all new staff and those new to teaching are expected to obtain qualified teacher status or Training and Development Lead Body qualifications. The college has made a commitment to Investors In People and is working towards approval by the end of 1995.

61   An appraisal system has been adopted. All teaching staff have completed their training on setting objectives. It is intended that this will become progressively linked to the outcomes of the programme review teams and the strategic plan. Agreement on the collection and storage of the evidence base to be used is being negotiated and all staff are expected to have completed the setting of their objectives by August 1994.

RESOURCES

Staffing

62   There is an increasing emphasis on the efficient use of teaching staff. Over the past two years the full-time teaching staff have been reduced from 152 to 115. The teaching hours lost have been compensated for by a reduction in average programme hours and the use of additional part-time teaching hours. Approximately 35 per cent of the full-time equivalent teaching staff are part-time. The staff to student ratio has moved from 1.14 in 1991-92 to 1:16 in February 1994.

63   Teachers have appropriate qualifications and experience to cover the programmes offered. In building services, there are sufficient teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience and satisfactory technician support. The nursery nursing staffing team is well qualified and has suitable practitioner experience. In business administration and secretarial studies, there is a poor use of staff time in the small number of skills classes and in the use of expensive full-time lecturer support in the training office. On computing programmes, the two specialist staff are enthusiastic and appropriately qualified for the current work but they are

unable to provide the full cover that is required. Further attention needs to be given to the deployment of staff for student support in order to ensure that a comprehensive and accessible service is provided.

64   There has been an appropriate emphasis over the last two years on increasing the number of support staff. Additional staff have been recruited for personnel, payroll, finance and student administration. Within the teaching divisions there are 20 technicians and four secretaries. Outside the divisions there are 103 support staff of which 52 are either part-time or working on a job share basis.

Equipment

65   Funding is generally sufficient to support the purchase of consumables and small items of equipment but there is no rolling programme for the replacement of capital equipment. The recent capital funds allocation from the FEFC have been used to support the college information system and the purchase of equipment for the college learning centre.

66   In building services, there is a good level of specialist equipment. The revenue funding for care programmes is adequate. Well-equipped home economics rooms are available at Stockhill Lane and at Hucknall. In business administration and secretarial studies, there is a well-equipped training office with a good range of small office equipment, and the information technology facilities, which include an adequate range of software packages, are satisfactory.

67   The college learning centre is a developing area of the college. It includes the library, reprographics and information technology facilities and communications and numeracy workshops. Considerable improvements to the accommodation have already been made and there are plans to refurbish the whole area over the summer vacation. The information technology accommodation is of a good standard with high quality computing equipment and networked software. A planned programme for updating hardware and software is being implemented, which in time should provide a high-quality information technology environment. Within building services, developments include a learning support base room and appropriate material for the full-time programmes.

68   There is a library on the main site at Stockhill Lane but no library at the other two sites. The main body of the library has a book-stock area, quiet study area, information technology area and a careers area. A separate room provides a study area for group work but overall there are insufficient study spaces. The book stock is poor. Thirty-nine per cent of the stock is over 11 years old, but staff make a good use of the resources available. Subject teams also purchase books using their revenue funds and these resources are additional to the library. For example, the building services team provides good textbook support and the social care access course is also well supported. There are five personal computers, including one machine for careers and CD-ROM work. These computers are available

for basic information technology when the information technology suite is closed. The introduction of a computer-based catalogue is currently under consideration. There is some liaison with course teams but there is no formal structure for liaison with users as a whole. However, a programme review team for the library is to be established in the near future.

Accommodation

69   At Stockhill Lane, there are facilities for construction, furniture, building services, business, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, art, and care programmes. It is a spacious site and the college buildings are surrounded by large grounds. The initial main buildings and adjoining workshops were built in 1969 and a second four storey building was added in 1974. Eight mobile classrooms have been added at various times since 1974. The specialist workshops are generally good although there are some cramped areas. The general appearance of some rooms could be much improved by the use of display material. Access to the 1974 block is difficult for students who use wheelchairs and plans are in preparation to overcome this problem. The refectory is overcrowded at lunch times and facilities for sporting and recreational activities are restricted. Some of the mobile classrooms have acceptable interiors, others are in a poor condition. The Hunter survey showed that a considerable amount of repair work, mainly associated with flat roofs, needs to be undertaken over the next few years.

70   Acourt street is a brick building which was at one time a primary school. It is located within an area of residential property and there is little parking space. It is used for plastering and tiling programmes and has a number of rooms on several levels which provide a realistic but cramped environment for practical work. There is also a classroom, a refectory, office and staff rest areas.

71   Portland Farm and Duke Street in Hucknall provide facilities for engineering, secretarial, care, art, and hairdressing programmes and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Portland Farm is a large site with a number of single storey buildings, some built of wood and some of brick. The oldest buildings date from the 1930s with later additions in the 1940s. The external appearance of the wooden buildings is poor and the sloping nature of the site and its various levels makes access for students who use wheelchairs difficult. The nearby Duke Street site is a former comprehensive school building. The original buildings date from the 1890s with later additions in 1913 and 1960.   They include administrative and office space and teaching areas. Some of the rooms are of a suitable size but others are small for their purpose. The Hunter survey identified the need for a considerable amount of work on both sites over the next few years. The college has yet to develop a strategy for the use and resourcing of all the three college sites.

72   In building services, there are some good workshop areas, for example, the domestic gas appliance area. Other areas, such as the

refrigeration workshop area, are tight for space. On care programmes, some classrooms are overcrowded and unsuitable for group work. The accommodation for nursery nursing programmes varies considerably. The better rooms are of a good size, carpeted and have attractive wall displays of students' work. Some rooms are too small and restrict the opportunities for group work and the mobile classrooms are in poor physical condition. In secretarial studies, the working office annex at Hucknall is small, cold and cramped.

73 The monitoring of the accommodation through the college information system is just beginning. It is planned that the base information available on the information system and information about actual room occupancy will be linked through a computerised register to allow room utilisation to be monitored.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

74 The particular strengths of the college are:

- the range of provision in specialist vocational areas
- the effectiveness of the management executive group in initiating change
- the accessibility of the college information system and its increasing use in the management of the college
- the high quality of teaching and learning in most vocational programme areas
- the outcomes of vocational programmes
- the quality of the workshops which support college specialisms.

75 If the college is to maintain and to raise present standards, it should address the following issues:

- the co-ordination of external links to promote better use of the college's facilities by employers, the community and individuals
- mechanisms by which members of the corporation can evaluate their own contributions to the college
- the development of a strategy for the resourcing and use of all three college sites
- the improvement of retention and attendance rates on some courses
- the further development of the quality assurance procedures
- the effective co-ordination of student support services.

FIGURES

Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.
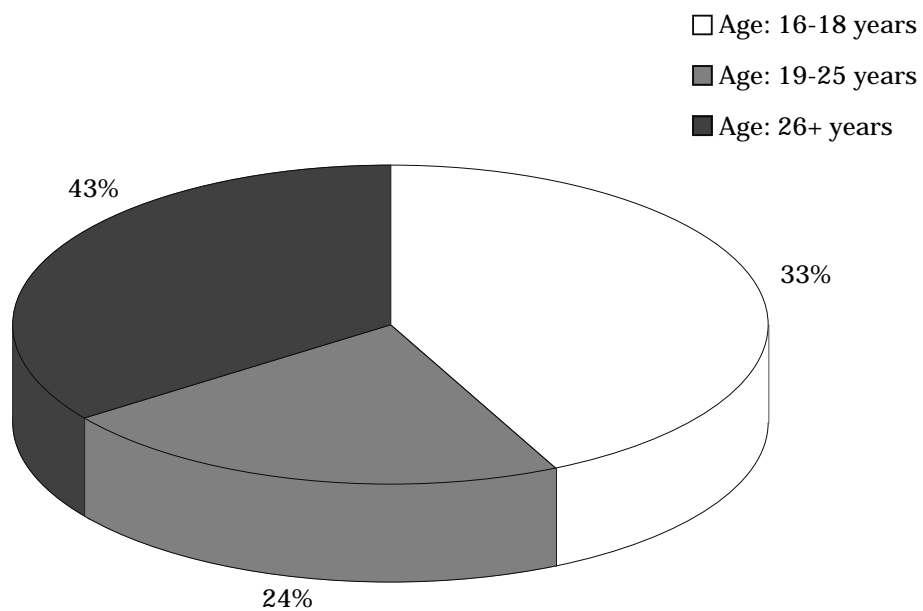
Figure 1

Basford Hall College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (at January 1994)
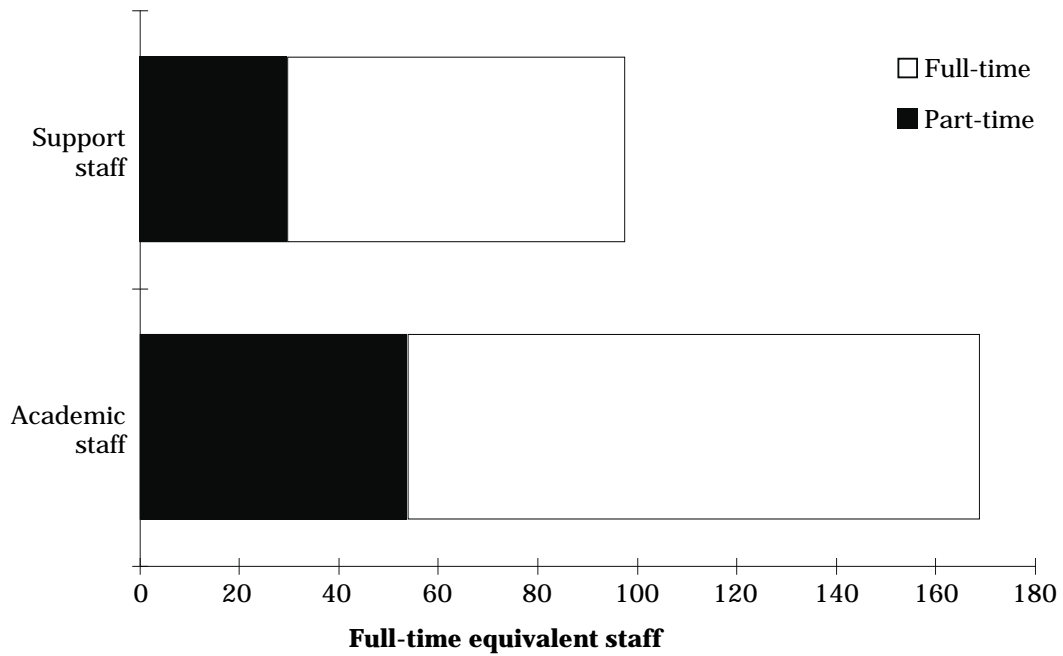
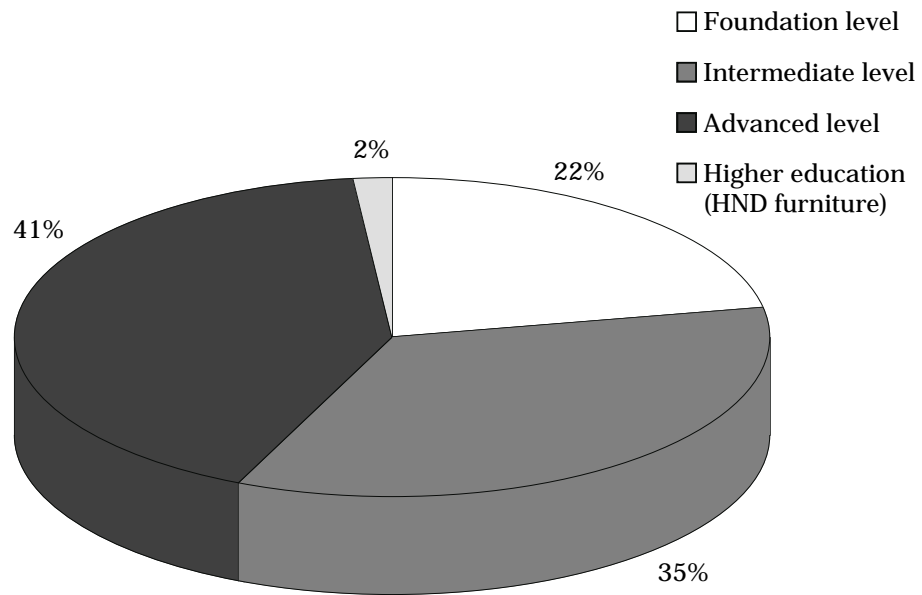

Full-time equivalent staff: 267

Figure 2

Basford Hall College: percentage enrolments by age (at November 1993)
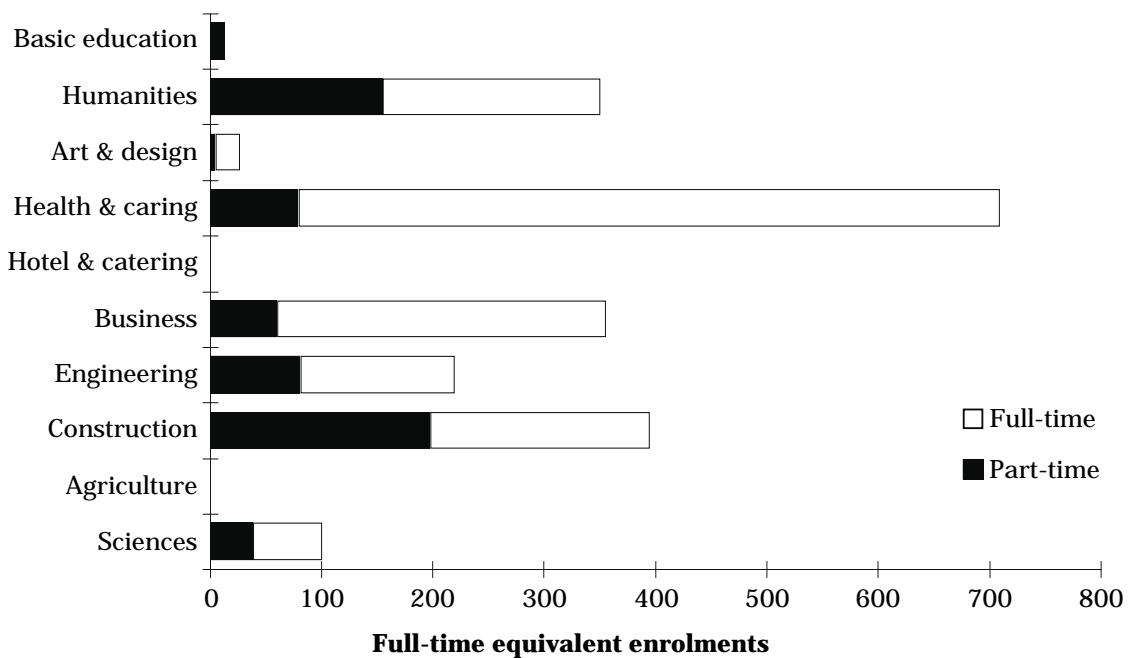

Enrolments: 4,529

20

Figure 3

**Basford Hall College: percentage enrolments by level of study
(at November 1993)**

Enrolments: 4,529

Figure 4

**Basford Hall College: enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of
attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)**
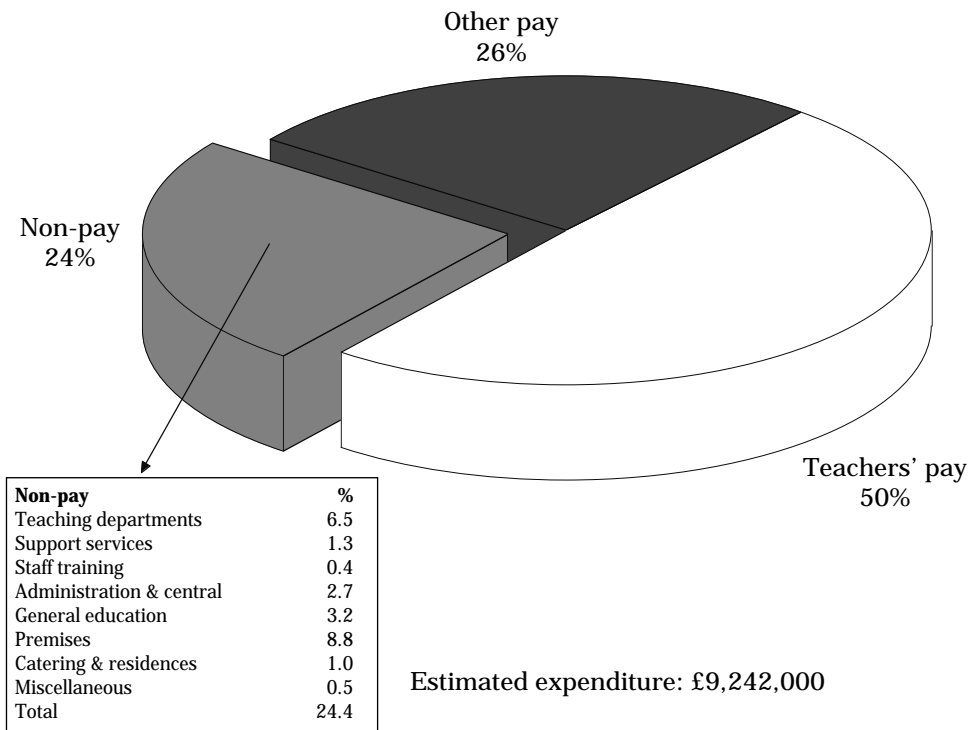

Full-time equivalent enrolments

Full-time equivalent enrolments: 2,173

Figure 5

Basford Hall College: recurrent income (16 months to July 1994)

□ FEFC recurrent
■ European
■ TEC
□ Higher education
■ LEA
□ Fees
■ Other

4%
6%
2%
1%
9%
3%
75%
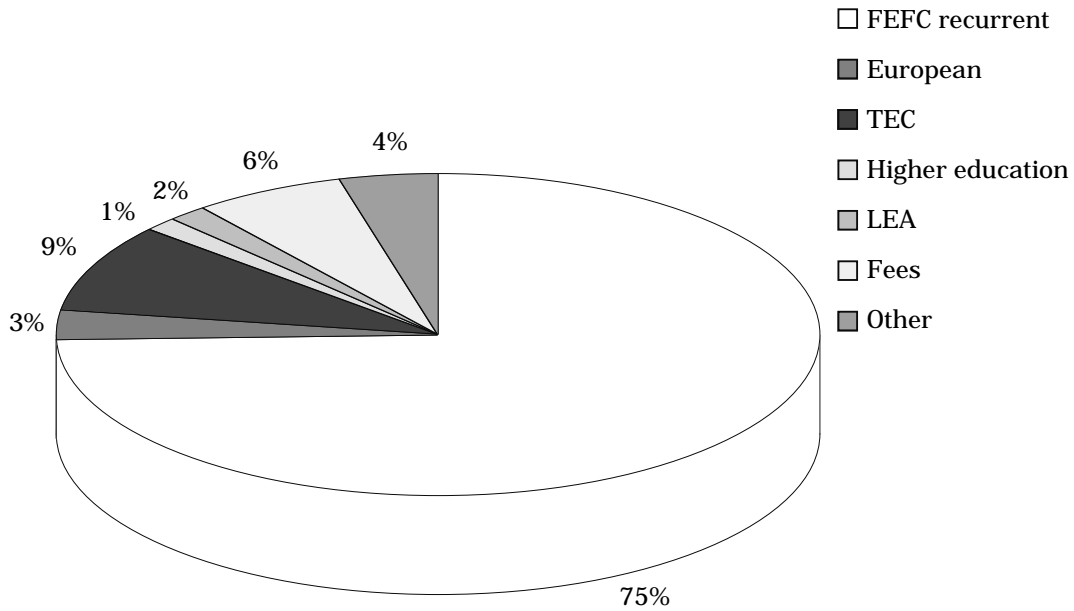
Recurrent income: £9,452,000

Figure 6

Basford Hall College: estimated expenditure (16 months to July 1994)

Other pay
26%

Non-pay
24%

Teachers' pay
50%

Non-pay	%
Teaching departments	6.5
Support services	1.3
Staff training	0.4
Administration & central	2.7
General education	3.2
Premises	8.8
Catering & residences	1.0
Miscellaneous	0.5
Total	24.4

Estimated expenditure: £9,242,000