

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Barton Peveril College

December 1994

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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 79/94

BARTON PEVERIL COLLEGE
SOUTH EAST REGION
Inspected September 1994

Summary

Barton Peveril College in the Borough of Eastleigh, Hampshire, is one of the largest sixth form colleges in the further education sector. Students come from a wide area around Southampton, attracted by its reputation for academic success. The college is well managed, and supported by an active and committed governing body. It has strong links with local industry and the local community. The majority of students are on GCE AS/A level programmes which offer students a wide choice of subjects. This year, the college has introduced four General National Vocational Qualification courses. There is a rich and varied programme of complementary studies which includes opportunities to gain additional recognised qualifications. Students also have opportunities to participate in sport, musical and dramatic activities, community service and work experience. High educational standards are maintained by a strong teaching and support staff, and there are good levels of pastoral support. Students achieve high standards in their work and examination results are good. The college should co-ordinate and analyse centrally the available data to inform planning and quality control. There is a need to develop further the quality assurance system and to clarify the role of divisional director. Provision for learning support and the development of core skills should be co-ordinated more effectively. Rapid growth in student numbers has put pressure on accommodation. This is an issue which should be addressed urgently.

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		2
Students' recruitment, guidance and support		2
Quality assurance		3
Resources:	staffing	1
	equipment/learning resources	3
	accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	2	Creative arts	2
Mathematics	1	English	1
Business studies/computing and economics	2	History/law/religious studies	2
		Modern languages	2
		Geography/geology	2
		Sociology/psychology/ government and politics	3

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INTRODUCTION

1 Barton Peveril College in the borough of Eastleigh, Hampshire, was inspected early in the autumn term of the academic year 1994-95. The inspection team of three full-time inspectors and 10 part-time inspectors spent a total of 65 days in the college. The college's provision for induction and guidance was observed at the end of the summer term 1994 and during the inspection of specialist subjects in the week beginning 12 September. Cross-college issues were addressed in the week beginning 26 September.

2 Inspectors visited 158 learning sessions and examined a representative sample of students' written and practical work. Almost all the teachers and most of the students were observed in classes. There were meetings with governors, representatives of the local education authority, the Hampshire Guidance and Careers Service, the Hampshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), local employers, head teachers of partner schools, the co-ordinator of the Eastleigh consortium of schools and colleges, college managers, teaching and support staff, students and parents.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 Barton Peveril was a grammar school until 1974, when it was designated a sixth form college as a result of a Hampshire-wide post-16 reorganisation. The college serves the Borough of Eastleigh, which includes Chandler's Ford, Hamble, Hedge End and Fair Oak, as well as Eastleigh itself, neighbouring communities in Romsey and the New Forest to the west, and Swanmore and Bishop's Waltham to the east. The community served is broadly the residential area north and east of Southampton and adjacent parts of rural Hampshire.

4 The college occupies a 5.87 hectare site to the south of the town of Eastleigh itself and is located near the junction of the M27 and M3 motorways. Eastleigh was originally a prosperous railway town, but in recent years its heavy industrial base has declined so that service industries account for approximately 50 per cent of employment in the area. Unemployment is around 6 per cent. Eastleigh and Southampton Parkway stations are near the college, and Eastleigh Airport is a mile to the east. The boundaries of the City of Southampton are less than a mile to the south. Winchester, the county town of Hampshire, is 10 miles to the north. Adjoining Barton Peveril College are Eastleigh College, a secondary school and a primary school.

5 The majority of students come from ten 11-16 comprehensive schools in Eastleigh borough, Romsey and Swanmore. An increasing number of students are from schools on the northern fringes of Southampton. The college provides mainly for day-time general education of students aged between 16 and 19. Most students follow General Certificate of Education advanced supplementary and advanced level (GCE AS/A level) courses and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses. General

National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) were introduced for the first time in September 1994. The complementary studies programme offers a range of short courses and activities of a general nature including business studies, language and secretarial courses. A recent development has been the introduction of a limited programme of GCE A level and GCSE evening courses.

6 The college curriculum is organised into four divisions: English and creative arts; humanities and languages; mathematics, business studies, computing and physical education; and science and technology. Tutorial support is managed by six senior tutors who lead pastoral teams of teaching staff.

7 The college has a strong tradition of games and physical education and encourages students to participate in team sports and active leisure pursuits. Music and theatre are important aspects of college life. Students participate in community service, work experience and work shadowing, both locally and abroad.

8 In November 1992 there were 1,471 full-time students on roll, increasing to 1,749 by November 1994, a growth of 20 per cent in two years. In addition, there are now 88 adult students studying on evening GCE A level and GCSE courses. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2, respectively. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. The college has 118 full-time equivalent teachers and 27 full-time equivalent technical and support staff (figure 4). In 1993, the college's unit of funding was £17.26 compared with a median average level of funding for sixth form colleges of £20.96. In 1994, the unit of funding is £17.53 compared with a median of £19.81. Both the corporation and chief executive are deeply concerned about the impact of this level of funding on the management of growth, accommodation and the high academic standards of a successful college. The college's income and expenditure for the sixteen months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

9 The college's stated mission is to provide educational opportunities of the highest quality to young people in the communities it serves. There is an emphasis on preparation for further and higher education, on effective pastoral support and opportunities for personal and social development leading to academic excellence. The college has high expectations of its students and aims to provide them with the challenge which leads to intellectual excitement and personal success.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

10 There is awareness throughout the college of the government's aims and policies for further education, the National Training and Education Targets and the requirements of the Council. A positive response to these is evident in the strategic plan. The corporation has adopted growth targets which were exceeded in 1993-94 and which are close to being met

in 1994-95. A programme of GNVQs is being introduced from September 1994.

11 The corporation and the staff of the college have a closely-focused view of the mission and educational character of the college. The college aims to provide general education courses for students over the age of 16 and, in practice, caters almost exclusively for 16-19 year old students whose studies lead mainly to GCE and GCSE examinations. The college has taken account of the curriculum offered by its close neighbour, Eastleigh College, and has chosen the scope of its service carefully. It has diversified to a limited extent by offering GNVQ courses from 1994, and by establishing its own programme of GCE A level and GCSE classes for adults in the evening. These additions to the college's programme have put some strain on the good relations which exist between Eastleigh and Barton Peveril colleges.

12 The college's mission statement is strongly supported by the local education authority, the careers service, employers, the local TEC, parents and local schools. The college has excellent relations with its 10 partner schools. These have been established by senior tutors in particular, but also by the efforts of individual departments and subject teachers. The Eastleigh Consortium is an important channel of communication with schools. It is made up of 10 secondary schools, four special schools and two colleges. The consortium is funded by its 16 members since the ending of the Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) funding. It is now housed on the college's premises. It concerns itself with matters such as curriculum development and progression, equal opportunities, guidance and transition from school to college.

13 Within the confines of its mission, the college affords its students a wide range of opportunities. It offers 46 GCE A level subjects, 12 AS subjects and 34 GCSE subjects. There are options within individual subjects; for example, there are three GCE A level history syllabuses which provide not only a chronological range but also a choice of content. The availability of two different GCSE mathematics courses provides appropriate opportunities for students. From September 1994, the college is running four courses for the General National Vocational Qualification, two at advanced level and two at intermediate level. These are in three areas: art and design, business studies, and science.

14 The college aims to provide its students with a programme which has balance, breadth and variety. This it achieves, through a combination of main studies and complementary studies. The complementary studies programme is impressive in its range. It consists of several broad categories of activity. Firstly, there are vocationally-based and examined courses, mainly in languages and typewriting, but also in areas such as child care for students contemplating careers in the caring professions. Secondly, there are short-course options which range over a variety of topics, from creative writing to understanding the modern world, from practical first

aid to awareness in driving a car. All such courses are internally certificated, are included in records of achievement and are noted in references for higher education and employment. Thirdly, there are physical education activities. Fourthly, there are work placements; for example with a local firm, school or voluntary organisation. Finally, there are support lessons for students who may need more time to develop a language, or the additional mathematical and information technology skills which may be essential for the subjects they are studying.

15 There is a wide range of sporting and cultural activities in which students are involved. The college has established a sporting prowess and fields teams in athletics, badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rugby, squash, table tennis and tennis. It is well known locally for its drama productions and students are given the opportunity to be involved in presenting theatre events for the community, an infants' school tour, a programme for the elderly and street theatre. Musical activities are numerous. The college orchestra and college choir meet weekly for practices. Public performances are held each term and a summer concert is held on the evening of induction day. The student committee organises an annual rock concert at which both college and invited bands play.

16 The college makes provision both for religious education and for a collective act of worship which satisfies the requirements of Sections 44 and 45 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

17 Mature students are new to the college. The 'Peveril Centre' has been established as a focus for community education and is marketed through a specialised brochure. Of the 25 evening classes on offer in the autumn term 1994, 13 are running, although the average size of classes, 7.5 students, is low.

18 The college is planning to establish an information centre in a new building by September 1995. This will offer resource-based learning to the college's existing students and enable it to attract those who are specifically seeking a distance or open-learning programme.

19 Provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is flexible, responsive and adequately meets the needs of the 75 such students who are currently enrolled. Facilities are good and staff are appropriately qualified. The support offered is designed to meet the individual needs of each student.

20 The college has been successful in establishing relationships with an appropriate range of external agencies. It emphasises its relations with parents, who are able to make contact with the college when their children are in the final year of secondary schooling. Parents also have ample opportunity to visit on open evenings and to meet staff on parents' evenings. The Barton Peveril College Association is an organisation for parents which has hitherto served mainly as a fund-raising body. It is now trying to widen its role to become a forum for debate and exchange of ideas with the college. Special events, such as a talk on routes into higher education, are also organised on parents' behalf.

21 The college is effective in introducing students to higher education. A major event each year is the higher education fair, to which local school pupils are also invited. In 1994, the fair was attended by admissions tutors from 49 universities and colleges. Trips to higher education open days are run. Negotiations are under way with the Southampton Institute of Higher Education to make a compact whereby students who might not otherwise consider applying to higher education are encouraged to do so.

22 Although the college has few links with employers arising directly from its courses, some productive contacts have been established. It is a leading member of the county-wide Hampshire Education-Business Partnership. It has established its own Barton Peveril Partnership. This is a group of local employers and college staff which works to strengthen links between education and industry by means such as work shadowing, careers conferences and practice interviews for students. Local employers speak highly of Barton Peveril students, whom they regard as interested, inquisitive and knowledgeable and having a positive attitude to work.

23 Relations with the Hampshire TEC are productive. The college is viewed by the TEC as forward-looking and imaginative. A number of initiatives have been funded by the TEC, one of which is a project designed to enable GCE A level students to acquire relevant vocational experience which will enhance their academic studies and enable them to gain nationally-recognised vocational qualifications. The project includes students doing voluntary or paid part-time work, as well as those undertaking coursework as part of their academic studies. More than 100 students have successfully participated so far. The college sees the experience offered by the project as a normal part of its complementary studies programme.

24 The college has a marketing policy which takes full account of the strategic plan. Activity to date has concentrated on promotion and this is conducted effectively. There is well-produced literature, which includes the student handbook. One person has responsibility for the co-ordination of marketing but all staff are involved in it. A good newsletter, 'The Peveril', is widely circulated, and the college achieved an average of two press releases per week during the last academic year.

25 A pilot survey has been carried out into the reasons why GCE A level students chose to attend Barton Peveril College. Further research is planned to discover why some of the 1994 applicants did not in fact enrol. The college should ensure that this work is pursued to provide data for strategic planning.

26 An equal opportunities policy statement was adopted by the college in 1991. An equal opportunities group was set up to advise on implementation and a procedure was subsequently agreed for appointment of staff. The impetus then slowed. A new member of staff has recently taken up responsibility for equal opportunities and rapid progress should be made towards full implementation of the policy.

27 A college charter has been published after consultation with staff, students and the corporation. Students themselves contributed one section to the charter, which was distributed and introduced during induction. Its use and effectiveness will be monitored during the year, after which the charter will be revised if necessary.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

28 The college is well governed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable corporation board. Members fully understand their responsibilities and liabilities. The board has 10 independent members who have a wide range of professional, commercial and educational expertise. The principal is a member of the corporation. Two members are nominated by the college staff and two by parents. A member of the Hampshire Education Committee, the chief executive of Eastleigh Borough Council and the college's senior vice-principal are co-opted members. The current vice-chairman is the nominated TEC representative. The president of the student council attends meetings.

29 Audit and remuneration committees are in place, but the board has decided not to continue with a separate finance and general purposes committee. The full board wished to be involved in all major decisions and has accepted the consequence that it now meets at least six times each year. In assuming the functions of a finance and general purposes committee the board should ensure that it complies with the instrument and articles of government. A finance monitoring group, consisting of the chairman and three governors, has been established recently to provide advice to senior college staff on the financial information which is to be presented to the corporation. Board meetings are well attended. Briefing papers are well presented and are clearly divided into those for information and those requiring a decision.

30 The ethos and mission of the college are fully supported by the governors. Governors have a thorough understanding of operational matters and support the college executive well. They familiarise themselves with the day-to-day working of the college through a programme of visits to departments and support services, and through meetings with senior managers. Governors have at least three information seminars each year in addition to normal corporation meetings. They are consulted on the formulation of the strategic plan at various stages in its development and approve the final draft. Governors are aware of quality assurance issues and are committed to reviewing their own effectiveness annually.

31 The principal and the four vice-principals constitute the principal's group. The vice-principals have responsibility for personnel, curriculum, administration and finance, and student services, respectively. Each academic subject is deemed to be a department, and these are grouped into four academic divisions, each headed by a divisional director. In

addition there are six senior tutors, reporting to the vice-principal for student services. The senior tutors manage pastoral provision. The principal provides dynamic leadership. Senior and middle managers work well together and managers show enthusiasm for their work.

32 The college mission is understood and supported by staff. The principal's group provides a strong lead which is informed by carefully-planned consultation at all levels. Divisional and departmental aspirations are co-ordinated with the college strategic plan and the cross-college aspects of provision are planned by the appropriate vice-principal. All staff have a copy of the annual operating plan.

33 The principal's group meets twice a week. At weekly intervals, it is expanded, by including the four divisional directors, the cross-college curriculum co-ordinator and the head of resources, to form the senior group. Departments, divisions and senior tutor groups meet regularly. All meetings have agendas and minutes or notes, but the recording of decisions, action and timescale is generally poor.

34 Responsibilities within the senior and middle management are generally clear and supported by appropriate job descriptions. Divisional directors, however, have only a general description of their role, which is relatively new and still evolving. The college should clarify the responsibilities of the divisional directors in the management structure. Line management relationships within the divisions are also yet to be fully established. The line management relationship between senior tutor and tutor is well defined. Through the curriculum and pastoral committees there is good liaison between the divisional directors and the senior tutors to ensure that academic and pastoral systems are effectively integrated.

35 Key policy documents are in place, including those for personnel, finance, equal opportunities, health and safety and student guidance. There are appropriate committees to develop these policies and the work of the committees is under constant review. For example, as a result of such a review, the academic board has recently been discontinued and replaced by a curriculum policy group. The college has a quality assurance policy. However, there is no constituted committee at college level other than the principal's group which has a clear and explicit brief for the oversight of quality.

36 Communications within the college have been improved as a result of the review undertaken through the Investors in People initiative. Staff briefings, working groups and written communications are now effective.

37 The college is gradually moving from historically-determined budgets to departmental allocations linked to student numbers. Currently, only materials and some equipment budgets are devolved to departments and cross-college services. The mechanism for deployment of teaching staff and allocation of departmental revenue budgets is logical and is understood by divisional directors and the majority of heads of department. Departmental budgets are not entirely allocated at the start of the academic

year and some difficulties arise from this. There is close monitoring of expenditure, although care needs to be taken to ensure the clear separation of revenue and capital accounts in financial reporting. Teaching staff are efficiently deployed. The size of the management team is to be reviewed with the pending retirement of one vice-principal.

38 Target enrolment numbers, actual numbers, retention rates and destination statistics are collected and reviewed. Records are currently held by senior tutors. They should be collated centrally in order to inform senior management of trends which may require action.

39 There is a sound policy for the continued development of the computerised management information system. Recent additions to the administration network have improved its availability to staff. There is evidence of increasing use and of increasing satisfaction among budget holders and senior tutors.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

40 Six senior tutors have major responsibility for recruitment, guidance and support. They are each supported by a team of about 15 group tutors. Policies are clearly set out in college handbooks. The new college charter includes specific reference to the entitlement of all students to appropriate support and guidance from application and enrolment to their time of leaving. The roles and responsibilities of staff are clear. The system is proving effective in coping with the recent increase in student numbers. Continuity is secured by basing tutor groups on those recruited from each partner school.

41 Each of the senior tutors takes responsibility for one or two of the 10 partner schools within the Eastleigh Consortium. The college operates an open-access policy. All applicants are interviewed by one of the senior tutors during the spring term. This task should be shared with group tutors to ensure that all applicants receive adequate time for counselling and advice.

42 At present staff receive no written guidelines for the conduct of interviews. In the interests of consistency the college should address this. Some schools provide references and predicted GCSE grades. To enable the college to place all students on the most appropriate course, consistent practices should be negotiated with the schools.

43 Each July, prospective students are invited to attend an induction day which provides an opportunity to experience life in college. In addition, there are subject taster days. In September, the induction programme includes visits to college facilities, including the library, the computing centre and the careers advisory service. This programme is supported by good information and materials.

44 There are daily registration periods of a quarter-of-an-hour during which tutors deal with administrative tasks. Student attendance is recorded through the tutor group registration system as well as by the use

of absence slips. A 'cause for concern' form gives adequate notice of developing problems. Although students have access to external counselling, there is no trained counsellor on the college staff. This is a service which a college of this size should provide internally. The equivalent of one period per week, however, is allocated to tutors to support students on an individual or group basis. Some tutors do not make good use of this time and the college should consider whether a statement of entitlement would better regulate it.

45 Careers education and guidance are readily available from three careers co-ordinators within the college, together with the professional support of the Hampshire careers, education and guidance service. There is a good careers library, with up-to-date information to support application to higher education, and a networked Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service and higher education database. The great majority of students, whose goal is to progress to higher education, receive appropriate guidance from their tutors or the college career co-ordinators. Students planning to enter employment, or who are less sure about their future, on average about 250-300 each year, use the services of the Hampshire senior careers adviser.

46 Student progress is carefully monitored. The system of profiling is effective in providing information for teachers, students and parents. Parents speak well of the standard of reports. However there is no system for ensuring that national records of achievement are regularly updated.

47 A student committee, on which all tutor groups are represented, provides a forum for airing student concerns and this is supported by staff as well as students. The committee also organises social events and assists in induction and other college events.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

48 The quality of teaching is high and learning is promoted effectively. Of the 158 sessions inspected, over 70 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. Because the inspection took place at the start of term, this high proportion of good teaching demonstrates the prompt and efficient start to the academic year which the college makes. Work of a very high standard was observed in most subjects, but particularly in English and mathematics. The following table summarises the grades given to the sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		24	74	33	2	0	133
GCSE		3	5	7	1	0	16
GNVQ		0	5	0	1	0	6
Other		0	2	1	0	0	3
Total		27	86	41	4	0	158

49 All departments have schemes of work. The best examples are detailed, include reference to resources and appropriate teaching methods, and have been designed to ensure clear progression and logical sequencing of activities linked to examination syllabuses. Schemes of work are shared with students or are prominently displayed in the classroom.

50 There is little inter-departmental consultation about schemes of work. This is particularly unfortunate in the separate sciences. Schemes of work should be more detailed and would be improved by explicit reference to related subjects, leading to a more coherent ordering of topics and a better understanding of the data and skills which are common.

51 The most successful teaching is thoroughly prepared and uses a range of methods to provide a variety of pace and activity. The aims of the best lessons are clear and students are told what they are at the outset. Expectations of both staff and students are high, and particularly so in mathematics, art and design and theatre studies. Promotion of the active involvement of students in their work is evident throughout the college. In mathematics, the standard of group work is good. In English where there is consistently excellent teaching, students are well briefed and come to class well prepared to play a full part in discussion and group activity. The use of topical issues to stimulate discussion is particularly good in social sciences. Question and answer technique is successfully used in religious studies, theatre studies and science. Key points are reinforced by good use of the whiteboard.

52 There is occasionally an over reliance on teachers' input and board work, for example, in business studies. This reduces the liveliness of the class and limits students' involvement. In a few science sessions, the pace of the work was poorly judged.

53 Some teaching is enhanced by skilful use of well-designed hand-outs; notably in history, social sciences and science. In history, art and some social science sessions better use of audio-visual materials would have helped to clarify and reinforce the teaching. In business studies, regular testing helps students by reinforcing the knowledge already covered.

54 The college provides a supportive learning environment. There are, for example, excellent information booklets for geology. The creation of a special room for geography students, although it is still limited in its resources, is a good initiative to support the new enquiry-based syllabus. In geography and in art and design, teachers give students appropriate help in preparing their work. In history, the use of documentary material and work folders helps to make the subject vivid. Additional support is provided for any students who are experiencing difficulties. In science and art, the practical work is particularly well planned and organised. Students are encouraged to work on their own.

55 In computing, good account is taken of the varying experience and skill of students. Differentiated tasks and sympathetic staff quickly put students at ease. This approach could improve some of the teaching in

the social sciences. Also in social science classes, teachers should improve their question and answer techniques.

56 In religious studies, where students earlier complained of poor teaching and were achieving poor GCE A level results, remedial action has resulted in an immediate improvement in students' performance. Sixteen per cent more students passed their GCE A level examination in 1994 than in 1993.

57 Students receive regular homework and are briefed well ahead of deadlines for handing in work. In music and foreign languages, students are required to maintain a record of their work and to draw up action plans. In geography there is an excellent booklet to support planning and analysis of individual studies. Discussions are held with individual students and target dates are agreed at each stage. In art, course work is well prepared with good printed briefs, complete with aims, objectives and completion dates for assignments. Advice, support and demonstrations of media and processes are given frequently to help students succeed in their project work. In music, students quickly lose their self-consciousness and gain in confidence as a result of sensitively-planned practical work.

58 Most departments have assessment policies which ensure consistency of grading. Work is regularly marked and usually returned promptly. Most comment is full and constructive, and particularly so in music, art and design and social sciences. Students of mathematics consider the additional oral commentary that teachers give on marked assignments particularly helpful. There is good practice, notably in art, in the use of peer assessment to help students to become self-critical.

59 In a number of subjects, considerable effort is devoted to providing students with relevant experience outside the classroom. For example, carefully-planned visits are arranged by the theatre studies and history departments. Work experience abroad is organised by the languages department. Whilst there are regular whole day visits arranged for geography and geology students, opportunities for residential fieldwork, already provided for geology and biology, should be extended to geography to give more scope for individual studies to be fully developed.

60 Greater emphasis should be given to the development of core skills to enable students to gain confidence in working on their own. In mathematics, there are good facilities but they can only be used by prior agreement with a tutor. Better use should be made of information technology particularly in business studies and economics. In some science sessions, not enough thought had been given to assessing the mathematical ability of students. However, in other science sessions there were positive attempts to develop communication skills. There is a need to increase awareness on the part of staff and students of how core skills are explicitly developed through their main courses of study.

61 In a significant number of sessions, groups were too large for the teaching space. This restricted the range of activities which could take

place; for example, group work was occasionally limited and contact between staff and individual students was sometimes hindered. This is an important consideration to be taken into account in the college's strategic plan and accommodation strategy.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

62 Students' achievements are impressive. Over a period of five years to 1994, during which the college has grown by over 25 per cent, students have achieved results consistently above the national averages in GCE A level examinations. Over this period, the number of A level entries has increased by 22 per cent from 1,428 to 1,740, and the pass rate has risen from 84 per cent to 88 per cent. In 1993, the GCE A level pass rate for sixth form colleges nationally was 80 per cent.

63 The college achieved a 100 per cent GCE A level pass rate in seven subjects in 1993 and in 11 subjects in 1994. In English, the largest college department, results have been outstanding. The average pass rate over the last four years is 97 per cent. In 1994, all students passed English literature and 99 per cent English language. Mathematics, the second largest department, also has an excellent record of success. Over 200 students, entered for a variety of syllabuses, achieved 100 per cent and 97 per cent pass rates in 1993 and 1994, respectively. All the students entered for statistics have passed in each of the last five years.

64 In 1993, 57 per cent of college GCE A level students achieved grades A-C compared with an average of 46 per cent for all sixth form colleges. In 1994, there was a slight fall to 54 per cent, still well above the national average for sixth form colleges. In 1993, the average A level score was 15.2 (where A=10, E=2). This compares with a national average of 10.2 for all colleges in the further education sector. It places Barton Peveril in the top three colleges in Hampshire and within the top 10 per cent of all sector colleges.

65 In 1993, there were 150 entries for GCE A/S level. Students achieved a pass rate of 77 per cent compared with a national average of 72 per cent for all sixth form colleges. Forty-five per cent of students obtained grades A-C compared with the national average for sixth form colleges of 37 per cent. A 100 per cent pass rate was achieved in English, pure mathematics and sociology. In 1994, there were 232 entries, achieving a pass rate of 75 per cent with 32 per cent of students gaining grades A-C.

66 The college has subscribed to the national Advanced Level Information System for the past two years. This measures the contribution of a college to improving students' GCE A level results above a prediction based on GCSE results. Initial results clearly suggest that added value is being achieved. However, the college has decided to await a third set of results before making firm judgements about the consistency of the analysis.

67 GCSE entries have increased by 35 per cent over the last five years, rising to 917 in 1994. Overall results are well above the national average.

In 1993, the pass rate at grades A-C was 69 per cent, falling to 57 per cent in 1994. In 1993, the average pass rate, grades A-C, for all sixth form colleges was 50 per cent. Results of the large numbers of students taking English have been consistently good over a number of years. However, in 1994, the pass rate in English language fell sharply. The college is currently consulting the examination board over this atypical result. Results in mathematics have also been good. In 1994, for example, 118 students achieved a pass rate, grades A-C, of 82 per cent. Most GCSE students were re-taking examinations to improve their grades, which is the common pattern in further education sector colleges, and such good results at GCSE are rare.

68 The college has a high student retention rate. In 1993-94, it was 97 per cent. Nevertheless there is significant movement of students within the college from one course to another.

69 Many students have gained awards in a variety of activities through the college's complementary studies programme; for example, in first aid, life-saving and food hygiene. In 1993-94, some 50 students gained credit towards NVQ awards by participating in work placement schemes. In the last three years, many students have participated in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, achieving a total of eight gold and eight silver medals. Over 1,000 students participate regularly in a wide range of sports and fitness activities. Both female and male students have represented their county at under 19 level in hockey, netball, athletics, soccer, cricket and golf.

70 The college has a strong tradition of music and drama. Students are involved in the Eastleigh and Hampshire County Youth orchestras and brass bands. Drama students are involved in Hampshire and National Youth Theatre activities, and are developing links with drama students in Denmark. In 1993, the college launched 'Celebration Week', to recognise the achievements of its students. Events included a concert, art exhibition, dramatic performances, and a party for local pensioners who live in sheltered housing near the college.

71 The college systematically tracks students' destinations. On average, 65 per cent of all leavers progress to higher education (about 80 per cent of GCE A level students) and approximately 12 per cent to additional further education. Some 16 per cent enter employment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

72 There is a strong culture of quality in the college. Staff are committed to encouraging their students to give of their best and thus they provide a good, if informal, guarantee of standards.

73 The college is moving forward decisively towards a more formal structure of quality assurance. Its policy is laid down in the staff handbook and strategic plan. An annual review cycle began at departmental level in 1993. In these first rounds, each departmental review has been led by the

principal. The result has been a rigorous examination of performance. However, the formal responsibility for quality control has been assigned to divisional directors. While they assist the principal in conducting the reviews, their only other activity, at present, is to prepare a report on the departments within their divisions for the corporation board. If their role is to be effective, direct lines of authority and responsibility should be established whereby divisional directors review their departments and stand accountable for them to an appropriate quality assurance body at college level. Further implementation of the college's quality assurance policy will include a review of provision for students' recruitment, guidance and support by senior tutors, and a review by vice-principals of the cross-college areas for which they have responsibility.

74 Departmental reviews have resulted in the setting of targets based upon systematically-collated evidence. Some performance indicators are used, particularly statistics on recruitment, retention and academic progression. A student profiling scheme is in place. It should be extended to include the recording of students' progression in core skills so as to assist the compilation of further evidence on the value the college is adding to students' achievements. Departments increasingly take account of students' views on the effectiveness of courses. Staff reactions to students' opinions and their willingness to act on the information received vary. All departments are now required to involve students in the review process and guidelines have been provided. The college is also exploring ways to draw in parents' and employers' contributions to course reviews.

75 Internal review arrangements are complemented by participation in a county pilot for external quality review. So far these external reviews, using FEFC criteria, have focused on only five departments and have been conducted by teachers drawn from neighbouring colleges. The marrying of external and internal review has been successful. There has been a good level of response to the external recommendations by the departments concerned. The process has enabled five members of the college's teaching staff to train as reviewers and two of these have now reviewed their subject specialisms in other colleges. The college is drawing on this external review experience to refine its own review processes. It is expected that the evaluation of the pilot will lead to an extension of the scheme to all curriculum areas.

76 Individual staff review is intended to be an important element of the planned quality assurance cycle. Its purpose will be to identify staff-development needs and to inform the departmental review process. It is now in its development stage and different approaches are being piloted by each of the four divisions. Not all the schemes include observation of teaching, a key factor in quality enhancement. One division is piloting an appraisal scheme. An early decision should be made on the scheme to be adopted, in order to ensure uniform practice throughout the college.

77 Current work to secure Investors in People status and the development of new accredited courses are leading to the closer alignment of staff training with the college's strategic and organisational requirements. Staff new to the college, including newly-qualified teachers, receive a formal programme of induction. The current arrangements are well documented, an effective monitoring system is in place, and the training package is well balanced. To date, a variety of professional development activities have been undertaken by teaching staff. All staff who attend training events or conferences are required to report upon them, but the quality of this reporting is inadequate.

78 The college's first self-assessment report is a thorough document which has much supporting evidence. The appraisal of the college's work and its place in the community is realistic and the conclusions in this report correspond closely with the findings of inspectors. Internal review is already moderated in a variety of ways and some account is taken of statistical information and student opinion. Professional development needs are being systematically assessed. All these initiatives are becoming an integral part of strategic planning and represent a significant advance from a situation in which some staff were expressing apprehension and others offering resistance. The good relations between staff, which exist across the college, have made an important contribution and solid progress is being made towards establishing an effective quality assurance system.

RESOURCES

Staffing

79 The college has an exceptionally strong and well-qualified teaching staff. Of the 128 teachers, 119 are graduates, 112 have formal teaching qualifications, another 14 are recognised as qualified teachers and two are currently undertaking a course leading to qualification. Thirty-four have higher degrees. The student:staff ratio is 15:1. Ninety per cent of contact hours are taught by full-time staff. The college is able to provide sufficient teaching and continuity of personnel to give students good support and encourage high levels of achievement.

80 Most teachers are between the ages of 35 and 50, with more young staff in expanding subjects such as psychology and the creative arts. Nearly half the full-time teaching staff and 85 per cent of part-time teachers are women. However, women are less well represented in senior posts. There is one woman among four vice-principals and one among four divisional directors.

81 Personnel policies are well developed, and there are good staff and personnel handbooks in use. Staffing numbers are carefully determined through analysis of trends in student demand and of the demand for particular subjects. All teaching staff are on new contracts which allow the college to require a greater degree of flexibility than hitherto, although there was a long-established practice in the college of staff giving

generously of their time beyond the requirements of their previous contract. Goodwill has been maintained and staff are conscientious, capable and enthusiastic. Not all staff have up-to-date job descriptions and this should be rectified.

82 Of the 33 support staff, approximately 50 per cent have recognised qualifications including degrees, higher national certificates and post-graduate certificates in librarianship. Support staff in both academic and administrative areas are recognised as full members of the college team. They attend staff meetings and are informed of the development of policy. Increasingly, the work of support staff overlaps at the margins with that of teaching staff. This trend has been welcomed and contributes both to the self-esteem of support staff and the efficiency of staffing as a whole. The science and information technology departments, in particular, benefit from the contribution of support staff. The former caretaking staff are also now better integrated into the personnel team of the college and are working flexibly on a range of site management duties.

83 There is a full-time teacher librarian who, since 1991, has worked in conjunction with a part-time qualified librarian. This balance of expertise has benefited the library service. The expansion of student numbers and the introduction of new courses have led the college to develop facilities which allow students to work on their own. Among these is an information centre which is planned to open in September 1995. A group of staff has been established to consider the staffing and training that will be needed to promote resource-based learning. Among the issues being addressed is the level of library staffing which these extensions in learning support will require.

84 Staff are active in continuous professional updating and the college provides a minimum training entitlement for teaching staff of five days a year. Training for assessor and verifier awards to permit the extension of GNVQ in the college is the present priority. A number of staff work as examiners and have written textbooks. Few have recent industrial experience, but this deficiency is being addressed: 31 staff have undertaken placements in industry in the last two years.

Equipment/learning resources

85 The college is generally well equipped. Classrooms have the white-boards, overhead projectors and storage needed to support class work effectively. The equipment in science is impressive, particularly for electronics. Language teaching is supported with a modern language laboratory and a satellite TV link for German. The quality of wall displays in classrooms vary widely. Most departments have good stocks of textbooks.

86 The information technology network provides one machine for every 15 students, which is less than the most generous practice within the sector. There is a range of software and compact disk read-only memory

(CD-ROM) databases available to students and staff. Both the variety of equipment and access to it should be extended. A further 68 workstations will be provided in the new information centre from September 1995 which will considerably strengthen existing provision. The college should establish a co-ordinated plan for information technology, which balances central provision with the requirements of some departments for specialised machines and applications. The relationship between information technology and learning resources should be worked out more fully.

87 The library is well organised but its bookstock of 14,300 volumes is small for a college of this size. Some old stock has been removed and further weeding of redundant stock is required. The quality of the subject collections varies widely. It is good, for example, in the creative arts but poor in mathematics. This may reflect the responsiveness of library staff to demands and the lack of any more formal allocation of funding by subject area. The stock has been reclassified recently to the Dewey system and a terminal provided for catalogue access. The library budget for the past 16 months was £14,700, which is modest given the existing provision. The CD-ROM network is well used and teletext, video, microfiche and photocopying are available to students.

Accommodation

88 The college is well housed in attractive modern buildings on an open, green site. The architectural quality of the accommodation contributes to a sense that this is a good place to study. Spaces are well organised and this helps to bring people together. The attractive entrance and communal areas contribute positively to college life. Some specialist areas such as the art and design studios and the science laboratories are of a high standard. Technician areas are well appointed. There are excellent new rooms for physical education, including a modern fitness studio.

89 However, the accommodation is not uniformly good. The gymnasium is inadequate for a college of this size and its badly worn floor is a hazard. Changing rooms are utilitarian. The college hall is too small to be used for a whole assembly. Its planned re-development as a theatre, beginning in December 1994, is a sensible initiative. Whilst the music area was purpose-built and is of a high standard, it is too small for orchestral work and practice rooms are poorly insulated for sound. The college has seven temporary classrooms which benefit from careful upkeep and decoration by the site maintenance team.

90 The present accommodation is inadequate to cope with the rapid growth in student numbers. There is overcrowding in some classrooms, restricting the range of teaching methods which can be used. Conditions in social and circulation areas are unsatisfactory, particularly during bad weather when students cannot use the grounds. The congestion caused by students sitting on corridor floors could be a serious hazard in an emergency and certainly prevents easy circulation between classes. In the dining area, catering staff are unable to prevent an unsightly build-up of food wrappers at peak times. The planned information centre will reduce some of the pressure on teaching accommodation when it becomes available.

91 At 5.16 m² per student, the college has significantly less accommodation than the 7 m² which is normally regarded as a benchmark for institutions with a reasonable range of work. The college carries out room utilisation surveys based on occupancy and frequency of use. It claims to achieve a utilisation factor of 73 per cent, which is high. Only in some practical areas have audits revealed low utilisation, and the means of improvement have

been identified. The impression of overcrowding gained by inspectors appears to be borne out by the college's statistical evidence. While the college day has been extended by one hour, it is still relatively short. The availability of public transport in the late afternoon for students who live long distances from the college is a potential constraint. The midday break has been phased to provide greater flexibility. Further consideration should be given to strategies designed to spread the load on accommodation more evenly.

92 Wheelchair access has been achieved by adaptation to some parts of the buildings. However, the library remains inaccessible and only with the opening of the information centre will access to the main learning resources become available.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

93 The particular strengths of the college are:

- good governance and management
- strong links with local community and industry
- a broad range of provision within the college's defined mission
- students' achievements including excellent GCE and GCSE examination results
- good rates of progression to higher education
- good teaching and good-quality support from non-teaching staff
- strong pastoral support
- commitment to staff development.

94 If it is to build upon its existing strengths the college should address the following issues:

- the development of core skills and learning support
- the central co-ordination and analysis of available data to inform planning and quality control
- the further development of the quality assurance system
- clarification of the role of divisional director
- the overcrowded accommodation.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1994)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1994)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1994)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1994)

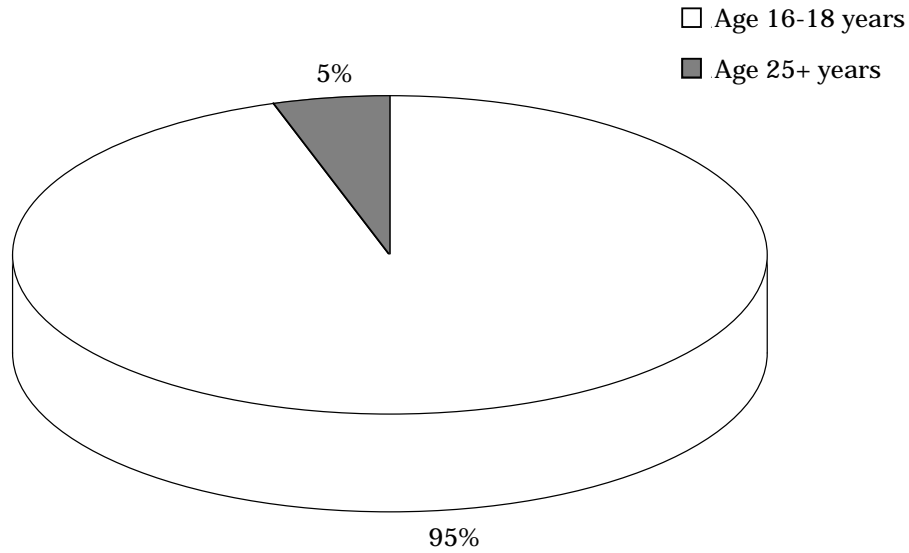
 - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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

Figure 1

Barton Peveril College: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1994)

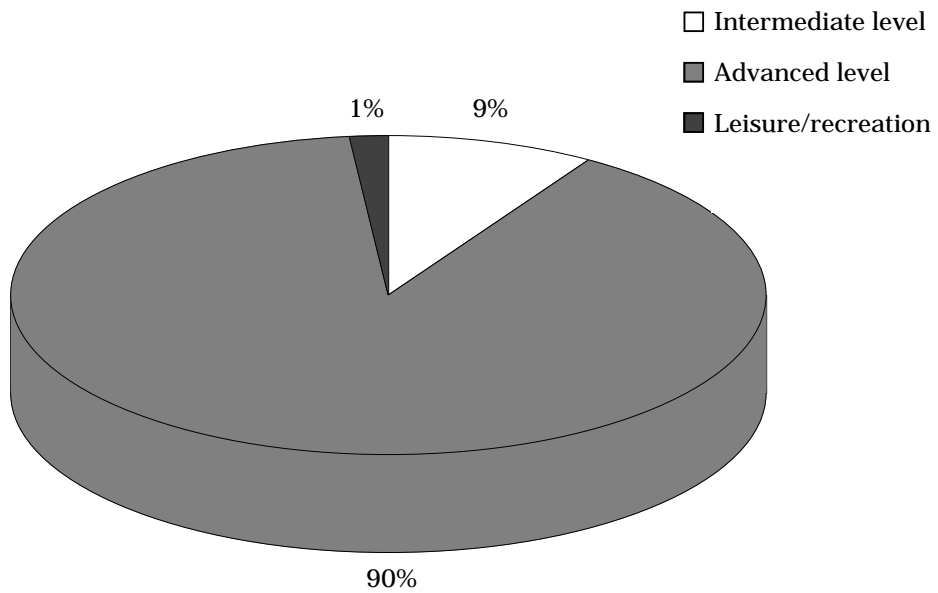


Enrolments: 1,837

Note: included in the category of students age 25+ years are five students age 19-24 years.

Figure 2

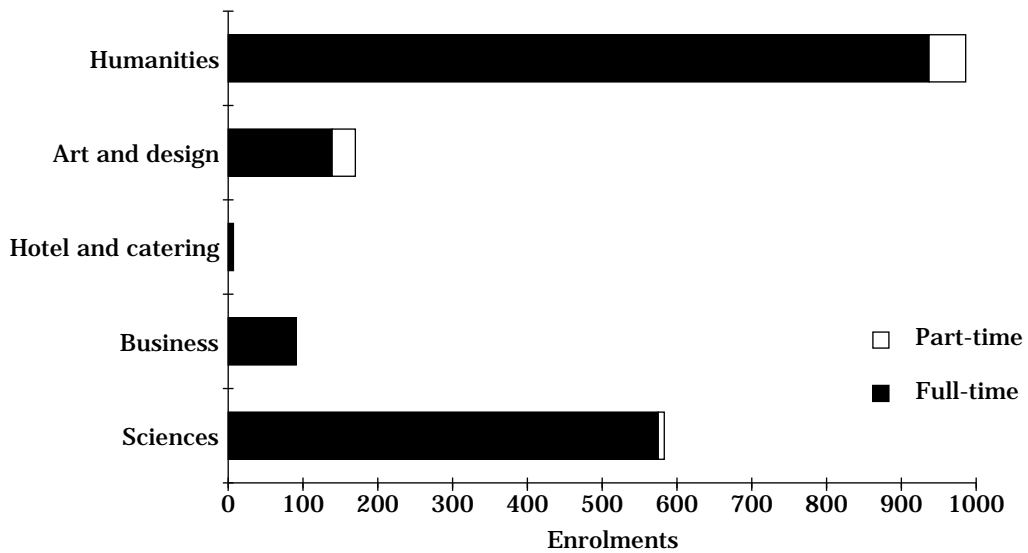
Barton Peveril College: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 1,837

Figure 3

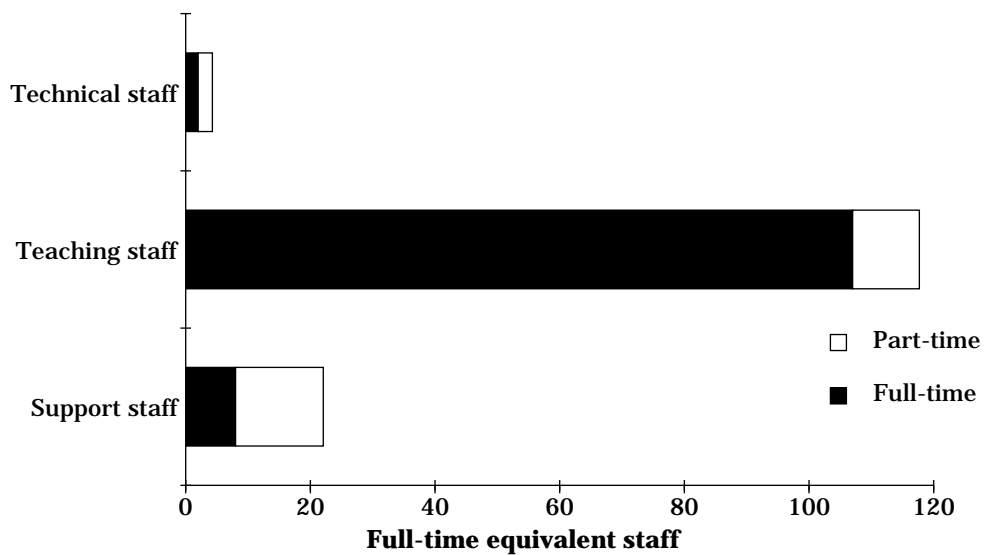
Barton Peveril College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 1,837

Figure 4

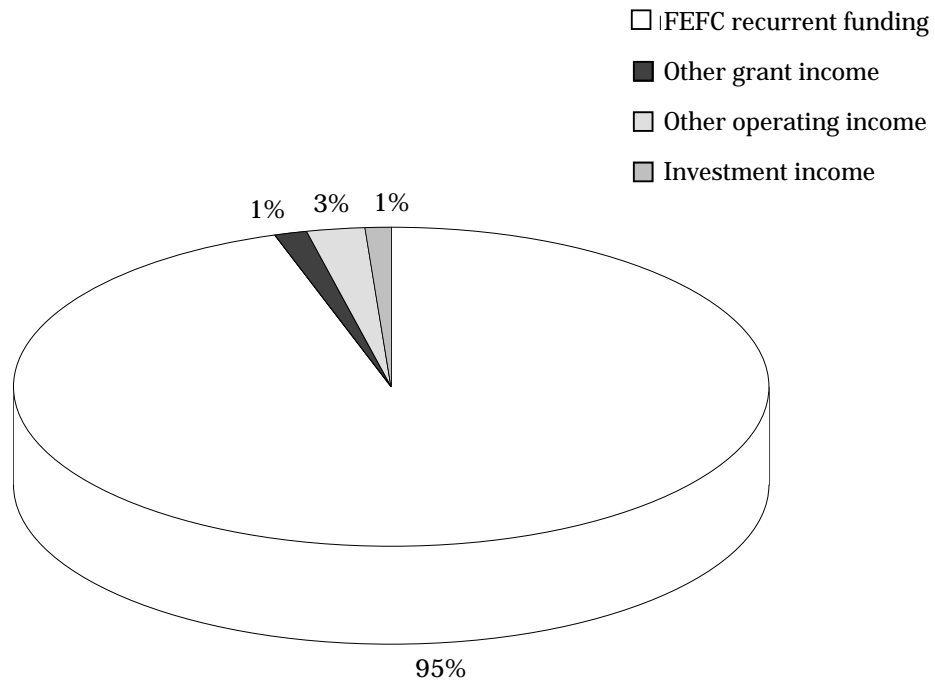
Barton Peveril College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1994)



Full-time equivalent staff: 145

Figure 5

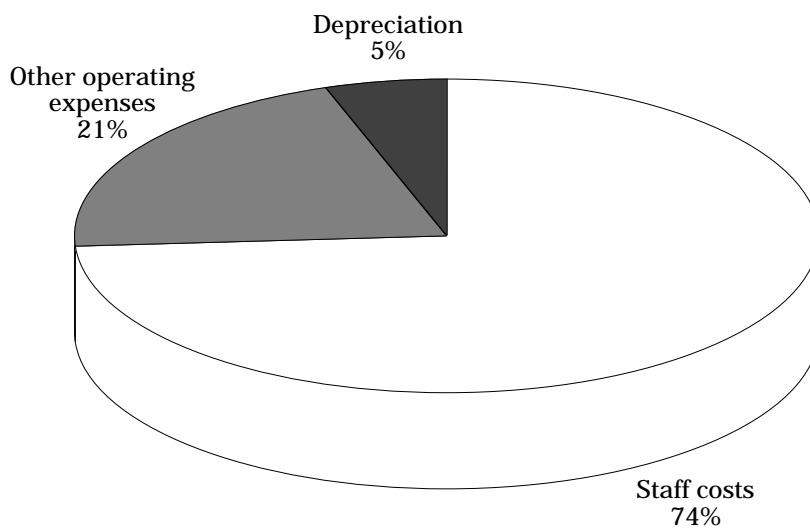
Barton Peveril College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)



Income: £5,755,736

Figure 6

Barton Peveril College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)



Expenditure: £5,521,205

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