

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Airedale and Wharfedale College**

**July 1997**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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## **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

*The descriptors for the grades are:*

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

*By June 1996, some 329 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 329 colleges are shown in the following table.*

### **College grade profiles 1993-96**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Inspection grades</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Programme area	9%	59%	29%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	14%	50%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	12%	54%	30%	4%	<1%

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 71/97

**AIREDALE AND WHARFEDALE COLLEGE**  
**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION**  
**Inspected April 1996-March 1997**

## Summary

Airedale and Wharfedale College is a general further education college in Horsforth, Leeds. Staff are committed to their work with students. The college has developed positive working relationships with higher education institutions and the Leeds TEC. The faculty of student services has comprehensive procedures in place for monitoring its work. Careers guidance is effective. Of particular note is the quality of the learning resource centre. Some teaching, particularly in engineering, business, humanities and leisure and tourism, is of good quality. Students' achievements are variable. There are major weaknesses in the governance and management of the college. The college should: address weaknesses in the management information systems as a matter of urgency; review the gaps in the range of programmes it offers; improve the marketing of some programmes; improve cross-college co-ordination between faculties; further develop learning support; ensure tutorials are of a consistently high quality; continue to develop its new quality assurance procedures; ensure that all students have appropriate access to information technology equipment; provide opportunities for staff to update their professional skills; and improve the quality of some accommodation.

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

<b>Aspects of cross-college provision</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Responsiveness and range of provision	3
Governance and management	5
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	3
Quality assurance	4
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	4

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science, mathematics and computing	3	Humanities	2
Engineering	2	Modern foreign languages	2
Business and management	2	Adult basic education	3
Leisure and tourism	2	Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	5
Health and social care	3		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Airedale and Wharfedale College was inspected between April 1996 and March 1997. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was inspected in April 1996, enrolment and induction procedures in September 1996 and other curriculum provision in January 1997. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected in March 1997. Inspectors spent a total of 71 days in the college. They visited 154 classes and examined students' work and documentation relating to the college and its provision. They also met governors, parents, head teachers, students, staff, a representative of the Leeds Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and representatives from industry, higher education and the careers service.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Airedale and Wharfedale College was built in 1972 under the auspices of the West Riding Local Authority. Subsequently, as a result of boundary changes, it fell under the control of the Leeds Local Authority. The college offers a range of academic and vocational programmes from foundation level through to higher education. The college has five sites but also makes use of 24 other centres. Its main site is at Horsforth, seven miles from the centre of Leeds. The college operates in a highly competitive market; there are four general further education colleges in Leeds, a Roman Catholic sixth form college and four other specialist colleges (the City of Leeds College of Music, the Leeds College of Building, the Leeds College of Art and Design and the Northern School of Contemporary Dance). The city has two universities and 45 secondary schools, 41 of which have sixth forms.

3 Figures provided by the college show that 11,398 students were enrolled at the college in November 1996. The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) funded 10,208 of these, 764 of whom were full-time students and 9,444 part-time students. FEFC-funded student numbers by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3. College figures indicate that 5.6 per cent of its students are from minority ethnic communities. Within Leeds, minority ethnic groups represent 6 per cent of the population. The college states that it employs 184 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 117 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

4 The population of Leeds is approximately 725,000. Much of the local employment is provided by small and medium-sized companies. The unemployment rate currently stands at 7.9 per cent, below both the regional and national averages. During the last 10 years, growth areas in employment have included leisure, tourism and financial services. The financial services sector has seen a particular increase. The service sector as a whole employs 73 per cent of the local workforce.

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5 The college aims to be a leading provider of further education in Leeds and its immediate area to enable local people to acquire and develop marketable skills and to improve the quality of their lives. It operates in partnership with local schools, the TEC, employers and a range of higher education institutions to achieve its aim. Current priorities include improving the college's efficiency and effectiveness, and monitoring its responsiveness to regional, local and individual needs.

6 The senior management team comprises the chief executive and eight directors. The curriculum is delivered through four faculties (business and health, leisure, general education and languages, and technology), which are co-ordinated by the executive director (programmes). A fifth faculty provides student services. Other cross-college roles are undertaken by directors of finance, estates and quality. Responsibilities for the delivery of the curriculum and cross-college functions such as marketing, finance, human resources and management information systems lie with a number of different managers.

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

7 The college is making an effective contribution to the achievement of the national targets for education and training. There are courses leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) at advanced, intermediate and foundation levels. Other courses lead to qualifications awarded by the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) and the RSA Examinations Board (RSA). The college also offers access programmes designed to prepare people for entry to further and higher education. There are some gaps in provision. For example, there are no foundation level programmes in leisure or engineering and no GNVQ programmes in science. Students have limited opportunities to study in their own time through open learning arrangements. The college has made little progress in developing procedures to accredit students' prior learning and experience.

8 The college provides a range of general education courses for full-time and part-time students. It offers 15 general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) and five GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects during the day and 20 GCE A level subjects and one GCE AS subject in the evening. The college has decided to maintain its general education provision despite competition from the local schools, but it has had to withdraw a number of subjects because of falling demand. While the college recognises the need to rationalise its provision, it does not yet have a mechanism to ensure that its provision reflects local needs. Nor is there a strategy for the development of alternative methods of teaching and learning which might attract students who are unable to attend classes on a regular basis. Despite a commitment to modularise the curriculum, plans are at an early stage. There are few opportunities for students to combine GNVQ studies with a GCE A level subject.

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9 There are productive links with five higher education institutions. The college is an affiliated college of Leeds Metropolitan University. Currently, 302 students are enrolled on higher education programmes which include computing, engineering, science and leisure. The college is a centre providing courses leading to the certificate in education for existing and prospective teachers. Relationships with local schools vary. The college has assisted two schools to develop GNVQ programmes. Initially this involved teachers from the college working alongside teachers in the schools. However, the schools are now delivering the programmes independently. Seven students under the age of 16 from the Leeds Learning Referral Unit are studying at the college. Links with special schools are currently being strengthened. The college does not have a schools liaison team and there are no effective link programmes for students at local schools. The college is aware that liaison with schools is inadequate.

10 The college makes provision for its local community. For example, it offers a range of courses for adults and has a contract with Leeds City Council to provide vocational and recreational programmes in 24 'outreach' centres across the north and west of Leeds. It works with other community groups to attract students from a wider cross-section of the community. As a result of financial difficulties, however, the college was forced to close a number of community classes at the start of the current academic year. The strategy to manage the closures was not well planned.

11 The college provides education programmes at four prisons. The programmes offered include adult basic education, life skills, NVQs in hairdressing and GNVQs in business. In collaboration with the careers service, the college has also established a successful 'job club' in one of the prisons. The college provides programmes at a local hospital for patients who have mental health problems. The number of programmes was reduced significantly when it was shown that some of the provision did not meet the criteria for funding from the FEFC.

12 Leeds TEC and the college have a well-established relationship. The college's chief executive attends termly meetings convened by the TEC to discuss labour market information and to review the progress of initiatives such as the further education development projects. The college is involved in the delivery of modern apprenticeships. Local employers speak well of the work experience programme which the college organises for its students. Other links with employers are few in number. Those that exist generally operate at course level, in areas such as engineering, leisure and administration. The effectiveness of the college's employer liaison panels varies and employers contribute little to the development or evaluation of programmes. Little consultancy or training is undertaken for local industries and businesses. Last year's income from this work was £36,000.

13 The college's marketing unit consists of a marketing manager and a public relations officer. Reports about college activities feature regularly in the local press. The marketing unit is responsible for producing course



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leaflets, the college prospectus and publicity materials. It also organises promotional and advice evenings. Some of the publicity materials are attractive and informative. The unit has used information from market research in developing the college's strategic plan. There are no procedures to monitor or evaluate the work of the unit and the money spent on marketing.

14 The college's programme of cultural and leisure activities is limited. There are few links with Europe and little consideration of European issues within courses. Only a small number of programmes are offered at the weekends. Most programmes start in September; students have few opportunities to enrol for programmes at other times of the year.

15 The college has an equal opportunities policy which commits it to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all staff and students. A 'disability forum', which is open to staff and students provides a valuable opportunity for discussing equal opportunities issues. However, implementation of the equal opportunities policy is patchy and the college acknowledges that the policy is not monitored and reviewed systematically.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

16 The effectiveness of management and governance at the college is seriously undermined by the lack of accurate management information on which to base decisions. At the time of the inspection, the college was facing financial difficulties arising from a miscalculation of the funding available for 1994-95 and the underachievement of funding targets for 1995-96. The college was unable to provide the inspectors with reliable or up-to-date information on the courses which were running, the number of students, or the number of part-time staff. Heads of faculty and teaching staff have little confidence in the accuracy of the information provided by the college's systems. College managers recognise that this is an area of considerable weakness. Financial reports have improved following the appointment of a new head of finance in November 1996. A management information review group was established in December 1996 to address the issues. The corporation of the college approved an information technology strategy in January 1997.

17 The corporation of the college has 15 members, including the principal, who bring a range of relevant experience to the board. They include nominees from the staff and from the TEC. Five members of the corporation are women. At the time of the inspection, there were vacancies for two representatives from the community. There are no governors from minority ethnic groups. Corporation board members are committed to the college and are aware of the seriousness of the college's current financial situation. The recently-appointed finance committee meets on a regular basis and has taken action to improve the quality of financial reports to enable it to monitor more effectively the college's finances. Comprehensive finance reports are provided to all corporation members each month.

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18 The board has a steering group. It recommends a timetable for corporation and committee meetings, and performs a search function for new governors when vacancies arise. All committees of the board have agreed terms of reference, and all members belong to at least one committee. The corporation holds six meetings a year, including an open meeting to which members of the local community and businesses are invited. The purpose of the meeting is to inform the community of the work of the college and to provide a review of students' achievements. There is a register of interests and a code of conduct for governors.

19 A governors' handbook is provided for new governors, and a number of training events have been arranged, to which existing governors are invited. The corporation is establishing criteria by which to assess its own effectiveness. It has approved a range of policies, including those dealing with equal opportunities, health and safety, and personnel. There is no timetable for systematic review and evaluation of college policies. For example, the corporation does not receive annual reports on the implementation or effectiveness of policies on equal opportunities or students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It has not requested an annual report on the college, involving an assessment of its performance against agreed targets. It has not monitored students' achievements in external examinations. It considers this to be an operational matter which is not part of its role.

20 The college has established a strategic planning cycle and a process to ensure that faculty plans are linked to the corporate plan. The chief executive prepared a first draft of the current strategic plan which was then considered by heads of faculty. All staff were given copies of the draft for individual comment and programme leaders were required to discuss the plan with their staff. Heads of faculty were not required to provide a faculty response to the plan and only one of the five faculties produced its own response. The operational plan does not include likely resource costs. Staff have little sense of ownership of the plan.

21 The college management group regularly monitors the implementation of the college operational plan. The college executive group meets regularly with individual heads of faculty to monitor progress on faculty operational plans. There are inconsistencies in the methods used by faculty directors and programme managers to monitor the implementation of the plans. In some faculties, monitoring is through monthly review meetings. In one faculty no review meetings had been held. There is a lack of rigour in securing compliance with procedures and this results in inconsistencies within and between faculties. Some faculty directors have not ensured that course teams have established performance targets which can be monitored against faculty and college strategic objectives.

22 Communications within the college are generally effective. Faculty and course team meetings take place on a regular basis. There is a weekly staff bulletin and termly newsletters. The chief executive has recently

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introduced informal meetings with small groups of staff to discuss college issues. These have been much valued by the staff involved. The college has a strategy for communication between employees which is reviewed annually, using information gained from a questionnaire to staff.

23 Lines of management responsibility are defined by organisational charts and job descriptions. In many respects, however, management structures are not best designed to secure the effective co-ordination of activities across the college. For example, the college marketing officer and public relations officer have different line managers.

24 In general, programme leaders and course co-ordinators manage the curriculum effectively. However, the lack of a common cross-college meeting time hinders the sharing of good practice and curriculum development. There is no provision for programme managers to meet as a team. There is no GNVQ co-ordinator. The GNVQ co-ordination group does not meet regularly. A curriculum group chaired by the executive director (programmes) and comprising the four academic faculty directors meets regularly and has produced a curriculum development plan. The executive director (programmes), however, does not have a budget or line management responsibility for staff within the faculties. Cross-college curriculum development initiatives have been hindered by faculty directors not releasing staff to attend curriculum events. In 1995, the academic board established a series of task groups to report on a number of issues, including students' achievements. Teaching staff valued the opportunities presented by these groups to work with staff from other faculties. The task groups have reported their findings and have now disbanded. There are inconsistencies between faculties over their policies towards the attendance and payment of part-time teachers at faculty meetings.

25 The college continues to struggle with ineffective systems for management information and senior managers' failure to ensure compliance with college procedures. Inspectors' attempts to reconcile information from class registers with that held by the college management information section were hindered by the failure of faculty directors to ensure that all registers were returned to the management information section. Only 60 per cent of registers were returned to the management information section at the last audit, despite a previous report to the corporation's audit committee from the internal auditors, identifying this as an issue to be addressed. Information relating to units of funding is collected from individual faculties by means of spreadsheets and is then collated centrally. Heads of faculty do not review unit totals with sufficient frequency to provide the senior management team with accurate, up-to-date information which can be used to review performance in relation to college targets.

26 Against a background of continuing financial difficulties, the college is uncertain that it will achieve funding targets for the current academic year. Corporation members and senior managers are aware of the seriousness of the college's position and have taken action to address the

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issues. The college has reduced its staff costs by 17 per cent over the last two academic years. The continuing financial difficulties are having an impact on staffing and the curriculum. For example, the funding to the faculty of student services has been reduced recently and this has had an adverse effect on the extent to which the faculty can provide services to students. Financial constraints forced the closure of some classes at the start of the current academic year.

27 The college's average level of funding per unit in 1995-96 was £15.57 per unit. The median for general further education colleges was £18.13 per unit. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6. One of the college's objectives is to calculate the cost of its provision in order to inform decision making. A methodology for calculating the cost of courses has been developed, but it has not yet been used to compare the costs of similar courses to see whether resources are being used efficiently. Some senior managers do not fully understand aspects of the FEFC's funding methodology; for example, in relation to claims for additional study units, and the proper use of funding for additional support.

28 For the current academic year, enrolment targets have been set in consultation with the directors of faculties. In previous years, directors were not involved in the process. Information provided by the college at the time of inspection indicates that it is unlikely to meet its targets for the current academic year. The college has not achieved its enrolment targets for the previous two years.

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

29 Support services for students, provided by the faculty of student services, are well managed. There are appropriate policies, codes of practice and entitlement statements, and each element of the service is subject to annual review and the drawing up of relevant action plans. The degree to which the faculty can influence the provision of support to students within the teaching faculties varies.

30 Students are provided with a good level of information and guidance on the college's courses. All full-time students receive an interview. Interviews take place at any time from late autumn through to enrolment the following year. They are in two parts. The first part is conducted by the college's team of guidance staff who offer impartial advice and guidance, and assess individual needs. Students are then referred to an appropriate vocational teacher who deals with more course-specific issues. Students speak highly of the process and its efficiency. They receive a helpful advice sheet prior to the interview to help them prepare for it. The faculty keeps records of the numbers applying to the college and monitors the time it takes to respond to enquiries and arrange interviews. It generally meets its targets.

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31 Arrangements for the recruitment of part-time students are generally well managed. In some curriculum areas, open evenings are held for specific courses such as the higher national certificate in computing. A team of people is recruited during the summer months to help with the surge in enquiries for part-time courses. There have been some difficulties, including delays in responding to telephone requests from students. The college offers a 'taster' day during the spring half term, when students can sample activity in various courses. An open day is provided in the autumn term and there are information evenings. The response to these activities is limited. For example only 67 students attended the last 'taster' day.

32 Students receive a thorough induction to their courses and to the college. They are provided with appropriate literature, such as college and course handbooks. Induction for full-time students extends over the first few weeks of their course and is well planned. Students who enrol late are identified and offered a 'catch-up' programme. Most part-time students also receive an appropriate induction. As part of the induction process, full-time students undertake a test of their skills in numeracy and literacy. About 300 students took this test in September 1996. Two-thirds were identified as needing support in numeracy and a smaller proportion were in need of support in literacy. Most of the students identified as needing help were enrolled on the college's 'linkit provision' to receive additional support in numeracy, literacy, study and other learning skills. The support is delivered alongside vocational teaching, or on an individual appointment basis. Students receiving help speak highly of the support they receive. However, the provision is under resourced. There are no base rooms for staff and students to work in. Some groups are too large. In some curriculum areas, including technology, students do not receive any support.

33 The faculty of student services provides advice and guidance to teachers about the construction of a pastoral programme. It has also developed teaching packs on several topics such as the development of curricula vitae, interview practice and letter writing. The faculty provides a consistent and well-regarded service to students across the college. In other faculties, however, the delivery of the pastoral programme is underdeveloped. College procedures for monitoring students' attendance are generally sound.

34 The extent to which students are involved in the regular review of progress, planning of future work and recording of achievement varies. In adult basic education, for example, there is a systematic approach to the setting of learning objectives and to reviewing and recording progress. In other areas of the college, review and action plan documents are used inconsistently. Students are encouraged to bring their records of achievement to their initial interviews. However, there is no official policy on the development of these documents and not all curriculum areas encourage their completion.

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35 The college has a team of 5.5 full-time equivalent careers/guidance staff. They are well qualified and provide a range of services for students. Staff have links with specific curriculum areas and provide 'drop-in' support for students. They conduct initial interviews. They also provide support to students and teachers during their tutorials. There is a service level agreement with the Leeds Careers Guidance Service who provide individual and group guidance sessions. There is a well-resourced careers library.

36 The college makes use of a range of outside services to supplement its counselling services. A team of qualified counsellors provides 14 hours a week of specialist support, which is available to both staff and students. There is insufficient time to respond to all the students who request support from the counsellors and the counselling room fails to provide an appropriately confidential environment for counselling sessions. Whilst the college does not own its own creche facilities, it provides financial help and assistance to students in choosing appropriate childcare. Students think well of the service. There is a college nurse and the college offers free legal counselling. The college provides support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through links with a range of agencies such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the Leeds services for the deaf. It maintains a budget to help purchase or modify equipment to suit individual needs. The college offers an initial test for students who may be dyslexic and has links with a specialist agency to provide support.

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

37 Inspectors observed 154 teaching sessions involving 1,389 students. Forty-eight per cent of the lessons observed had strengths which outweighed weaknesses. This is well below the national figure of 63 per cent for colleges inspected during 1995-96 according to figures published in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. Fourteen per cent of lessons had weaknesses which outweighed the strengths. The following table summarises the grades given to the teaching sessions inspected.

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

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
GCE AS/A level	0	4	8	3	0	15
GCSE	1	3	1	0	0	5
GNVQ	2	8	7	1	0	18
NVQ	4	3	0	1	0	8
Access to higher education	2	3	1	0	0	6
Adult basic education	0	3	11	1	0	15
Other vocational	12	24	17	5	0	58
Higher education	1	0	3	1	0	5
Other	1	3	10	8	2	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>154</b>

38 During the inspection, the number of students attending classes as a percentage of those on register, varied from 85 per cent in engineering to 59 per cent in adult basic education. The average attendance was 73 per cent. An average of nine students attended each of the lessons observed. The national figure for attendance in general further education colleges inspected during 1995-96 was 73 per cent and an average of 11 students attended the lessons observed, according to figures published in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*.

39 Relationships between staff and students were good. Teachers demonstrated up-to-date knowledge of their subject areas. The more successful lessons were well planned. Teachers used appropriate methods of teaching and learning and succeeded in capturing students' interest. Where appropriate, teachers related theory to current commercial and industrial practices. In less successful lessons, teachers often spent too much time presenting information. Methods of working were insufficiently varied. Students had too few opportunities to think for themselves, to discuss matters, or to ask questions.

40 In management and professional studies, lesson objectives were clearly stated and generally achieved. Teachers made effective use of students' backgrounds and experience to provide a context for work in class. They maintained effective records of students' progress and achievements. Teaching in business subjects was sound. For example, as part of a GNVQ revision programme, students working in groups were asked to explain key employment terms. The explanations were then read to the other groups to see if they could guess the original key terms. The process reinforced understanding of the essential vocabulary required for a forthcoming external test as well as providing an enjoyable learning process for students. Marking of GNVQ assignments was detailed and gave constructive pointers for improvement. Teaching was less

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satisfactory on the public services course and GCE A level programmes. In some classes, teachers did not check students' understanding sufficiently; questioning techniques were ineffective. Overhead transparencies were sometimes poorly presented.

41 Humanities students benefited from sound teaching and appropriate tutorial work. Lessons were generally well prepared. The aims of the lesson were shared with students and the key points were summarised effectively. Students had confidence in their teachers. Teachers working with adults showed skill and sensitivity in making learning enjoyable. In some GCE A level classes, there was an over reliance on teachers talking and students listening. Students were not experiencing a wide enough range of methods of learning. For example, in English sessions students often engaged in group discussion, but they were rarely given the opportunity to work on their own or to conduct research.

42 Most teaching in adult basic education classes was competent. Teachers gave clear instructions; work set was at an appropriate level; regular checks were made of students' understanding; written work was marked in class and feedback was provided to students. Students undertook initial assessments to establish their levels of ability, learning objectives were set and progress reviewed regularly. However, in many sessions opportunities for group work were missed and activities were not varied enough. Little use was made of materials or equipment other than printed sheets, some of which were out of date and not related to students' experiences.

43 There was some effective teaching in mathematics. Teachers made good use of the board to provide graphical illustrations; they stimulated debate on underlying mathematical principles; and they gave encouragement and support to individual students as they worked on solving problems. Mathematics was taught effectively as a key skill on GNVQ programmes. There were insufficient materials designed to enable students to work effectively on their own.

44 Teaching in computing and science was well planned. In the better classes, teachers made good use of overhead transparencies, there was appropriate practical work and effective support for individual students. Teachers were skilled in building the confidence of mature students. In computing, teachers stressed the importance of using software design methods that reflected good commercial practice. In science, work was regularly set, marked and returned to students. In most lessons, teachers spent too much time talking to the class; there was little attempt to vary tasks or materials to meet the needs of students of differing abilities. Teachers did not make adequate use of information technology to support students' learning. Where information technology was taught as a key skill to students on other courses, it was not made sufficiently relevant to their vocational course.



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45 In engineering, teachers provided a good range of activities. Practical and theoretical work was often combined effectively within the same lesson. In some subjects, such as training in basic engineering practice, computer-aided design and electronics students benefited from comprehensive materials for teaching and learning. Arrangements for the marking of students' work and the recording of their progress were effective. The pace of work in some lessons was not appropriate for all the students. In some classes, learning was hindered by students having to wait to use single items of equipment.

46 Most classes in leisure, tourism and sport had clear aims and objectives which were shared with the students. In the better lessons, students engaged in a range of appropriate activities including effective group work. For example, one lesson involved questioning by the teacher, followed by group discussion of case studies relating to the world of work, presentations by students to the rest of the group and a class discussion. Some teachers, however, expected students to spend much of the lesson listening to them talk. Students were not given enough opportunity to think for themselves and were not sufficiently challenged.

47 In health and social care, students' assignments were set and marked at an appropriate level. Teachers' detailed comments helped students to understand how they could improve their work. In lessons, teachers' skilful questioning enabled them to check students' understanding. Classroom activities were well structured and carefully planned. Where appropriate, teachers made good use of their own experience as practitioners. In some sessions, teachers gave students little opportunity to develop important skills such as problem solving or managing their study time.

48 Much modern foreign language teaching was competent. Lessons were appropriately challenging, well prepared and structured. Teachers made good use of the language being studied, and in the better lessons there was effective use of mime, gesture and humour. In many lessons, students were given insufficient opportunities to practise their oral skills. In some classes, the introduction of potentially exciting topics was unimaginative. Too much emphasis was given to the completion of worksheets.

49 Although some sessions for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were well structured, enabling students to develop their practical skills, much of the teaching and learning lacked rigour. Teachers did not understand fully the educational implications of students' learning difficulties and as a consequence used inappropriate teaching methods. Too much emphasis was given to devising social and recreational activities for students' enjoyment and too little to effective learning which would help them to progress.

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## **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

50 Most students were enthusiastic about their studies, showed a willingness to learn and had the confidence and ability to apply their skills to the tasks they were set. They were developing knowledge and understanding appropriate to their abilities and levels of study, had a good understanding of the requirements of their programmes, and were aware of the progress they were making. On some two-year programmes, retention rates were low. Students' achievements in external examinations varied considerably. On some GCE A level programmes, results were poor.

51 On GNVQ advanced business programmes, students achieved high standards in their written work. Achievements on GCE A level accounts, NVQ level 2 administration, GNVQ and higher national certificate programmes were sound; pass rates were 80 per cent and above in 1996. On the GNVQ intermediate programme, over 75 per cent of students gained merit or distinction grades in 1996. Over 90 per cent of students studying GNVQ programmes progressed to other further education courses, higher education or employment in 1996. There were less satisfactory achievements in GCE A level business studies, where only 52 per cent of the students gained a pass in 1996, and in NVQ level 3 administration, where only 10 per cent of the students who enrolled gained the full award during the academic year 1995-96.

52 Management and professional studies students demonstrated the ability to work together effectively in groups. They were able to apply the knowledge gained in college to their respective workplace practices. Wordprocessing and typewriting students worked well on their own, requiring minimal supervision from staff. In some classes, students did not have appropriate numerical skills and demonstrated poor note-taking skills. All students taking the Chartered Insurance Institute certificate in financial planning level 1 gained the qualification.

53 Most humanities students had a positive attitude to their studies and were confident and articulate in discussing their work. However, their examination achievements were mixed. In 1996, 66 per cent of students following access to higher education courses completed their studies and 88 per cent of these progressed to higher education programmes. Examination results for students on GCE A level programmes were significantly below the national average. For example in 1995, 64 per cent of students gained passes at grades A to E compared with 84 per cent for general further education colleges nationally, and in 1996, 46 per cent gained passes at grades A to E compared with 86 per cent nationally.

54 Adult basic education students enjoyed their studies and were very supportive of each other. All students had the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications in 1996-97. Some students were able to demonstrate that they had made progress over a period of time. However, students' achievements overall were poor. A high proportion did not complete their courses. Pass rates for those who did complete

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were low. Only 18 per cent of them achieved a qualification in 1995-96, which was 9 per cent of those enrolling.

55 Science students worked together well in class and carried out practical work competently. Retention rates for students on the access to higher education programme were low; 35 per cent achieved their primary learning goal in 1994-95 and 50 per cent in 1995-96. However, most of those who successfully completed the course progressed to higher education. Performance in many GCE A level and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) science examinations was poor. For example, in 1996, the percentage of two-year, full-time GCE A level students achieving grades A to E was 43 per cent in physics, 29 per cent in biology and 8 per cent in chemistry.

56 In mathematics and computing, students enjoyed their work and contributed well to debates about mathematical principles. The achievements of students taking GCSE mathematics were above the average for general further education colleges. However, about half the students who enrolled for GCSE mathematics last year did not enter the examination, and the small group studying GCE A level mathematics achieved few examination passes. Many mature students performed well on the part-time information technology courses, successfully updating their skills and gaining accreditation. Full-time students on the second-year national diploma course performed well; most completed their studies successfully and progressed to higher education. There were, however, considerable weaknesses. Retention rates for the GCE A level computing course and the higher national certificate programme were poor and only 50 per cent of students on the first diploma programme completed their studies successfully.

57 In general, engineering students were developing appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. Examination pass rates on some engineering courses were very good. For example, 90 per cent of the last two cohorts of students who completed their advanced level technician courses passed their examinations. A high proportion of the students enrolled on the engineering workshop training courses also completed their studies successfully. Success rates on the higher national courses were less satisfactory; only 74 per cent of students who completed the course passed. On average, only 60 per cent of the students who completed the day release craft course leading to NVQ level 3 were successful in gaining a pass. Retention rates were generally satisfactory; 83 per cent of all the students who started their courses completed them.

58 Retention rates and levels of achievement on leisure, tourism and sports courses were good. The number of students progressing to employment and to other courses in further and higher education was high. All full-time students obtained an additional qualification in sports coaching and leadership. Their achievements were enhanced by work placements in a real working environment. In some classes, students took responsibility for organising their own learning and they contributed well

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to group work. In more than half the classes observed, however, a number of students displayed little enthusiasm for their work.

59 Health and social care students obtained good pass rates on the part-time diploma of the Pre-school Learning Association, the BTEC national diploma in childhood studies and the Associated Examining Board's counselling courses. Pass rates for the first cohort of GNVQ advanced students, however, were 50 per cent, 6 per cent below the national average. Retention rates were below 75 per cent on a number of courses; for example, the retention rate for the dental surgery assistants course was only 61 per cent. The majority of students were interested in their studies and well motivated. The quality of written work ranged from satisfactory to very good. When students were set challenges which were appropriate to their levels of ability, they worked well in class.

60 Modern foreign language students were positive and assertive learners. For example, students in an advanced German class were able to discuss in German the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of teaching and learning. Students in the early stages of learning languages displayed imagination and resourcefulness in their assignments as well as linguistic competence. In 1996, few students were entered for the Institute of Linguists examinations, and pass rates were low for those who were entered.

61 Many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, studying on programmes specially designed for them, were underachieving because the programmes were not sufficiently challenging. In many lessons, students appeared bored and failed to participate fully in the planned activities. Much of the students' written work was of poor quality. Although staff provided some topics to give students a 'taste' of vocational work, students' achievements were restricted by the lack of opportunity to study vocational programmes. Achievements were also adversely affected by the inadequacy of some teachers' subject knowledge, inappropriate teaching accommodation and poor equipment. None of the students gained nationally-recognised qualifications, and very few progressed to employment at the end of their college programmes.

62 The 72 students, aged 16 to 18, who entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1996 scored, on average, 2.6 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2) according to the tables published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the sector on this performance measure. According to the same tables, 50 per cent of 16 to 18 year old students in their final year of study for intermediate vocational qualifications, and 51 per cent of those taking advanced vocational qualifications gained their awards in 1996. These figures place the college in the bottom third and the bottom 10 per cent, respectively, of colleges in the further education sector. The college disputes the accuracy of these figures.

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## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

63 The college's quality assurance policy was approved in May 1996. Prior to this, responsibility for monitoring the quality of programmes lay with faculties. Quality assurance now has a high priority within the strategic plan and is one of the three key priorities identified by the college as critical to its success. The policy addresses programme review and development; service review and development; staff development; and appraisal. It requires the collection and analysis of relevant data, the development of action plans to address the weaknesses identified through reviews, and the implementation and monitoring of these action plans. A considerable amount of time has been spent over the past year establishing systems to provide reliable data to support quality assurance procedures. Currently, data are still unreliable, undermining the implementation of quality assurance procedures.

64 A detailed system for reviewing the quality of courses and programmes was introduced in the last academic year and staff have been provided with appropriate notes of guidance and training. Compliance with the system is mandatory. A quality assurance group was established in September 1996, charged with sampling course reviews and testing compliance with the system. Quality standards have been set for marketing, guidance for students before entry, induction, programme management and design, teaching, learning, assessment, resources and administration. Reviews are undertaken in July and January. They are designed to include an analysis of performance in relation to key indicators such as retention, achievements and destinations. The reviews that have been completed are of variable quality. Some are too descriptive or specify action which is difficult to monitor. The scheduling of the reviews is inappropriate for some programmes because key information, such as students' achievements in examinations, cannot be incorporated in time to influence the planning of programmes for the following year.

65 The setting of targets is at an early stage of development. Targets for students' achievement and retention are set within the strategic plan, but not all faculties incorporate these targets in their own plans. Targets are not always set at course level; for example, there are no targets for retention and achievement in engineering, business, mathematics and basic skills.

66 The college has procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. External consultants were used to undertake an inspection of the college in 1995 and a small team of college staff was established in August 1996 to undertake lesson observations throughout the college. One of the objectives stated in the strategic plan is that all teachers who have substantive contracts should be observed working in the classroom. Fifty lesson observations were undertaken in October and November 1996 and information from these was made available to the teachers and their faculty directors.

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67 The faculty of student services has comprehensive and well-established procedures for monitoring the quality of students' services. Standards are set for a number of activities, including acknowledging applications and arranging interviews. Students' views are sought on a range of matters, including procedures for admissions, enrolment and induction. The information gathered is analysed and discussed, and action plans are developed to address the issues raised. Action which is within the control of student services is implemented appropriately. For example, students expressed concern that they were not informed of all the costs involved in programmes. In response to this, leaflets have now been produced, prompting students to ask about costs and informing vocational tutors of the need to provide students with this information. Procedures for monitoring the quality of other college services, such as administration and estates, are at an early stage of development.

68 Internal verification procedures are managed within faculties. In some faculties these procedures are comprehensive and carefully documented. There is no system for managing and monitoring internal verification across the college. Some staff do not consider that this is necessary; others consider that it would be helpful to have a college-wide internal verification group to discuss issues and to share good practice.

69 An academic validation group was established in May 1996. Prior to this, there was no formal system for approving new courses. Procedures have now been established to ensure that the need for a proposed course has been identified and that issues such as admissions criteria and resource implications are considered before the course proposal is submitted to the group for approval.

70 A new appraisal system was introduced for all staff in the last academic year. It allows staff to be appraised by their peers and their line managers. Training has been provided to familiarise staff with the system and to help them prepare for their appraisals. A relatively small number of staff have completed personal development plans following their appraisal interviews. Those that have done so are generally positive about the outcomes.

71 There is a well-organised programme of staff development which is organised centrally. The college's strategic plan and the personal development plans of staff who have completed their appraisals are analysed and a programme of training is developed to address the needs identified. Attendance at some training events such as those relating to appraisal is mandatory. Within some programme areas, for example mathematics, languages, and health and social care, staff have had insufficient opportunities to update their professional skills or their knowledge of the subjects they teach.

72 In preparation for the inspection, the college produced a formal self-assessment report under the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The report is evaluative and makes reference to

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supporting evidence. A grade is awarded for each aspect of work. The judgements of the inspection team are broadly in agreement with those of the college, although there is disagreement about the significance of some of the weaknesses.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

73 Most teachers are suitably qualified and experienced for the programmes they teach. Eighty-five per cent of full-time teachers are qualified to first degree level or its equivalent, and 31 per cent also have a higher degree. Eighty-five per cent of full-time teachers have a formal teaching qualification. Teachers working on vocational programmes generally have industrial experience relating to their specialist areas although, in some instances, this is out of date. A good proportion of teachers hold, or are working towards, relevant assessor qualifications. The heavy reliance on part-time staff in a number of curriculum areas results in an excessive administrative burden for full-time staff and discontinuity in the teaching of some classes.

74 Some teaching staff lack appropriate teaching qualifications or experience. For example, some part-time adult basic education teachers lack teaching qualifications, and only one in three full-time teachers of health and community care has significant vocational experience. Some staff lack the knowledge, expertise or awareness of current practice necessary to teach students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

75 Support staff are well qualified and experienced and they offer a good service. The college learning resource centre is staffed by qualified librarians and library assistants, technician support is provided in specialist workshops and information technology staff provide effective support across the college. Non-teaching staff are generally well integrated with the college. They are involved in a number of college committees and participate in training events.

76 The college has established a range of effective policies and procedures relating to personnel. Staffing and employment-related policies have been updated, and a staff handbook has been issued to all staff. A comprehensive review of the teaching establishment has recently been undertaken. However, the college recognises the need to develop a more systematic approach to the analysis of staff profiles and the deployment of staff.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

77 There are satisfactory levels of general classroom equipment at the main Horsforth site. Most classrooms have a projector, screen, white board and blinds, and there is adequate access to audio-visual equipment. The college has recently introduced a standard specification for classroom furniture and equipment, and a number of rooms have been converted to

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this new standard. Rooms at the staff-development centre are equipped to a high standard. There are adequate levels of specialist equipment in most vocational areas. The mechanical engineering workshop and electronics laboratory are equipped to an appropriate level, and the physics laboratory has recently been re-equipped and refurbished. Equipment levels in some teaching areas are poor. For example, some science equipment is awaiting repair and there is insufficient audio-visual equipment in some community centres. Equipment for some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate.

78 The learning resource centre at Horsforth is modern and well furnished, and provides a welcoming and supportive learning environment. There are over 12,000 books, video and audio tapes, plus a range of journals, newspapers and compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) titles. The fund for books and related materials in 1995-96 was approximately £26,000, an allocation of £12.50 per full-time equivalent student. Insufficient books are available in a number of curriculum areas, including mathematics and computing, history and sciences. Some library staff are members of college committees, but formal links with programme areas are weak. There is limited access to library provision for students at other sites.

79 A range of information technology equipment is available at the Horsforth centre in five dedicated computer rooms and in the learning resource centre. Some equipment is recent and modern, and contains the latest graphics and computer-aided design software. There are 188 computers available to students across all college sites, providing a ratio of one computer for every 12 full-time equivalent students. Access to information technology at other sites is poor, and there is limited course-specific software in curriculum areas. The information technology strategy does not incorporate a planned programme for upgrading and replacing equipment.

### **Accommodation**

80 The college's main site is at Horsforth. It has smaller sites at Featherbank and Pudsey and uses accommodation at 24 schools and community centres in the surrounding area. A building and refurbishment programme has been carried out during the past three years at Horsforth, and there is a range of comfortable and well-furnished general and vocational teaching accommodation at the Horsforth and Featherbank sites. Some accommodation is of poor quality. For example, the chemistry laboratory and the classrooms housed in temporary buildings at the main site require major repair or refurbishment, as does most of the accommodation at Pudsey. Some of the general classrooms on all sites provide an unsatisfactory learning environment. Some community-based accommodation is poorly decorated and barely fit for purpose.



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81 The college has taken steps to improve access for wheelchair users at the main Horsforth site. A major investment has been made in modern stairlifts to improve access to refurbished areas of the college. Buildings and corridors are clean and free of litter, and the management of the sites is generally well organised. Social and recreational facilities on all sites are generally poor. There are no indoor sports facilities and the student common room at Horsforth is cramped, noisy and uninviting to mature students. Staff accommodation at Horsforth is overcrowded. On all sites directional signposting is poor, and parts of the main site are drab and uninspiring. Car parking at the Horsforth site is inadequate. The single lane entrance and unauthorised parking on the roadway impede emergency access.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

82 The strengths of the college are:

- its strong links with the higher education institutions
- successful provision of education services to four prisons
- positive working relationship with the TEC
- effective course team management
- effective careers guidance
- comprehensive procedures for monitoring the work within the faculty of student services
- appropriately-qualified and experienced staff
- the high quality of the learning resource centre.

83 In order to raise standards, the college should address the following issues:

- some significant gaps in the range of programmes offered
- ineffective marketing of some programmes, including poor liaison with schools
- management information systems that are incomplete and unreliable, and which fail to provide an accurate picture of the college's activities
- continuing financial uncertainties that are having a serious impact on staffing, resources, the curriculum and forward planning
- failure to make proper use of the FEFC funding methodology
- failure to achieve enrolment targets for two years
- shortcomings in college management and in the management structure
- weaknesses in cross-college co-ordination
- underdeveloped provision for learning support

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- the variable quality of the tutorial programme
  - the need to secure effective implementation of the college's quality assurance policy
  - insufficient opportunities for staff to update professional skills
  - limited access to information technology and specialist equipment in some areas
  - the poor quality of much of the accommodation.

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## FIGURES

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

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

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3 FEFC-funded student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1996)

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4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)

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5 Income (for 12 months to July 1996)

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6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

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

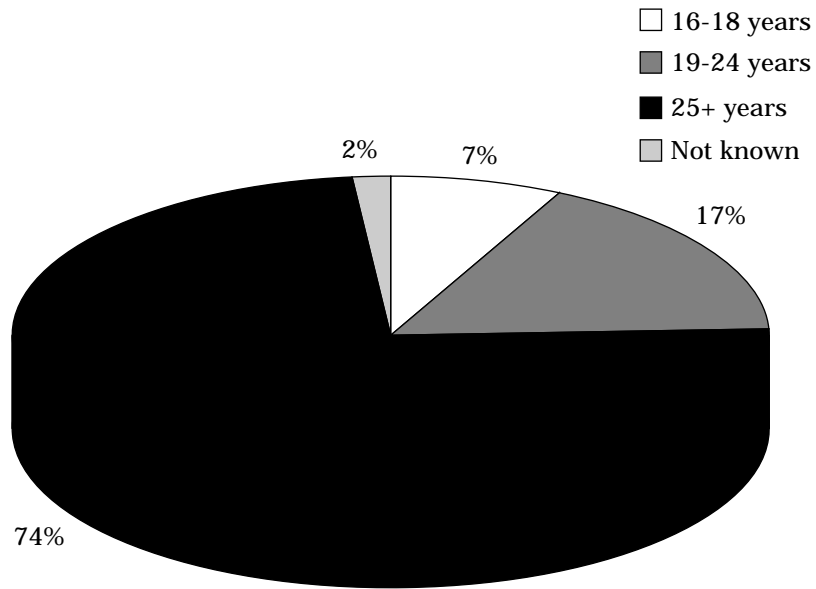
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**Figure 1**

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**Airedale and Wharfedale College: percentage FEFC-funded student numbers by age (as at November 1996)**

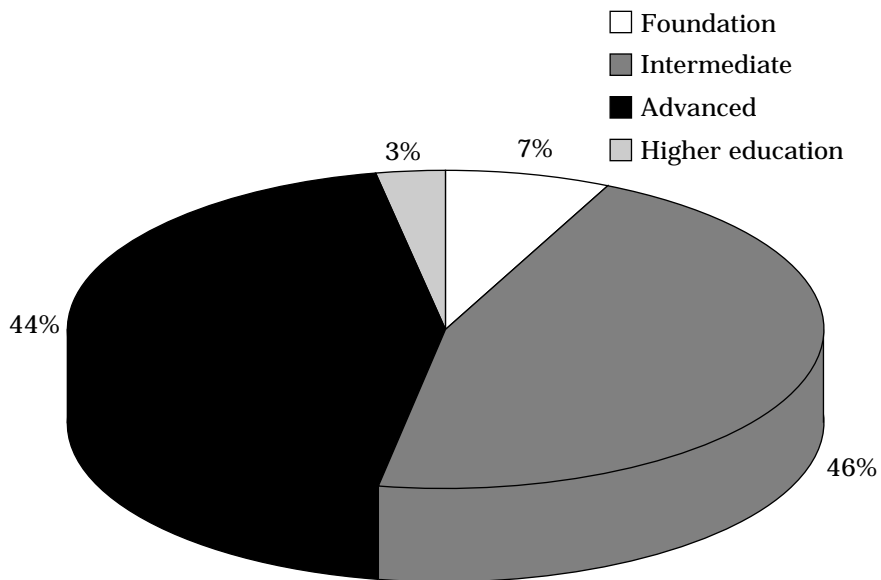


FEFC-funded student numbers: 10,208

**Figure 2**

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**Airedale and Wharfedale College: percentage FEFC-funded student numbers by level of study (as at November 1996)**

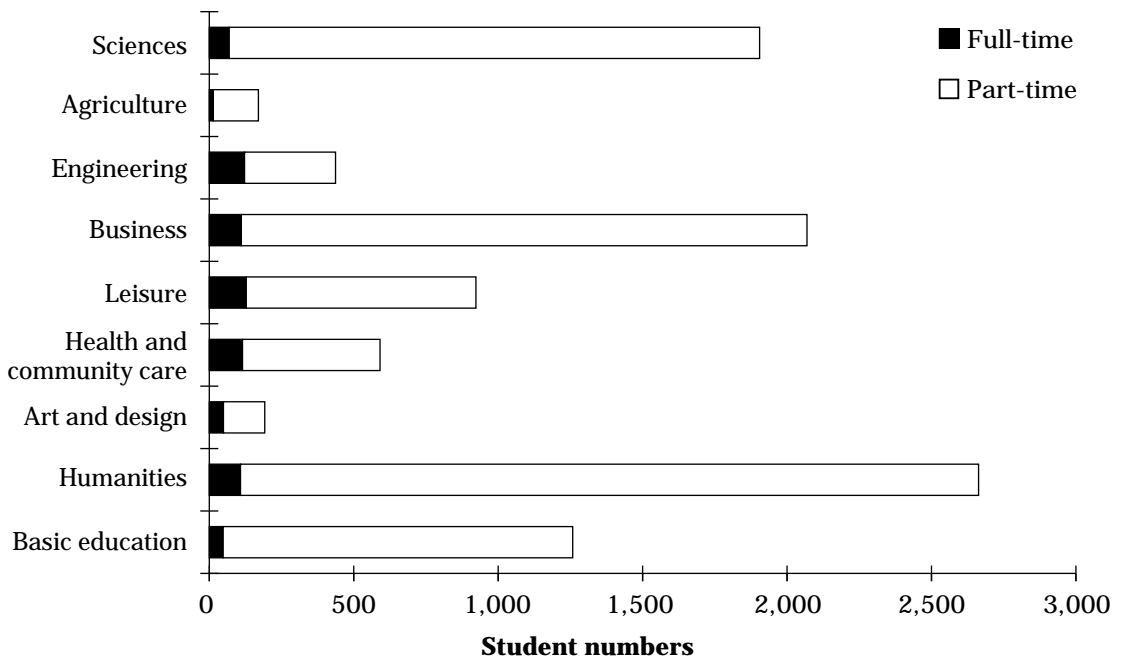


FEFC-funded student numbers: 10,208

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**Figure 3**

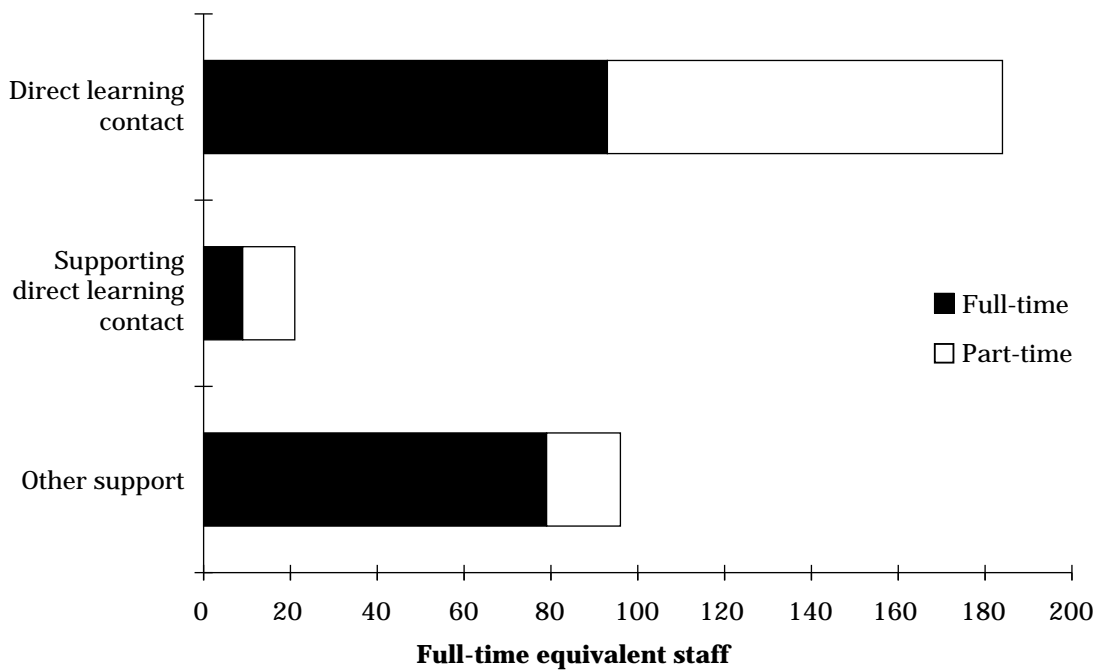
**Airedale and Wharfedale College: FEFC-funded student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1996)**



FEFC-funded student numbers: 10,208

**Figure 4**

**Airedale and Wharfedale College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)**



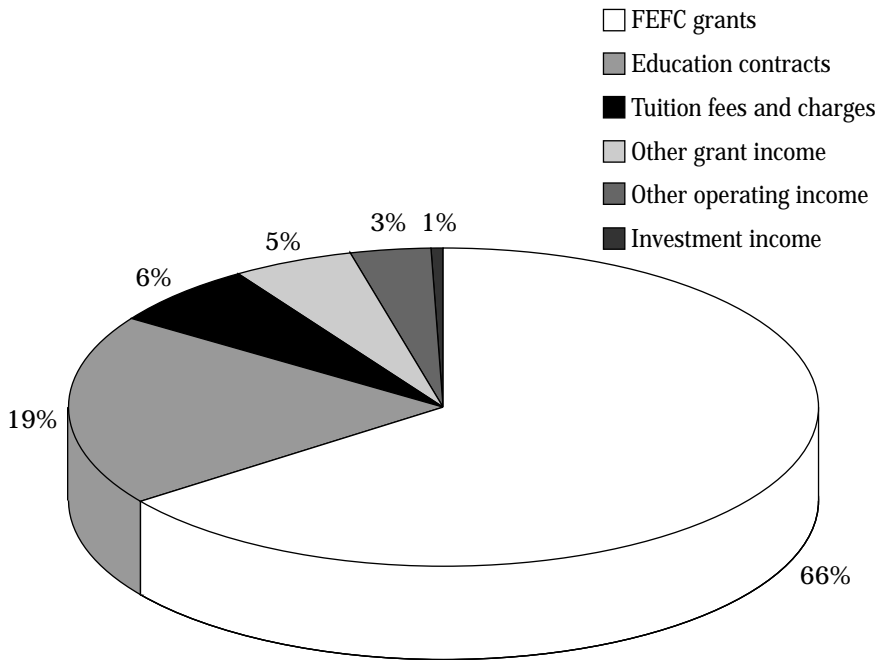
Full-time equivalent staff: 301

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**Figure 5**

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**Airedale and Wharfedale College: income (for 12 months to July 1996)**

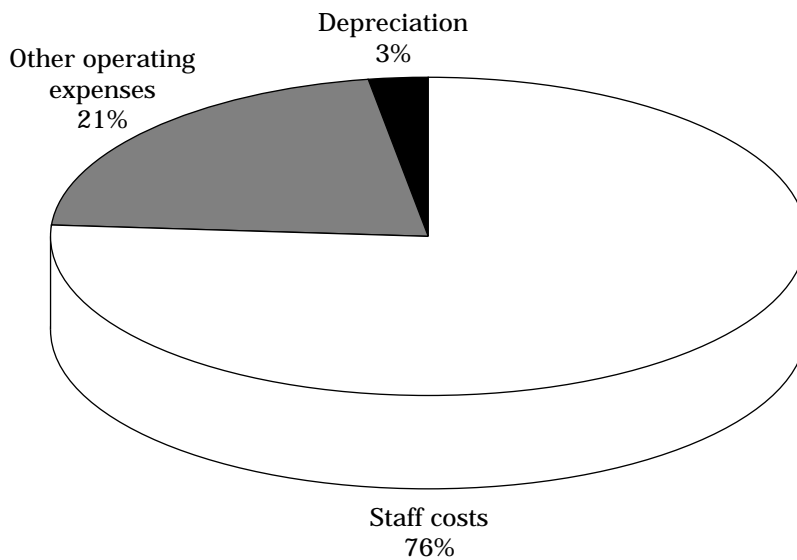


Income: £7,568,000

**Figure 6**

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**Airedale and Wharfedale College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Expenditure: £7,242,000

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