

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

**North
Lincolnshire
College**

July 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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 85/95

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COLLEGE

EAST MIDLANDS REGION

Inspected September 1994 – March 1995

Summary

North Lincolnshire College is the major provider of further education in north Lincolnshire. It provides a broad range of vocational courses and has been particularly successful in encouraging participation by mature students. The college has established excellent links with the local community, schools, employers and other agencies, especially Lincolnshire TEC. Governors provide a clear sense of purpose which is shared by the senior management team. The board is undertaking a timely and far-reaching review of its role and working practices. Managers' responsibilities are clearly identified and an effective system for monitoring their performance against targets supports their work. Plans for equipment resources, staffing and accommodation are comprehensive and appropriate. The quality of teaching is high and there is outstanding work in building and civil engineering, health and social care, catering and hospitality services and leisure and sports science. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Many students achieve good results in vocational examinations, but results in some subjects at GCE and GCSE are below average. The college has made good progress in implementing its quality assurance system. It has yet to be fully applied across the college. The college should: raise retention rates and levels of attendance in some courses; extend the use of management information at programme level; and address the issue of access for students with restricted mobility.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Mathematics	3	Catering and hospitality	
Computing	2	services	1
Building and civil engineering	1	Leisure and sports sciences	1
Production and transport engineering	2	Health and social care	1
Electrical and electronic engineering	3	Humanities including access provision	2
Business, management and secretarial studies	2	Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2

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INTRODUCTION

1 Eighteen inspectors visited the college for 69 inspector days between September 1994 and March 1995. They observed 182 teaching sessions involving approximately 2,500 students. Discussions were held with staff, students, governors, and representatives from industry, the local community and the Lincolnshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). Inspectors also examined samples of students' work and a range of college documents.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 North Lincolnshire College was formed in 1987 from the merger of Lincoln College of Technology and Gainsborough College of Further Education. The college serves three centres of population: Lincoln, Gainsborough and Louth. North Lincolnshire is predominantly rural in character. The college operates on five sites in Lincoln, on a single site in Gainsborough (20 miles from Lincoln) and on two sites in Louth (26 miles from Lincoln). Over 80 per cent of the college's work takes place in Lincoln. In 1993, Lincolnshire County Council's adult education programme was added to the provision at Louth and Gainsborough.

3 In January 1995 unemployment rates were 10.3 per cent in Lincoln, 13.3 per cent in Gainsborough and 13.8 per cent in Louth compared with 10.2 per cent for Lincolnshire as a whole. There are few very large companies in the area but 1 per cent of employers provide 25 per cent of jobs. The large employers include public sector organisations and food processing and engineering companies. There are many small businesses (88 per cent of local companies employ less than 20 people) which employ 34 per cent of the total workforce. There is seasonal employment in agriculture, as well as tourism and a considerable amount of self-employment.

4 The college recruits school leavers from over 25 schools, 17 of which have sixth forms. Seventy per cent of 16 year olds in the area continue in education, with approximately equal numbers going into further education and sixth forms. De Montfort University also offers further and higher education through its school of applied art and design and school of agriculture and horticulture which are both situated in Lincoln.

5 Full-time enrolments at the college have risen by 46 per cent over the past five years. At the time of the inspection there were 8,381 FEFC-funded enrolments of which almost half were students more than 25 years old. A further 2,172 students attend non-vocational adult education classes at the Louth and Gainsborough Centres. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. Minority ethnic groups form over 2 per cent of the college population. This is slightly higher than the figure of 1.3 per cent for the proportion of Lincolnshire's population who come from such groups. Most of the college's students live within a 20 mile radius of one of the college sites. The college employs 726

people. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

6 The college has worked closely with Nottingham Polytechnic since 1988 and became an associate college of Nottingham Trent University (formerly Nottingham Polytechnic) in 1993. Currently, the college has 458 higher education students of which 359 are full time. The college is a partner in the Lincolnshire Business School, the forerunner of the University College for Lincolnshire which is being established in conjunction with private and public sector organisations.

7 The aim of the college is to provide a comprehensive and accessible further education service which provides opportunities to students of all ages. The college recognises the potential of its staff and encourages them through professional development and appraisal to contribute to the college mission. The college seeks to achieve its aim by the efficient and effective use of resources whilst constantly striving to improve the learning environment.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

8 The college's own local market intelligence is used in conjunction with the TEC's labour market information to assist in planning future provision. Information on all courses is made available in public libraries and job centres, and guidance staff attend events held in local shopping centres. The 1994-95 part-time prospectus was distributed to 70,000 homes throughout Lincolnshire using the network of local newspapers. Individual courses are marketed through direct advertising and the level of applications is effectively monitored to identify any changes in enrolment patterns. Better use could be made of available information on students' destinations in publicity material. The college is reviewing the writing style it uses because some leaflets contain technical terms not commonly used by the general public. Many applicants are attracted by recommendations from past students at all three college centres. In order to tailor provision at Gainsborough to the needs of the community, public meetings were held and questionnaires were used to gauge demand for particular subjects.

9 The college offers a broad range of programmes across its three centres in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Louth. Twenty-three subjects are offered at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) together with 14 GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects and 24 subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at intermediate and advanced levels have been introduced in business, construction, health and social care, leisure and tourism and hospitality services. A more limited range of GNVQs is also available at foundation level. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) across a range of levels are offered in engineering, secretarial studies, management, catering, motor vehicle engineering, electrical installation and information technology. The college is a leading

provider of NVQs in construction. Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) first and national diplomas are offered in nursery nursing, engineering, sports science and computing. Many other courses are provided which are accredited by specialist vocational bodies. The college also runs programmes specifically for women returners and programmes preparing adult students for entry to higher education which are accredited by the Open College Network.

10 There are currently about 40 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities following the Lifestyle programme. Other students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities follow a range of courses, including higher education programmes, with care assistants giving support in the classroom where necessary. The college is recognised by the Royal National Institute for the Blind as a centre of excellence. The new buildings include support for hearing-impaired students and specially-equipped teaching rooms.

11 The curriculum framework allows a range of attendance patterns to suit individual needs, especially those of mature students. Students who would not previously have thought of undertaking training have been attracted to the college. The college is improving its guidance for adults through tutorial provision and monitoring procedures. The adult education contracts from Lincolnshire County Council for the areas of Gainsborough and Louth are run by the college. The provision of adult education is important for the Gainsborough and Louth centres since it contributes towards effective use of resources in these small towns. Adult education in Welton, North Hykeham, Branston and Sleaford is sponsored by the college.

12 The college has successfully extended its provision to reach members of the more remote rural communities. One initiative to reach potential adult students is to market Open Door and Newstart programmes for adults through primary schools. Open Door programmes are available for women returners to take advantage of opportunities in management and motor vehicle skills training. Staff from the programme visit nursery groups and playschools to provide information. Funds have been received from Urban Challenge to provide programmes in local schools, church halls and libraries. There are close working relationships with the local job centre in order to provide progression opportunities for students. An adult learners' handbook has been prepared in conjunction with the job centre. The Newstart initiative offers adults the opportunity to return to training. Lincolnshire has a high proportion of qualified women whose skills are underused and the intention is to raise awareness of career possibilities. The educational needs of women in rural areas are also being met through the Lincolnshire TEC Lift Off programme. Activities in villages are designed to provide confidence and information to encourage progression to other programmes. Basic skills development has been provided for the isolated rural communities between Louth and the east coast.

13 The college and Lincolnshire TEC work in a close partnership. The college has set up two units, NL Consultants and NLC Training, to develop

links with local employers. The college has large training contracts with the TEC which are serviced by NL Consultants and NLC Training and over £2 million of TEC funding flows into the college annually. NLC Training runs training courses for youth trainees and adults. This unit received the Investors in People award and a top performer award in 1994 from the TEC. The success of the training provision is the result of its flexibility coupled with a willingness to work on college or company premises. NLC Training staff attend careers conventions to assist with schools liaison. There is an effective link with the main college enquiry system to ensure that all applicants are dealt with by the appropriate department. Employers are visited every eight to 10 weeks and mailshots are used to disseminate course information. Where possible, work placement requirements are tied into the training effort. Bringing employers and parents into contact with the college is seen as an additional benefit of training activity. NL Consultants provides short courses and consultancy services and is included in the TEC's consultancy brokerage service. The unit provides a flexible and speedy response to enquiries for services. Programmes include consultancy for Investors in People, management training, health and safety courses, and accreditation for the Training and Development Lead Body. NL Consultants is included in the TEC's consultancy brokerage service. The development of NVQs for the staff of general practitioner fundholders is one of many examples of opportunities identified by NL Consultants and developed with the TEC.

14 Promotion to business is a scheme for exploring new links with industry. Groups of around 20 company representatives at managerial or director level are invited to a seminar outlining how multi-skilling can help a company. Marketing concentrates on ways in which the college can help the business. The key to the project's success is the college's ability to respond quickly to requests and to provide a timely diagnosis for future action. Unexpected business opportunities have arisen from this project and have prompted further action through NL Consultants. The reputation for providing a service which is of benefit to companies and offers practical solutions is now reaping rewards through word-of-mouth recommendations. The Technology Access Network Service gives support to technological development in 50 small to medium-size enterprises. The participation of major companies and organisations in this network offers more extensive expertise than would be available in the college alone and enhances the quality and range of information available to clients.

15 The college has a close relationship with the Royal Air Force including provision for part-time day-release students. College staff are involved in Royal Air Force education open days and information events. The college provides learning packs for those posted abroad. These are aimed at the partners of service personnel as well as Royal Air Force staff. The college has offered guidance to over 200 Royal Air Force recruits and their families this year. Whilst some Royal Air Force facilities are closing, there has also been relocation into Lincolnshire so that the overall reduction in staff is

relatively small. The Royal Air Force is very supportive of the college and officers attend meetings of consultative committees.

16 The six employers' consultative committees are generally well attended. The membership is diverse with input from staff and employers drawn from a wide area. The committees give advice on the viability of specific courses. Members also help the college with the provision of materials. Two-way exchange visits benefit college staff by updating them on working practices and benefit employers by removing misconceptions about the college and informing them about training opportunities. Consultation with employers through the construction consultative committee enabled the college to identify the need for more training to meet the increase in construction activity required by the development of the University College of Lincolnshire. This led to the Construction Industry Training Initiative and the decision to retain construction courses despite current falling demand.

17 The college works with Lincoln City Council through the Economic Development Liaison Group. One initiative is the redevelopment of Sessions House, an eighteenth century building which will provide the college with a site on the edge of the town centre. Local jobs are being created through the Investors in Lincoln group of major local organisations, including the college, which aims to regenerate the inner city area. The college helps to co-ordinate the Managed Workplace Scheme which provides office services for new businesses. Trainees are used in the provision of this service and it is hoped to develop this into a modern apprenticeship scheme.

18 The college has been particularly successful in attracting European funding. The Newstart skills of advising and supporting older employees formed the basis of a joint bid with Nottinghamshire County Council under the Euroform project for the transfer of knowledge and technology skills. This has led to links with major training organisations in Portugal and Holland. NL Consultants produce materials to train the trainers. The college's expertise in mechatronics (the bringing together of computing, computer numerical controlled machines and flexible manufacturing) has led to close links with French, Portuguese and Dutch institutions. The technology centre at Lincoln was established in partnership with the TEC and the City Council with the help of a substantial European grant.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

19 The corporation has a planned membership of 20 but there are currently two vacancies. One of these vacancies has remained unfilled for a long period. Eleven governors are drawn from local industry and the TEC. There are two staff nominees, one student member, two co-opted members who are also local councillors, one member with particular community interests and the principal. There are two women on the board. The board has set up committees for finance and general purposes,

personnel and remuneration, and audit. The committees have agreed terms of reference but these do not yet include standing procedural orders. The finance and general purposes committee receives comprehensive financial reports and goes through them rigorously. The audit committee is extending its role to include value for money studies. All board meetings have been quorate and are reasonably well attended. The agendas are well planned and supporting papers are clear. In addition to attendance at board meetings, many board members are actively and enthusiastically involved with the college both on the main site and at the Gainsborough and Louth centres.

20 The board is knowledgeable and operates increasingly at a strategic level. Members are currently engaged in an ambitious and timely review of the role of the board and statements have already been agreed which set out the board's role in determining policy and direction. This review was initiated by the attendance of the principal and a number of governors at a national conference on a North American model of governance. The review encompasses a reconsideration of the committee structure and methods for the monitoring of the board's own performance. It is planned that all the changes resulting from this thorough and far-reaching review will be in place by the end of the year. It is important that this target is achieved and that procedural issues such as mechanisms for filling vacancies are quickly established.

21 The governing body and the senior management team have a clear and shared sense of purpose. Governors have established the mission statement and general aims for the college. Strategic plans are prepared by the senior management team in conjunction with the heads of schools and heads of the non-teaching support units. These plans are discussed by the staff and academic board and considered and approved by the governors. The board monitors progress towards the strategic goals using well-chosen performance indicators. This monitoring process is phased over the year so that proper consideration can be given to each topic. The monitoring plan is set out as an annual calendar of topics matched to board meeting dates. The annual operating statement is broken down into detailed schedules that are used by senior managers, heads of schools and units to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan on a regular monthly basis. A management performance review is used by the principal to carry out a similar monthly monitoring of members of the senior management team. Performance indicators in the operating statement are monitored monthly at principal and director level. Regular reports on key operational indicators are made to the governors and monthly financial reports are provided for the finance and general purposes subcommittee.

22 The senior management team consists of the principal, a chief administrative officer (who is also clerk to the corporation), three directors and three assistant directors. The three directors' responsibilities are respectively, development, operations and resources. There is one female

assistant director in the senior management team of eight. The senior management team holds minuted meetings every two to three weeks. The principal and the three directors meet weekly. There is a clear allocation of responsibilities and senior managers work closely together as a team. The college is organised into 10 schools of study: adult and continuing education; building and civil engineering; business and management studies; secretarial studies; community, health and social care; computer studies; electrical and electronic engineering; production and transport engineering; sport, leisure and hospitality; and core studies.

23 The management structure and lines of accountability and communication are clear and well understood in teaching and support areas. Some checks and balances have been deliberately included in the structure. One example is in the area of resource management. The director of resources is responsible for setting budgets and for the overall control of expenditure. The college accountant, who reports directly to the principal, is responsible for monitoring expenditure and cash management. Although the director of operations has 10 heads of school reporting to him, the college system of monitoring through performance targets ensures that this structure can operate effectively. Heads of schools and units are increasingly becoming involved in strategic issues. The college has a policy of devolving responsibility down through the organisation. The practice is now being extended beyond heads of schools and units. There are many examples of good leadership and management at operational level. One example is the learning-resources unit which publishes an annual report. This contains a vision statement for the unit which identifies the focus for the learning-resource centres within the context of the college's strategic aims. The learning-resources management group meets twice a term and is attended by school representatives. The learning-resource centres are managed through the setting and monitoring of performance targets. Stock is reviewed systematically and computer systems are applied to routine monitoring tasks. There is some inconsistency in managerial effectiveness. There are variations in interpretation of college policies at programme level especially in those areas which do not easily fit the structure of a programme team, such as the servicing provision for other curriculum areas and GCE A level which is delivered in subjects.

24 Arrangements for the management of the centres at Gainsborough and Louth are working well. Changes have recently been made in the management of the Gainsborough centre. Three senior lecturers at the centre are now responsible for day-to-day operations and a budget has been allocated to the centre. Both centres have considerable independence but are well supported by senior management.

25 The academic board serves as a college-wide structure for communication. It meets every three to four months. It has one subcommittee, the quality standards committee, which monitors the college's quality initiatives. A staff governor is a member of the academic

board. Issues are tackled by working groups reporting to the senior management team. The college has a wide range of methods for the dissemination of information including newsletters, open staff meetings and briefing sessions through the schools and units. At programme level there are some difficulties in arranging meeting times.

26 The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £18.46 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £18.17 per unit for the same period. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6. Efficiency in the use of staff and accommodation has improved steadily. The budget setting process is carried out by the director of resources and begins with the broad three-year financial forecast. This is approved by the finance and general purposes committee of the corporation. Seventy per cent of the budget for consumable items is allocated to the schools according to a formula related to student numbers and the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) funding methodology. Staffing numbers are allocated in a similar way but the actual pay budget is held centrally. The remaining 30 per cent of the materials budget is used to meet targeted needs such as information technology equipment and the purchase of new furniture which has had a high priority in 1993-94. Heads of schools and units receive regular monthly financial reports.

27 Good use is made of management information on enrolments, retention rates and destinations by senior and middle managers. Remedial action is taken where necessary. The use of management information at programme level is less well developed. Statistical indicators are required as part of quality reviews and programme teams generate these from their own manual records. Confidence in the reliability of information from the central management system is only slowly being established. This centrally-held information is gradually being made available in more accessible and useable forms but further progress is needed. Problems with the optical mark reader used to automatically record attendance from a new register system made it difficult to obtain data on student absences in the first half of the year. Unit cost information is generally not available at school or programme level. Senior managers make use of the information which is already available and a system is being introduced which will provide detailed unit cost information for the whole college.

28 Policies for equal opportunities and health and safety are being successfully implemented. Responsibilities under these policies are clearly understood and regular monitoring is in progress. Policies and procedures are reviewed and modified if necessary. A member of the academic board attends all recruitment interviews to monitor equal opportunities issues. Very thorough systems are used for monitoring health and safety. Regular reports on health and safety and equal opportunities are made to the corporation.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

29 Close ties have been formed with local schools through the technical and vocational education initiative. Contacts include attendance at careers conventions, group presentations and individual discussions. Competition has made it increasingly difficult for the college to maintain effective contact with those schools that already have, or are developing, sixth forms. The head of marketing co-ordinates liaison with schools. She has been invited to speak to some schools, both to market further education in general and to give specific information on North Lincolnshire College. There is close liaison with Lincolnshire Careers Service which arranges careers conventions. Liaison activities extend to Gainsborough and Louth as well as Lincoln. The recruitment of adults is the responsibility of the college adult guidance team. The team recruits students through their work with community organisations, job clubs and other local centres.

30 The guidance unit at the Lincoln site provides students with advice about suitable programmes, appropriate opportunities for progression and career choices. The unit is well equipped for enquiries and private interviews. It accommodates a range of staff who provide services, including receptionists, advisers for the accreditation of prior learning, counsellors, tutors for adult learners, an adviser and co-workers for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a careers adviser, accommodation officers and two part-time chaplains. Guidance and counselling services are particularly effective for mature students. Gainsborough and Louth also have advice and guidance services which are appropriate to the demands of students at those sites. The Lincolnshire TEC unit providing access to assessment is based at the college. This unit aims to provide recognition of the experience and skills gained at work, from general life experience or independent study. It helps to plan a programme of study which is tailored to an individual's needs. It offers an accreditation of prior learning service in a range of vocational areas leading to NVQs. In 1993-94 there were 720 enquiries and the unit ran 16 workshops for a total of about 240 students. There were 86 individual assessments and 35 accreditations.

31 Students are advised of their rights and responsibilities. They are provided with a pack during the induction process which explores issues that relate to their behaviour and attitude at the college and as citizens. There is a well-constituted students' union at the college. A sabbatical officer promotes formal communication links between students, the college and other bodies. The college provides tutor and student packs on induction, health education, study skills and careers education and guidance. Tutors provide a variety of induction activities. Induction lasts from three days to four weeks according to the aims of a course and the student group. Students on sports studies speak highly of their experience at induction. Some good practice was seen in the health and social care GNVQ programme where induction extends over the first block of teaching. It helps students to understand the teaching and learning concepts

associated with GNVQ and to identify their core-skill development needs. The induction programme for full-time students in the school of business and management includes a residential element which is highly valued.

32 The college is developing a strategy to identify all those who require learning support. In September 1994, over 900 students were screened during induction using the Foundation Skills Assessment Screening. Eleven per cent of students received further diagnostic testing to identify the additional literacy and numeracy support required. Screening of students using this method is still at a pilot stage with results being made available to students but not to their tutors. The college is gradually adopting more vocationally-specific initial assessment. Six staff are trained as occupational assessors. Students who indicate that they need learning support are referred to the guidance unit and provided with clear information to help them to understand the support available. Arrangements for additional support include a formal agreement signed by both the college and the student on the nature of the support. The agreement is distributed to all staff who teach that student. It is also reviewed regularly. A member of the learning support team provides a workshop for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at Gainsborough and an assessor attends the Louth centre.

33 There is an effective personal tutorial scheme for full-time and part-time students with a planned tutorial programme for the year. It is college policy, where possible, to provide students with a tutor who also teaches on their course. All students interviewed commented on the excellence of tutorial support and the hard work by tutors. Tutorials are monitored through weekly briefing sheets. Tutors give appropriate attention to individual student's progress. Students who request a change of programme are able to do so through a college-wide transfer procedure.

34 The college has a policy requiring 80 per cent minimum attendance but the optical mark read system for monitoring absence is not easy for staff to use. However, changes have been made and attendance monitoring is now improving. Most of the programme teams are now operating their own systems. This results in variation in quality of monitoring and action taken, as well as difficulties in implementing the college's attendance policy. Attendance recorded on 8 March 1995 showed an average attendance level of 86 per cent with absences ranging from 27 per cent in the school of core studies to 4 per cent in the school of building and civil engineering. Absences in the schools of adult and continuing education, business and management studies, community health and social care and computer studies were above average. Observations during specialist inspections supported these figures with recorded absences of 18.3 per cent in business and management studies and 27 per cent in the school of adult and continuing education.

35 All full-time and part-time students on youth training programmes maintain a record of achievement. Students are encouraged to record their own achievements and to assess their progress. The college's process

in providing a record of achievement has been validated by the Lincolnshire TEC. Comprehensive and easy-to-use guides help students and staff to understand the objectives of records of achievement. Examples of students' records of achievement show their growing awareness of the importance of this document. On leaving the programme, students can obtain a copy of their record of achievement to use in interviews for employment or further education. There is a designated co-ordinator for records of achievement.

36 Careers education and guidance are aimed at young people and those who are experiencing a change of work, unemployment or who are returning to learn after many years. A link person from each of the college's 10 schools works with the full-time careers officer to provide careers guidance and advice to students. Lincolnshire County Council careers advisory service is developing service-level agreements with individual schools within the college to improve the service offered. All full-time further education students are entitled to participate in work experience during their programme. Work experience is an integral part of the curriculum. It is arranged at course level but tutors are urged to plan and organise high-quality experiences for students. Tutors work with employers to assess students' progress and to support students in the workplace.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

37 Strengths clearly outweighed weaknesses in 73 per cent of the 182 classes which were inspected. Weaknesses were predominant in only 3 per cent of the sessions. The following table shows the grades awarded by inspectors.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		4	6	5	1	0	16
GCSE		5	5	1	1	0	12
GNVQ		5	10	7	1	0	23
NVQ		6	14	11	1	0	32
Other vocational		25	52	21	1	0	99
Total		45	87	45	5	0	182

38 In the school of computer studies there is a strong rapport between staff and students. A variety of teaching and learning techniques is used and the quality of computing teaching is high. Material is well presented. In a lesson on quantitative methods in the BTEC national diploma programme, the lecturer used cartesian co-ordinates and transformations to link mathematical skills directly to computer programming by using examples from screen displays of graphics figures. By changing the size

and position of triangles using transformation formulae, the students were able to integrate these principles directly to the writing of screen-handling routines in high level programming. Mathematics teachers follow well-prepared schemes of work which ensure adequate syllabus coverage. The relevance of students' mathematical studies would be enhanced by wider consultation about schemes of work across all programme areas. More varied teaching is needed to extend the more able students and provide more interest amongst all students. Few opportunities exist for students to undertake practical or group work. The mathematics module for access course students does not take account of students' previous experience.

39 The school of building and civil engineering has a highly organised approach to teaching and support for students. A blend of traditional values and innovative teaching by highly-committed staff has created a very good model. Students work in well-managed and safe environments to industrial standards. Resource-based learning in most craft areas has transformed the traditional approach of separate workshop and classroom activities. Individual learning methods provide flexible working arrangements which enable students to join or leave a course at any time during the year. Efficiency is improved as students from several different groups use the workshops at the same time. Achievable targets are set for students. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities spend time in each craft section in the school.

40 Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies in electrical and electronic engineering and demonstrate a sound knowledge of their subject. Lessons are planned in a satisfactory way and there is good interaction between teachers and students. Limited use is made of the overhead projector but some teachers have developed excellent sets of course notes. Appropriate coursework is set but no schedule of assignments is produced. Students' work is marked accurately and thoroughly and clear feedback is given. There is no system of internal moderation for marked assignments.

41 All classes in production and transport engineering have clearly-stated aims and objectives. Assignments, competence tests and homework are set at regular intervals, and promptly marked although there were some instances of inconsistent marking. Students are made aware of safe working practice in practical situations.

42 The learning experience of students in secretarial skills classes is good; teaching is well planned, appropriately paced and knowledge of test results is immediate. The core skills of literacy and numeracy are stressed. NVQ sessions are less challenging, with some mechanistic approaches and inadequate feedback to students. Little use is made of students' knowledge of work situations.

43 Business and management studies programmes are underpinned by comprehensive schemes of work which ensure good syllabus coverage. In

general, students' workloads are balanced although the variety of additional studies on offer causes distractions for some. Students are challenged by what they do and teachers ensure that they maintain a good pace. Students have opportunities for individual and groupwork. They are keen to take part in discussions and role plays. Questions are used to good effect to check understanding and to involve all students. Students' achievements are properly recorded. The work students are set is fair, consistent and well marked, although teachers' written comments vary in their extent and usefulness.

44 Catering and hospitality courses are well documented; comprehensive information is given to students. There are productive relationships between students and staff. Assessments are of an appropriate standard and they are marked fairly. Students' progress is monitored efficiently and discussed with them. Students' written work would benefit from more teachers giving more rigorous attention to spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. The training restaurant which is open to the public provides a realistic working environment.

45 In sports and leisure studies, high standards of teaching and learning are maintained for both theoretical and practical aspects of the programmes. Students are actively involved in the planning of their work. Teaching is stimulating and makes learning an enjoyable process. The partnership with Hill House Equestrian Centre provides first-class practical facilities.

46 Teachers in the school of community, health and social care produce comprehensive files which include schemes of work. Lesson plans vary in their quality but they are used systematically. Students are given course booklets which include information about work placements. In a number of cases, skilled questioning was used to encourage clear thinking by students. However, some staff should make more effort to draw passive members of the group into discussion. Core skills are taught using vocationally-relevant materials. Work placement experiences are integrated into teaching and learning programmes. Staff relationships with students enhanced the teaching and learning process. Detailed feedback is provided about written work but students would benefit if this were more closely related to assessment criteria. Further work is required to help students to understand grading issues within individual assignments.

47 There is an excellent relationship between the staff and students of English, drama and communications. Teachers in the English section of the school of adult and continuing education work together to produce high-quality teaching materials. The section also produces annual schemes of work for each course which are included in the subject induction pack provided for each student. Students experience a variety of methods of working; groupwork is particularly well structured and successful. In all sessions teachers regularly check what students have learned.

48 In psychology and sociology, the characteristics of the better classes were a challenging pace, a variety of activities, students thoroughly involved in their studies, high-quality resource materials, some examples of excellent feedback by students from group activities, well-directed questions to individual students and effective testing of learning. Sociology teachers share schemes of work and learning resources. There is an interesting team teaching development in GCE A level psychology with excellent packs of learning materials. Course handbooks with assignment dates are given to all students.

49 In access courses which prepare adults with non-traditional qualifications for entry into higher education, teachers used a variety of teaching strategies. Generally, there is appropriate coverage in depth and breadth of the area of study but some schemes of work are unrealistic for the length of the course. Creative illustrations and examples help to make learning enjoyable, relevant and effective. Teachers encourage students to explore ideas and participate in discussions. They make regular checks on students' understanding in the classroom. Good records are kept of students' achievements. Assignments and examination questions are successful in developing knowledge and skills for higher education. Students receive helpful guidance in study techniques. They appreciate the willingness of staff to be helpful with their personal difficulties in learning and in dealing with domestic issues. The provision is split over two sites and this causes problems in communication, administration and access to support facilities.

50 Individual tutoring for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Most teaching sessions in the school of core studies were well paced and carefully managed. Relationships between teachers and students are purposeful and productive. Some good arrangements exist for reviewing the progress made by students. Good use of questions, reinforcement of key points and use of previous experience were evident in some of the sections observed. However, sometimes the aims of sessions were not made clear to students or the lessons were not summarised effectively as a means of reinforcing learning. The range and variety of teaching techniques used could be extended in some cases to take greater account of the varied abilities of students. Most students on the Life Styles programme do not as yet have access to nationally-recognised accreditation although they can obtain college certificates. The college is in the process of gaining accreditation for the programme through the Open College Network.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

51 The overall retention rate for the college was 89 per cent in the academic year up to March 1995 and 91 per cent for the year 1993-94. Completion rates in computing, health and social care and in most engineering programmes were good. There are significant numbers of students withdrawing from access courses which prepare adults for higher

education; the main reasons given for non-completion are students' personal commitments and domestic problems. Over 80 of the 350 students studying GCSE mathematics have withdrawn from classes. Although the proportion of students gaining grades A-C in GCSE mathematics is improving, this has been partly achieved by a poor retention rate prior to examination entry. There is no evidence that retention and pass rates are being carefully monitored in this area. In the humanities classes inspected attendance averaged only 73 per cent resulting in an average of only 10.5 students per class. There is a significant retention problem on humanities programmes at the Gainsborough site. Withdrawal rates at the end of the first year of two-year GCE A level programmes are generally high.

52 About 6 per cent of college enrolments are on GCE A level or GCSE programmes. The average points score per GCE A level entry for students aged 16-18 years old was 3.0 points (where A=10, E=2). This is comparable with the average of 3.0 for students aged 16-18 years old in further education sector colleges. The GCE A level pass rate in 1993-94 was 64 per cent compared with the provisional national average of 68 per cent for sector colleges other than sixth form colleges. The pass rate in GCE AS subjects for 1993-94 was 64 per cent compared with the provisional national average of 55 per cent for sector colleges other than sixth form colleges. The GCSE pass rate at grade A-C for students aged 16-18 in 1993-94 was 41 per cent compared with the national average of 38 per cent for sector colleges other than sixth form colleges. For students aged 19 and over the college pass rate was 60 per cent compared with the same figure nationally.

53 Most students at North Lincolnshire College are following vocational programmes. Pass rates on intermediate GNVQ awards for 16-18 year old students varied from 57 per cent in information technology to 83 per cent in business. Pass rates on advanced GNVQ awards for 16-18 year old students varied from 70 per cent in leisure and tourism to 95 per cent in business. For students aged 19 and above pass rates varied from 70 per cent in information technology to 97 per cent in business. Test results for current GNVQ students are encouraging in many areas. Students have achieved consistently good results with over 90 per cent pass rates in the examinations of the National Nursery Examinations Board. All NVQ level 1 and level 3 courses had 100 per cent pass rates. One hundred per cent pass rates were achieved on NVQ level 2 courses for all students in engineering and providing business services, and for students aged 19 and above in construction. Sixty-eight per cent of the 221 students aged 16-18 in the final year of study on vocational courses included in the Department for Education's 1994 performance tables were successful. This puts the college in the lowest third of all colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. However, 16-18 year old students form a small proportion of students on vocational programmes.

54 The standard of students' work is generally high. Good work was seen in craft and advanced craft construction programmes, in computing, in sports and leisure programmes and in secretarial skills. Individual students have gained outstanding success. One student gained six distinctions in plumbing and is a candidate for a City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) gold medal. Students of secretarial studies win regional awards in most years. The high-quality work demonstrated in secretarial skills is not always replicated in NVQ areas where the standard of tasks completed is inconsistent and the presentation unbusinesslike.

55 The development of information technology skills is variable. In some subjects, students make good use of computing facilities. In other areas, for example, electrical and electronic engineering, insufficient use is made of information technology in the preparation of written work. Students who require development of mathematical skills as a subsidiary element of their courses are not all making sufficiently rapid progress. This is especially true of some access course students who make slow progress on the mathematics module or give up altogether. Some students on intermediate level courses have insufficient skills in written English to present their ideas accurately and clearly. Where students have the opportunity to work in groups they respond well. Examples were seen of effective team work. Catering students used each others' skills to best advantage in order to achieve a good outcome from a practical session: the greater technical skills of NVQ level 3 students were used in the preparation of the more complex dishes while the management skills of national diploma students were predominant in planning and organising the theme evening for the restaurant.

56 Students demonstrate their practical competence in a range of workshops and practical areas. They are aware of safe working practices. Engineering and construction students show a high degree of practical competence. In electrical and electronic engineering, project work for the BTEC higher national certificate programme is of a satisfactory standard. Most engineering students use instruments and other equipment competently. Catering students work deftly and safely. During the inspection they responded well to the challenges caused by absence amongst colleagues when working in the training restaurant. Sports studies students are able to demonstrate developing skills in a range of sports by gaining coaching awards.

57 Students are positive about their learning experiences. They can talk enthusiastically about their work and are responsive in class. The comments of students on health and community care programmes on their own progress are often realistic. Generally, students are well motivated and work hard. An especially high level of commitment was apparent from students on professional courses.

58 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on vocational programmes are pleased with the support they are getting and the progress

they are making. They are responding well to the high expectations of teachers. There are some good personal achievements in terms of progress made over a period of time although some students were achieving very little from individual sessions. Construction staff expected students to use and understand technical terms, to work in pairs and to achieve practical results. Much of this was being achieved but not recorded. Of 36 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the Lifestyle course in 1994, 23 continued on the existing programme, seven began a new programme at the college, two continued in further education at other colleges and one found employment.

59 The college produces detailed destination statistics and takes considerable trouble to try to complete this information with the actual destinations of students rather than their anticipated destinations. Of the 1,181 full-time students who completed their course of study in 1994, 40 per cent continued in further education, many at North Lincolnshire College. Seventeen per cent went on to higher education and 22 per cent found employment. Twenty-one per cent were unemployed or their destinations were unknown. The majority of the students who went on to higher education qualified through BTEC national diploma programmes. Thirty-seven of the 60 students who completed access to higher education courses in 1994 went on to higher education provision.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

60 A college charter has been produced which covers all the areas required by the national charter for further education. This is given to all students as part of their induction pack. It is also available to course applicants. New staff receive a copy of the charter as part of their introduction to the college. Much of what is contained in the charter was already in place but has now been assembled in one document. The charter explains what students can expect, how the college will meet those expectations and points students towards policy documents that are available in each school, the library and learning centres. The complaints procedure is also included. A standard presentation format is being introduced as these documents are reviewed to ensure they are easily identifiable. A section of the charter aimed at employers has been sent to members of consultative committees. The existing students' questionnaire has been adapted to monitor targets set in the charter. Further development is the continuing responsibility of the assistant director of operations and the working group that was formed to draw up the charter initially. Standards have been set for most charter targets and these are monitored by the quality standards committee of the academic board.

61 A quality strategy is included in the strategic plan. One of the key aims of this strategy is to ensure that all staff understand and apply the required standards and procedures. The college is making good progress towards this aim in the first full year of operation following a number of successful pilot schemes. There is a framework for the review and

evaluation of curriculum programme areas and a review procedure against quality standards for support and cross-college teams. Senior management responsibility for quality assurance and control lies with the principal and the three directors but the accountability of all staff for the quality of provision is emphasised. The director of development is responsible for the monitoring, review and evaluation of the system. Matters concerning quality assurance are presented to the quality standards committee of the academic board. The membership of this committee has recently been changed to give broader representation. This committee monitors the application of quality procedures and staff development. The corporation receives an evaluative report on the whole process each year.

62 The college has produced a self-assessment report which provides information against the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The report is mainly descriptive and the style of writing means that it is difficult to focus clearly on strengths and issues for attention under every heading. A number of strengths are identified at operational level; insufficient recognition was given to other strengths of the college, particularly the strategic vision which guides all aspects of college life. The college's self-assessment and the inspection team identified similar areas for improvement. Much of the information for the report was derived from the college's quality assurance procedures. At the moment the self-assessment report is not an integral part of the quality assurance cycle but will be included in the future.

63 The implementation of the system for curriculum review and evaluation is developing well but it is not equally rigorous in all programme areas. Programme teams are required to produce a master file which serves as an operational manual and as evidence for quality assurance. Each team is required to produce a summary report containing key statistical indicators, programme strengths and weaknesses, areas requiring attention and an action plan. In the 1993-94 academic year there was some variation in the returns and the quality of the information provided. Some returns were late, certain areas within the college made minimal returns and some courses were not covered. Improvements have been made to the system for the 1994-95 academic year. Monitoring against performance indicators is still developing at programme level. An analysis of students' achievements is provided by the programme team as part of the review summary. College performance indicators for students' achievements have been established and comparison with national pass rates is made. A detailed analysis and plan for improvement are required where performance falls below the level of these indicators. The present system is difficult to apply to programmes which do not run on an academic year pattern or programmes leading to NVQ or GNVQ where partial success is possible.

64 Teams are required to include an agenda item on quality at least once a term in their meetings. Feedback from students, input from employers, discussion of external moderation and validation reports and input from

team members result in improvement plans for each team. Student feedback is obtained from questionnaires. Levels and quality of response are generally improving. All full-time students complete two questionnaires and a third if they are on a two-year programme. These questionnaires have also been given to all part-time students in the current year. The involvement of employers in the course review process is variable across different schools. The use of a formal employer questionnaire has been tried but was generally not successful. Employer views are fed into schools through consultative committees, from work placement visits and questionnaires and, in a minority of cases, through employer representation on course teams. There is some good practice. For example, recommendations of the Construction Industry Training Board monitoring team which includes representatives from industry form part of the quality assurance procedures of the building and civil engineering school. The outcome of the review process is a plan of action for improvement. Some staff need training to improve action planning techniques. Some plans are not clear about who is responsible for action. The action plans are collated by the director of development and presented to the senior management team and the quality standards committee.

65 Many cross-college teams have devised quality standards in conjunction with line managers and the development directorate. These were first introduced in draft form to a limited number of areas in January 1994. They were revised in February 1995 and now apply to 12 areas including NL Consultants and NLC Training. There are certain key areas of the college such as personnel and resources, which have not developed standards as yet. The monitoring and reporting of performance against standards is at an early stage of development. The customer care unit is one area where quality standards have been developed and monitored on a regular basis. Some college sections use external quality assurance systems. NL Consultants have quality control systems to comply with British Standard (BS 5750). The systems include specified documentation and internal and external audits. NLC Training have quality procedures which satisfy the various criteria of audits carried out by the TEC and the Training, Enterprise and Education Directorate of the Employment Department. There are opportunities for staff in other areas of the college to work with these two units and for staff from these units to contribute their experiences to the quality standards committee.

66 The college achieved the Investors in People standard during the period of the inspection. Staff development is the responsibility of the director of development. There is a clear policy which outlines a commitment to meeting the strategic needs of the college whilst addressing the personal aspirations of individual members of staff. The associated procedures and responsibilities are clearly identified with links to the staff-appraisal system. There are mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme. There is a strong financial commitment to staff development with £165,000 devoted to this in the 1994-95 financial year

which represents almost 2 per cent of staff costs. The staff-development budget is able to meet all needs identified in the staff development plan. Administration of the staff-development programme is effectively managed with the aid of a computerised management system. This assists in tracking staff-development activities and budgetary control. Personnel records are held in the same office but at the moment these are not integrated into the same computer system.

67 The staff-appraisal scheme forms a valuable part of the staff-development procedure. The appraisal manager is located in the personnel office and appraisal documents are sent out through the personnel unit. In the summer of 1994 an analysis of appraisal summaries showed a close correlation to strategic plan objectives. The appraisal scheme, was introduced in 1992. Fifty per cent of teaching staff have completed the first cycle and are now at the stage of reviewing targets set during that cycle. Nearly half of the support staff have undertaken training and fifty staff have volunteered to participate in the scheme.

68 Programmes are in place for the induction of all staff new to the college. A common two-day programme is provided for all teaching staff and a one-day programme for support staff. The additional support received in schools and units of the college is variable. Some staff receive additional support and mentoring within their work area, whilst others receive little additional support. All teaching staff without a recognised teacher qualification are encouraged and financed to undertake a qualification as soon as possible.

RESOURCES

Staffing

69 The policy for human resources is clearly derived from a vision statement and the strategic plan. Key human resource issues have been identified, such as the appointments procedure, the staff skills profile, the grading of posts, the balance of part-time and full-time staff, and the appropriate level of support staffing. The human resources operating statement for 1994-95 includes objectives for appraisal, staff-development systems, staff training themes, the Investors in People standard and the staffing establishment. The staffing establishment is the responsibility of the director of resources. A personnel unit has been established and is supported by the use of a consultant. A computer-based staff-record system has been established to provide management information. For example, staffing costs are available for all parts of the college. Many staffing policies and procedures are already in place or are being developed.

70 At the time of the inspection there were 177 full-time equivalent teaching staff. They are appropriately qualified and have suitable experience. Ninety-two per cent of the full-time academic staff have a teaching qualification and 84 per cent have either a professional or higher

technical qualification. Two appointments have been made of staff who combine teaching and technical support duties. Teaching staff are being used efficiently and average class sizes are gradually being increased.

71 The main support teams are information technology, personnel, health and safety, finance, registry, technicians, guidance services and library. All of these services are led by a well-qualified manager. There are 32 full-time equivalent technicians spread across all schools. Additional professional librarian support would support the future expansion of the learning-resource centres and their effective management across the three sites. The estates management team is split into a maintenance team and a services team which covers cleaning, warden and caretaking functions. The maintenance team has three staff with electrical skills and two with general skills. This is small in relation to the amount of college accommodation but local specialist contractors are used extensively.

Equipment/learning resources

72 There are appropriate references to the college's equipment base in the strategic plan. An annual cycle for the replacement of equipment linked to a policy for maintaining the asset value of the college has not yet been established. Considerable resources have been allocated to improving information technology facilities. Seventy-two per cent of the 450 computers in use are modern 486 machines. The majority of machines have been networked and provide access to industry-standard software packages. Thirty computers for general student use in Lincoln are situated in the Bishops building. A further £45,000 has been obtained for higher education equipment of which the majority will be allocated to sports studies equipment and the remainder to computer studies, business and management, and community, health and social care. The school of building and civil engineering has well-equipped laboratories and workshops. Catering equipment is suitable and well maintained. Sports and leisure is generally equipped to a good standard. The resources in secretarial studies are barely adequate to support the existing numbers of students. There are new typewriters but office training equipment is poor with limited access to modern hardware and some out-of-date software.

73 Almost £0.5 million has been invested in learning-resource centres. The centres at the Lincoln, Gainsborough and Louth sites are a mix of library, open access computing and individual learning facilities. The size of bookstocks and facilities offered vary between the sites but are generally appropriate. There are audio-visual aids facilities on all the three sites although the main maintenance base and resource is at Lincoln. A stock review programme is being implemented which targets a different curriculum area for each month except August. Some areas still need further improvement despite recent purchases which have enhanced bookstocks in areas such as construction. The library stock for mathematics and information technology is limited and dated. In electrical

engineering there is a good range of electronic component data books. The library contains many out-of-date books for secretarial studies but this is compensated by local stock held at the Broadgate centre.

74 The learning-resource centre at Lincoln has a wide range of curriculum material for students to use in independent study. There is a video library and modern language audio and video material. A recording studio is available for use by students. There are 55 computers in the centre, all with access to compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases. The area has 100 study spaces and it is well used. Records of student use show that approximately 2,800 individual students have logged on to a computer in this academic year from 378 different courses. User guides have been developed to support the use of the computing facilities. A recent addition is a colour photocopier which can also be connected to a computer for colour printing. Specialist resource-based learning centres in schools are developing. In electrical engineering there are excellent computer-based resources in the new electronics centre. The Park Street centre in Lincoln has a small network of computers in its resource centre. This developing facility is quite well used but the continuing acquisition of materials for specialist subject areas is required, together with provision for private study.

75 The audio-visual resource centre is managed by the librarian. There is a rolling maintenance and repair programme which is monitored by a computer system which also includes the database of video material. Specialist support for curriculum areas is provided by recording and editing material to be used for teaching. Specialist technical support is available for photography.

Accommodation

76 Management of the building stock and of the asset base is forward looking. There is a clear strategy for the retention, acquisition and development of the sites and actions are being taken to implement the strategy. Appropriate strategic aims are in place which include references to the accessibility, standard and use of accommodation and environmental issues such as energy efficiency and waste recycling. In five years time the college intends that its accommodation will cope with more students, provide for student-centred learning, be of a high standard, provide improved access for students with restricted mobility and enable college activities to be more accessible to clients. The director of resources is responsible for premises. The assistant director is responsible for monitoring the use of the accommodation, managing resources at Gainsborough and Louth and ensuring compliance with the college health and safety procedures.

77 According to a detailed analysis carried out by the college there is an excess of space. This analysis has helped to form the accommodation strategy which has five key areas of property acquisition and disposal,

provision of support services, development of a rolling programme of teaching area conversions, implementation of a room utilisation management system and the development of a planned maintenance schedule. Implementation of this strategy is already evident in Lincoln where the disposal of Waterside, the release of Greestone and the demolition of plastering workshops in Cathedral street has reduced space by 1,800 square metres. Room co-ordinators from each building timetable accommodation at the Lincoln site to help improve room utilisation. A computer-based timetabling package is to be introduced. There are no significant problems of room allocation at Louth and Gainsborough. A report was commissioned from consultants on the maintenance requirements of the college. This included the preparation of a 10-year maintenance plan which will be reviewed after five years.

78 In Lincoln, the main site in Monks Road has a mix of buildings from the relatively modern dating back to the original technical college building. The buildings are being upgraded and new furniture has been purchased. Teaching spaces are in good condition and many provide a good learning environment. Areas are being moved as refurbishment proceeds. General circulation areas present a poorer image. The library has a dated appearance. The college has achieved a great deal in improving the main site. Recent changes have included: altering electronic engineering areas to form a new technology centre; resiting the students' union; developing a new college reception area on Monks Road with adjoining students services area; refurbishing the refectory; expanding the learning-resource area; creating the Turner Suite for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and refurbishing the training restaurant and adjoining reception area. Halls of residence for 117 students have been successfully created out of a row of old college-owned buildings and the development won a Harris environmental award. The Park Street site has been refurbished and considerable remodelling has been undertaken to provide extra teaching spaces to allow the rehousing of health and community care from the Greestone annexe. The nearby Spring Hill site houses four classrooms used mainly by health and community care students, the college playgroup, a large grassed play area and a hard-surfaced playground which is in poor condition. The other sites occupied by the college in Lincoln are at Broadgate and Rosemary Lane. The Ravendale playing fields are two miles north of the main site. They provide good support for sports studies. The pavilion has been refurbished externally and internally. The extensive playing fields provide two football pitches, one rugby pitch, one hockey pitch and 27 coaching grids. In the summer there is a cricket square and an athletics track.

79 The Gainsborough site is shared with a local school and consists of a main building with a separate College House. A new purpose-built centre is being developed on another site close to Gainsborough town centre and will include a seminar centre, establish a school of welding to international standards and provide a computing suite. This will replace the main

building which will be taken over by the local school in September 1995. The present building at Gainsborough has specialist accommodation for health and social care, business studies, and engineering students. There is a learning-resource centre which provides library and computing facilities, a refectory and two student social areas. The college will retain College House which has already been extensively refurbished to provide a high-quality seminar environment which is available for hire by local companies and organisations.

80 The college at Louth is located on two sites within walking distance from each other. One site, at Eastfield, is owned by the college. The other site at James Street is leased from the local education authority and is used for adult education courses. The Eastfield site provides office facilities for secretarial students, as well as classroom and specialist facilities for health and social care programmes. A learning-resource centre has been developed which houses computers, some library books and individual learning materials. There is a student social area with a drinks vending machine. There is also a privately run creche which provides at least five places for college students. The James Street site provides a number of classrooms which are somewhat dated but are generally suitable for their purpose. There are two rooms which provide support material for basic skills tuition. There is a small kitchen area with tea and coffee making facilities. Overall, the facilities at Louth are suitable for their purpose.

81 Most buildings were not purpose built to provide access for wheelchair users. Some improvements have been made but many areas remain difficult or impossible as there are several different levels to negotiate which are currently linked only by stairs.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

82 The strengths of the college are:

- the clear sense of purpose provided by the governors and shared by the management team
- the governing body's review of its role and working practices
- clearly-identified management responsibilities and an effective system for monitoring performance against targets
- a broad range of vocational courses and success in recruiting mature students
- close working relationships with other agencies, particularly Lincolnshire TEC
- flexible and speedy responses to local industrial and commercial training needs
- a well-equipped unit providing students with high-quality guidance and advice and an effective accreditation of prior learning service
- generally high-quality teaching and learning

-
- good progress in the implementation of the college's quality assurance system
 - a clear staff-development policy supported by adequate resources
 - comprehensive and appropriate strategic and operating objectives for human resources, equipment and accommodation
 - forward-looking management of the building stock and the asset base and a good start to the implementation of the strategy for the development of college sites.

83 The college should address the following issues:

- the consistency with which college-wide policies, including the quality assurance system, are applied in all areas of the college
- the use of management information at programme level
- the consistency with which students' attendance is monitored
- improvement of retention and attendance rates in some areas
- examination results in some GCSE and GCE A level subjects
- access for students with restricted mobility
- general circulation areas in the college's buildings which need refurbishing.

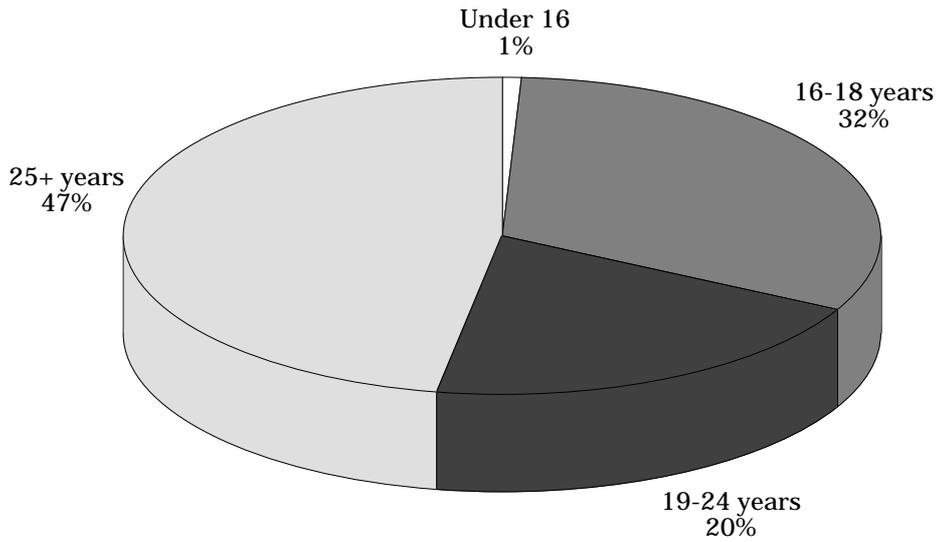
FIGURES

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| 1 | Percentage FEFC-funded enrolments by age (1994-95) |
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| 3 | Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95) |
| 4 | Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95) |
| 5 | Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995) |
| 6 | Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995) |
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Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

Figure 1

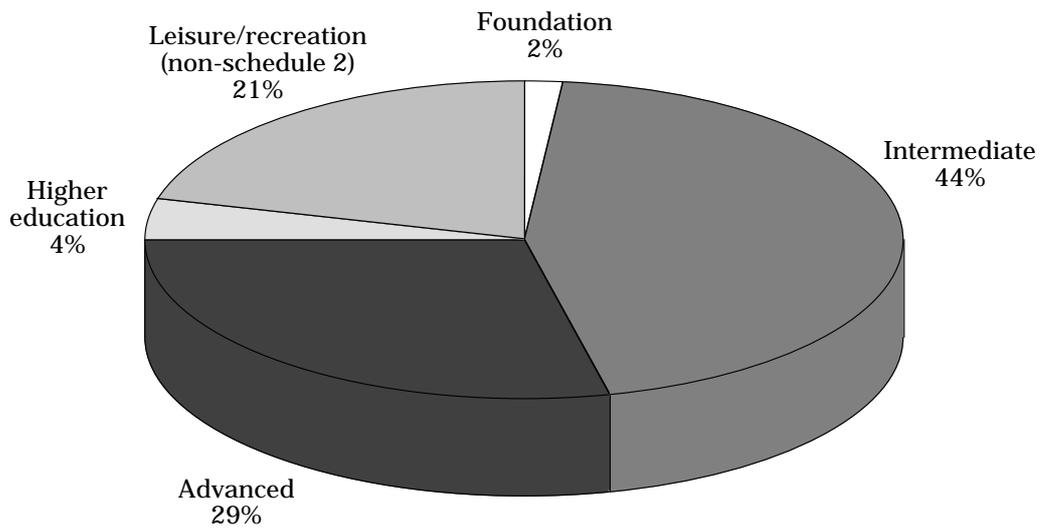
North Lincolnshire College: percentage FEFC-funded enrolments by age (1994-95)



FEFC-funded enrolments: 8,381

Figure 2

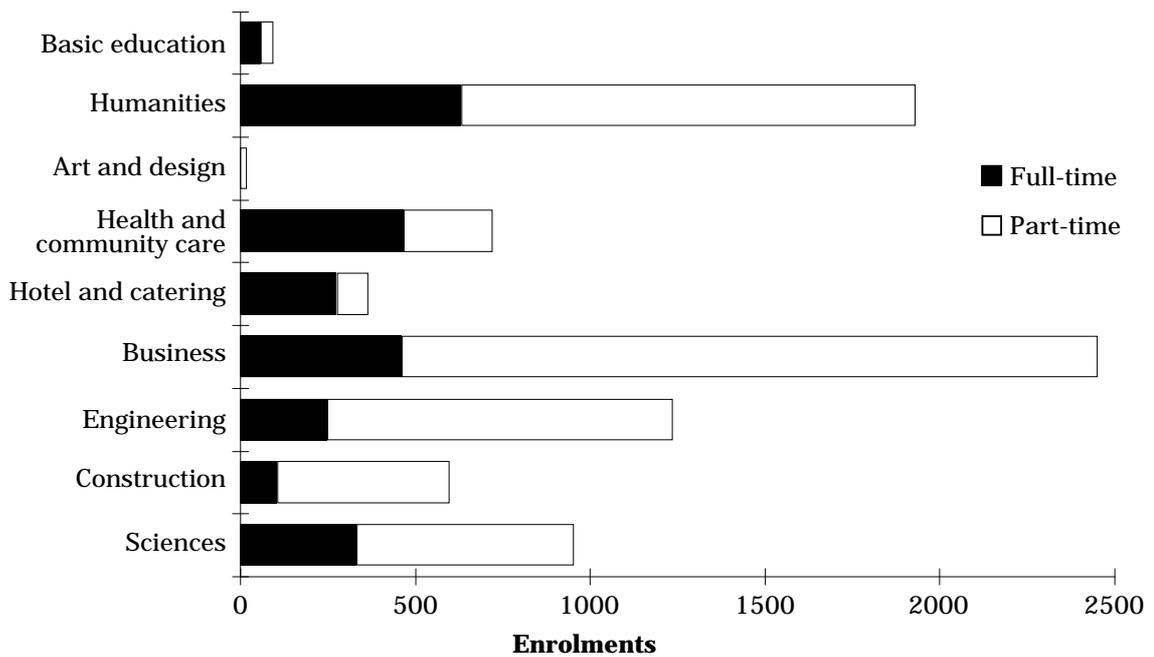
North Lincolnshire College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 10,553

Figure 3

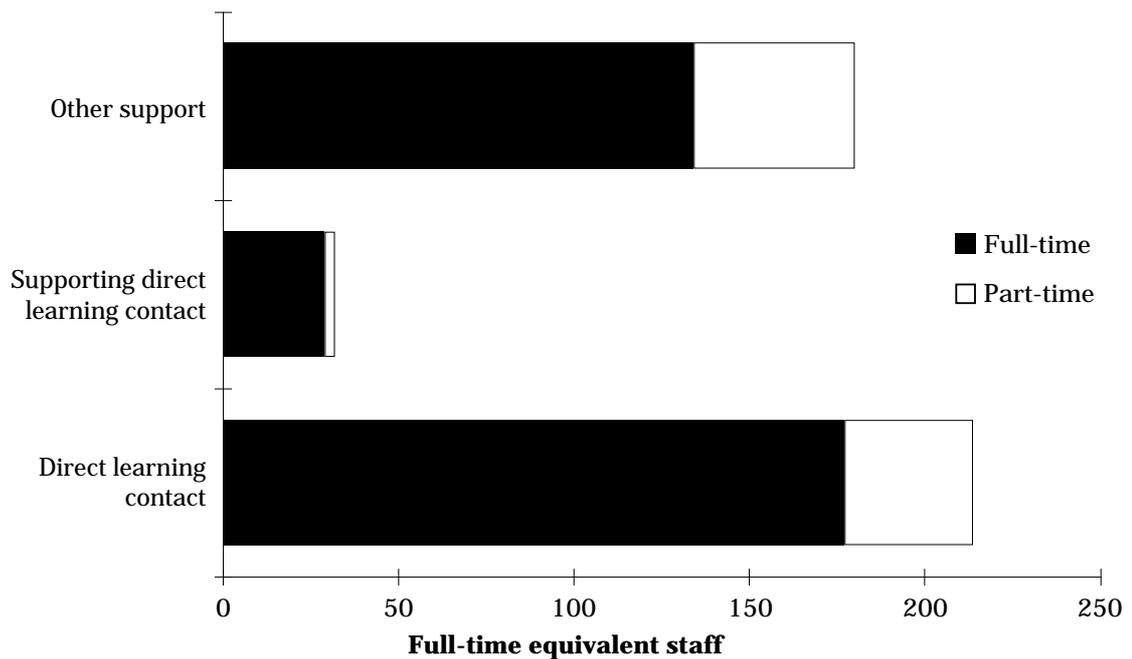
North Lincolnshire College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)



FEFC-funded enrolments: 8,381

Figure 4

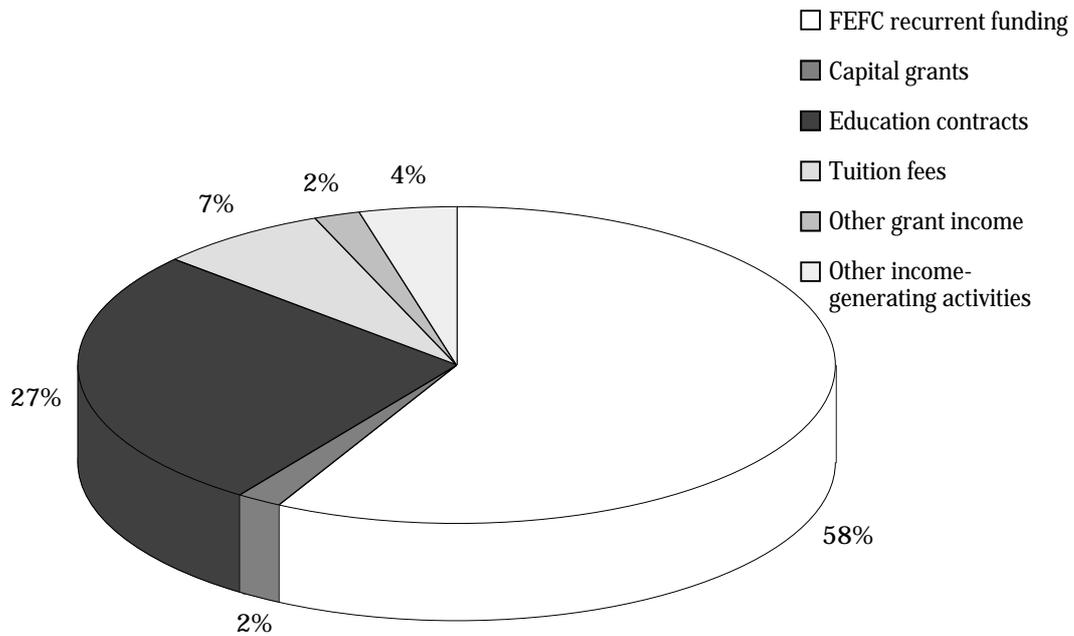
North Lincolnshire College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 426

Figure 5

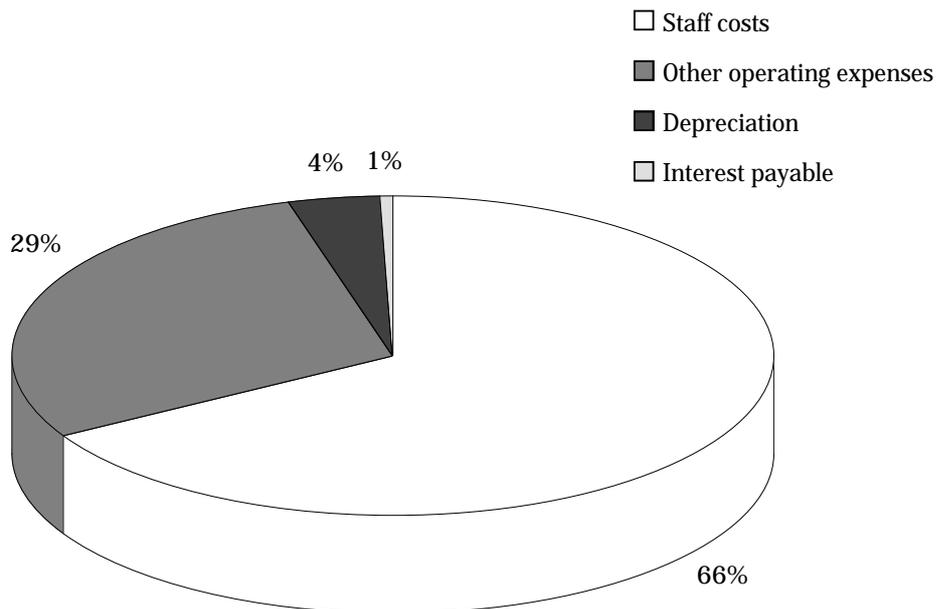
North Lincolnshire College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated income: £12,575,000

Figure 6

North Lincolnshire College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated expenditure: £12,499,000



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