

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Brooklands College

February 1997

**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 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.

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100*

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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

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

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 14/97

BROOKLANDS COLLEGE
SOUTH EAST REGION
Inspected May-November 1996

Summary

Brooklands College is a general further education college situated near Weybridge in Surrey. It offers a wide range of courses for school-leavers and adults, from pre-foundation level to higher education courses. It is a large provider of GCE A level and AS subjects. Students are recruited from a wide area, including overseas. The college has particularly productive contacts with industry, and close links with schools and universities. There are good library and computing facilities. Prospective students receive careful guidance about courses. Governors and senior managers have successfully tackled some difficult issues since incorporation. Teaching in some curriculum areas is effective but overall the quality of teaching is variable. The retention of students on many courses is poor. Although some examination results are at or above national averages, in some areas they are very poor. There is little monitoring of curriculum quality and inadequate analysis of students' achievements. Some of the new roles for managers require clarification. The college's charter is not familiar to students, parents or staff. The college should implement and monitor its equal opportunities policy, improve progress on staff appraisal, and continue to improve its accommodation, some of which is poor.

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	3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	4
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	2
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	3	Hotel and catering, leisure and tourism	2
Mathematics and computing	2	Art and design, including performing arts	3
Motor vehicle engineering	4	English and modern foreign languages	2
Aeronautical engineering	2	Social sciences	3
Electrical and mechanical engineering	2		
Business	3		

INTRODUCTION

1 Brooklands College was inspected between May and November 1996. During May 1996 and October 1996, 11 inspectors spent a total of 33 days assessing specialist subject areas. They visited 160 classes, involving 1,744 students, and examined a broad range of students' work and extensive documentation relating to the college and its courses. In November 1996, and during September 1996 when enrolment and induction procedures were inspected, six inspectors spent a total of 20 days assessing aspects of cross-college provision. They held meetings with members of the corporation, representatives of the Surrey Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and of local industry and commerce, head teachers of local schools, students, parents, college managers and staff.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Brooklands College is a general further education college, which was established in 1951. It is situated on a single campus close to the town of Weybridge in north Surrey. It offers a broad range of education and training opportunities to students of widely differing abilities and ages. The college has well-established links with employers, with other general further education colleges in the county, with Surrey adult education service, and with higher education providers. There are four other general further education colleges in Surrey, four sixth form colleges in the immediate locality, and a growing number of grant-maintained schools with sixth forms.

3 The college attracts students from Surrey, Hampshire and some of the outer London boroughs. The staying-on rate for 16 year olds in Surrey is over 80 per cent. Although there are a number of major employers in the area, 90 per cent of Surrey firms employ fewer than 20 people. Unemployment is around 3 per cent and is highest among those aged 40 to 59. One-fifth of potential women returners in Surrey enter the labour market each year, a total which exceeds the number of school-leavers by some 50 per cent.

4 Immediately prior to incorporation, the college expanded and diversified its full-time courses. Since then, full-time enrolments have declined slightly and part-time numbers have dropped substantially. At the time of the inspection the college had 4,093 students, of whom 2,140 were full time. Student numbers by age, by level of study, and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. During the past 18 months, the college has reviewed its staffing needs. Voluntary redundancies and early retirements have been accompanied by new appointments to match changes in the curriculum. The college employs a total of 320 full-time equivalent staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

5 The college is organised in three faculties: the faculty of technology; the faculty of general education; and the faculty of professional studies. There are four schools of study in each faculty. Central services include

admissions and guidance, student welfare and development, key skills and resource-based learning, marketing, finance, management information systems, estates management and personnel.

6 The college's mission is to serve the community by providing opportunities of high quality for lifelong learning. It has four broad aims: to identify customer needs; to increase further the college's range of courses; to maintain and enhance the effective management of resources; and to extend the college's influence in the community.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 The college offers a wide range of courses for school-leavers and adults. It is a major local provider of general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses, offering 40 subjects. It also offers GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects, and the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in 12 subjects. There are more than 50 vocational courses, from pre-foundation level to advanced level, and 15 higher education courses, mainly higher national diplomas. There is an extensive range of courses for part-time day and evening attendance from foundation level to degrees. Foundation courses are limited to four vocational areas: art and design, health and social services, engineering and motor vehicle engineering. The work of the faculty of general education has been concerned mainly with full-time GCE A level courses. It is now expanding its range of vocational courses for full-time students.

8 There are specialist courses for students with severe and moderate learning difficulties. Students are able to progress to an award requiring evidence of general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) core skills at level 1. The certificate in pre-employment studies is for students with moderate learning difficulties and for those undecided about a career. It provides experience in two vocational areas and one day a week work experience. Students progress from this course to a GNVQ foundation course.

9 The college has recently developed an innovative driver education course in association with Surrey police and a major insurance company. Students enrol at 16, receive driving tuition at weekends in the college grounds, and acquire practical vehicle maintenance, map reading and first aid skills. Although the scheme was validated only in November 1996, it has already enrolled more than 200 students and is expected to grow rapidly and to be adopted by other colleges.

10 The college enjoys a good relationship with Surrey TEC. The principal meets with the TEC chief executive annually and with officers termly in the company of some other Surrey college principals. The TEC's targets for training are higher than the national targets. The college has responded to the target for lifetime learning by trebling its own target for part-time enrolments over the next three years. In particular, it plans to expand the courses it franchises to the adult education service. The college also intends

to encourage adult education students to progress to other courses, and it is providing childcare vouchers to help them to attend. The college has recently appointed a new manager to develop further its work in modern apprenticeships and training credits.

11 The college has close links with local schools, even though many have sixth forms. Senior college managers are governors of some local schools. The college schools-liaison officer visits 12 partner schools and five others each autumn term. Advice is given without bias and pupils are advised to research post-16 opportunities widely. The college is also represented at open days and parents' evenings at all these schools. The college has introduced 'curriculum teas', to which teachers from partner schools are invited in order to discuss new ideas in the curriculum. Links with higher education are productive. The college offers the first year of a Thames Valley University higher national diploma in computing, and there is a compact with Surrey University to assist students to progress to higher education courses. There are two foundation programmes, one in science and one for overseas students, which are run in partnership with Royal Holloway College of the University of London. Access courses at the college in humanities, art and social sciences are accredited by the Surrey and South West London Access Agency.

12 There is a marketing unit which is increasingly effective. It has been helped by a consultants' study carried out in 1995, which shaped its broad objectives for the next three years. To determine the needs of the growing number of women returning to work, the marketing unit has surveyed the views of parents of primary school children.

13 There are fruitful links with many local employers, including large national and international companies. The college has impressed employers by its willingness to respond speedily to their needs. New courses have been introduced, often with flexible arrangements for attendance and teaching. Of particular note are the contracts with British Airways to train apprentices and develop new training programmes, and with British Aerospace for which the college runs flexible training courses. College teachers accredit the prior learning of company employees seeking national vocational qualifications (NVQs). The college works with companies in telecommunications, hotels and the catering and leisure industry to provide flexible training and verification for NVQs. There are programmes for unemployed people and for retraining based on existing courses or on individual programmes. Some of these arrangements use open learning materials.

14 The college is developing links with Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Korea. It has connections with colleges in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and Russia. There is an international office to promote college courses. As well as offering English as a foreign language, the college promotes vocational courses with a language component.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

15 The corporation board has 20 members. Over the past two years there have usually been three vacancies; the college needs to develop more effective means to recruit governors. At the time of inspection there were 16 governors, including the principal. Ten members are from business, one represents the local community, one is an elected staff member, one is co-opted, there is a student member and a member nominated by Surrey TEC. Three members have joined the board only recently. Members have a wide range of experience which is of benefit to the college. Between 1994 and 1996, the average attendance at corporation meetings was 80 per cent. Two recent meetings of the corporation board and its committees were inquorate because there were too few business members present. There is a register of members' interests and a code of conduct. One member has not agreed to sign the code of conduct. Governors have not evaluated their own performance.

16 The corporation board has an appropriate range of committees: audit; estates management; finance; remuneration; employment policy; and a search committee to recruit new governors. Each has clear terms of reference and a well-planned calendar of meetings. Governors who are members of committees may need to attend up to six meetings a term. The director of personnel is clerk to the corporation board and its committees. Governors receive appropriate background papers and their meetings are well recorded. The finance committee receives monthly accounts which are reliable. Governors properly leave the day-to-day management of the college to the principal and senior staff. Since incorporation, governors have spent much of their time dealing with issues of finance, estates and personnel. On incorporation the college inherited a large debt from the local education authority (LEA) and had a budget deficit of some £300,000. It responded to this serious situation in a number of ways including management restructuring, staff redundancies, and early retirements. In the period 1994-96, 70 staff left through early retirement and redundancy, of whom 29 were teachers and 16 were managers. The governors should now do more to satisfy themselves about the quality of the college's academic performance.

17 The college has recently introduced a simplified equal opportunities policy. An audit of equal opportunities issues has been undertaken, but as yet there is no plan for implementing it, and targets and responsibilities have not been defined. There is a policy on health and safety which is monitored by the health and safety committee.

18 The academic board meets twice a term. It has clear terms of reference. It has received minutes from curriculum boards, considered student survey responses and discussed the students' charter. It has discussed students' achievements only in general terms and since September 1995 it has played no significant role in monitoring this central indicator of the college's academic performance, or in considering new course proposals.

19 The present management structure was established in the spring of 1996. The principal is assisted by a management board comprising three directors for curriculum and quality, finance and estates, and personnel, and three heads of faculty. They meet weekly to discuss strategic and staffing issues and to monitor financial matters. The management board does not review students' achievements. All meetings are minuted and the results of actions are reviewed. The principal holds occasional meetings with all the staff and there is also a staff bulletin. Staff are generally well informed.

20 Courses are managed by the faculties of general education, professional studies, and technology. There are four schools in each faculty which are led by heads of school. Courses and subjects are effectively led by programme managers. Their workloads and responsibilities vary significantly. In a few areas, roles are unclear. There are regular meetings in some programme areas, but others rely on informal arrangements. Each faculty has an associate head with a range of responsibilities related to the curriculum. Associate heads are managed by the director of curriculum and quality rather than the appropriate head of faculty. Their roles involve work within their own faculties and also across the college, including quality monitoring, development of new courses such as NVQs, and enrolment and induction. Each associate head also chairs a cross-college curriculum board. Their roles, responsibilities and priorities lack clarity.

21 The strategic planning process has been revised to involve more staff. In 1996, when the college reviewed its mission, staff and governors took part. Objectives for 1996-99 were developed by the senior management team and subsequently translated into operating objectives with timescales. However, the targets set are insufficiently precise to allow measurement of success. There are no faculty development plans, although each school has its own plan. School plans are not produced to a consistent format, they are largely descriptive, they have little evident connection with the college strategic plan, and indicators of achievement are not clear. Enrolment targets for 1996-97 were set by heads of faculty in consultation with heads of school, but the extent to which they consulted teachers varied. The college did not meet its targets for funded units over the last two years, falling short by 1 per cent in 1994-95 and by 8 per cent in 1995-96.

22 The process for delegating budgets is widely understood. Heads of faculty are responsible for budgets and they delegate authority to spend in all areas, including staffing, to heads of school. They receive timely and reliable financial information to enable them to monitor their budgets with confidence. In some schools, heads devolve money for materials and small items of equipment to programme managers and other staff, but this practice is not common across the college. Budgets are amended to take account of increased income or of failure to recruit students. The college's

income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6, respectively. The college's average level of funding for 1996-97 is £17.36 per unit, compared with the median for general further education and tertiary colleges of £17.97 per unit.

23 Computerised systems provide information on student administration, finance and personnel. A computerised college timetabling system is being developed. Curriculum managers are not well served by the management information system. Teachers have little confidence in the accuracy of the data produced centrally. Apart from data on student enrolment there are no other regular reports. Managers and teachers may request information but many are unaware of what is possible. There are plans to increase access for staff to the computer network and to provide training on using the management information system.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

24 There are policies for all aspects of student guidance and support. The student services manager is responsible for careers advice, learner support, counselling, the college nurse, the student union adviser and the work experience office. The admissions and guidance unit is managed separately by the college services manager, but staff from the two sections work closely together. Links with the faculties are through the associate heads and through committees such as the learning support advisory committee.

25 The college provides effective support for recruiting, interviewing and enrolling full-time students. Informative publicity packs are sent to enquirers. All applicants are interviewed, usually in the faculty which manages their chosen course. About 300 applicants a year are given an additional advisory interview to help them to decide on their future courses. The college maintains contact with prospective students and their families. The faculty of technology arranges informal evenings when parents and applicants can meet teachers. The college has recently established the Brooklands Scholarships to be awarded to about 20 pupils a year. Each scholarship will be worth £200 to the student and £100 to the school from which they come.

26 Enrolment of both full-time and part-time students is efficient. Full-time students at vocational levels 1 and 2 are tested for literacy and numeracy. The number of students tested has risen from 300 in 1995, to 700 in 1996, and the college intends to extend testing to GCE A level students in 1997. Where testing shows the need, a programme of learning support is arranged for each student. There are special arrangements for dyslexic students. Some students point out their own needs during guidance interviews. In some cases, the data from testing are not passed on to teachers sufficiently promptly. Use of the national record of achievement as a guide to students' previous achievements is uneven.

27 There is a standard induction programme across the college for full-time students. It is well planned, so that students receive information about all aspects of college life. The programme extends the information which students received before they enrolled, and it involves a wide range of activities during the early weeks of the college year. Some elements of the programme continue in tutorials. The college has recently reviewed its students' charter to achieve livelier presentation. The charter is given to students during induction but neither students nor their parents seem aware of its significance. Its value as a statement of rights and obligations is not emphasised by teachers. The useful students' handbook includes a diary, but not a summary of the charter.

28 Full-time students are assigned to a personal tutor at enrolment. All full-time teachers are tutors. Tutorials in the faculty of general education are organised consistently and they are particularly effective. In the other two faculties, both the quality of organisation and the effectiveness vary. In the faculty of professional studies, tutorials are managed by each school, militating against a coherent programme across the faculty. The faculty of technology organises tutorials through course tutors. Most students are well aware of the college support services. A qualified full-time counsellor and the college nurse, who is also a qualified counsellor, provide good personal and welfare advice. The counsellor is largely occupied with general education students, who account for 60 per cent of referrals. The college has not investigated the reasons for this uneven pattern of referrals.

29 Full-time students' attendance is carefully monitored through a report card system, and prompt action is taken to investigate absences. Parents speak warmly about discussions on the progress of their children with teachers at parents' evenings, but some would like more written reports. Some companies would also welcome more regular reporting on their employees' progress.

30 The college offers vouchers for childcare to students. Twenty-one students had received vouchers at the time of the inspection. The college welfare fund is stretched to meet the demands placed on it. These demands are likely to increase with the new franchise arrangement for adult education. The local Rotary Club awards study bursaries to some students.

31 Work experience for full-time students is well co-ordinated with employers. The work experience office reviews the suitability of employers and oversees arrangements for insurance and health and safety. During the college year 1995-96, 507 work experience places were organised for students from all three faculties.

32 The college organises a wide range of enrichment activities for students. There are various college sports teams, musical activities, and opportunities to join the young enterprise scheme. Students compete in a wide range of inter-college fixtures and internal competitions. They also take part in purely recreational sports. Two students were members of the British teams in the 1996 Olympic and Commonwealth games in rowing

and judo. Other students have played rugby at under-18 level for Surrey. The student union is active and supports a range of events. There is a college student union liaison officer who has worked well to enhance union activities and to secure consistent service year after year. The student centre is open to all students, but it tends to be used regularly by only a few.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

33 Fifty-four per cent of lessons had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. This figure is well below the average of 63 per cent for the sector, identified in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. In 11 per cent of lessons observed by inspectors, the weaknesses outweighed strengths. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was 78 per cent. The lowest attendance was in art and design at 64 per cent, and the highest in engineering at 87 per cent. The average class size was 14 students. The following table summarises the grades given to the classes inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		7	21	18	5	0	51
GCSE		0	4	3	2	0	9
GNVQ		4	9	10	6	0	29
NVQ		3	8	8	1	0	20
Other vocational		5	14	15	2	1	37
Other		2	9	3	0	0	14
Total		21	65	57	16	1	160

34 A significant amount of teaching is poorly planned and the quality of the students' learning suffers as a result. More attention needs to be paid to the development of lesson plans to identify clearly all the learning outcomes that are anticipated. There are schemes of work in all curriculum areas, but they are of uneven quality. In mathematics and computing, lessons are well prepared, forming part of schemes of work that are coherent and that ensure the syllabus is covered. There are also good course handbooks in these areas. Planning is particularly good in aeronautical engineering, where teachers have produced an extensive range of excellent students' notes. Most teachers in the college have friendly and supportive relationships with students. In some cases their approach to students' punctuality, attendance and behaviour is insufficiently firm. More should be done to identify and disseminate good practice in teaching across the college.

35 In the better lessons in the sciences, teaching is lively and learning is carefully assessed. In some lessons, inadequate planning left insufficient

time for student activities. Some teachers did not adjust their teaching methods to match the facilities available, writing illegibly on worn-out whiteboards for example. Much of the teaching in mathematics and computing is challenging, and teachers use a variety of approaches to sustain students' interest. However, in some lessons, the aims and objectives were undefined. Some teachers failed to check that students had understood what they were taught.

36 Teaching in engineering is generally good. Lessons in electrical, mechanical and aeronautical engineering were particularly good. However, in motor vehicle engineering, only 25 per cent of lessons had more strengths than weaknesses. Some teachers test students' knowledge and extend their understanding in a friendly and instructive way, using a wide variety of teaching aids. In two of the classes that were inspected, students were taken into a workshop during a theory session so that they could be shown a practical application of theory.

37 In business, administration and management studies, some teaching and learning is good, particularly, but not exclusively, in the professional and part-time courses. There is a very wide range of student abilities in some classes but not all teachers are able to deal with this challenge successfully. For example, in a revision class for a mixed ability group, all students were given the same task. The more able students, who finished it quickly, were frustrated and disruptive, whilst those who were struggling were largely ignored.

38 In most lessons in catering, leisure and tourism, teachers use well-presented materials and a variety of teaching methods. Question and answer sessions and discussions were well managed. Teaching in practical subjects is particularly good. In a practical cookery class there were students working at three levels, the more advanced taking responsibility and helping to train the less experienced.

39 Teaching and learning in the performing arts and media are of mixed quality. There is good rapport between staff and students and some excellent teaching in some GCE A level classes. In a film studies lesson, students considered the films of Marilyn Monroe. By skilful questioning, the teacher encouraged students to analyse each film-clip. Topical issues were introduced, relating to today's fashion models and actresses. Students were able to contrast society today with the Monroe era. Practical classes help students to develop appropriate communication skills and confidence. However, some performing arts students are not given a sufficiently-disciplined framework in which to work; they are unruly and their studies suffer. In art and design, teaching varies between exemplary and poor. In a GCE A level class, students were sketching at a local boat yard. They laid out their work on the river bank to criticise it as a group. The teacher challenged their ideas and maintained their enthusiasm. By contrast, some specialist studio and workshop activities are badly organised. The disciplines of punctuality, regular attendance and a professional approach to work are insufficiently developed.

40 Most teaching in English is effective. Relationships between staff and students are friendly but more attention is needed to achieving efficient use of time. Students were often allowed to hand in work late without being made to understand that this hampered the progress of the class. Modern language teaching is good and lessons are well managed.

41 In the social sciences, most lessons are well planned. There is some good small-group work; students work to clear briefs and contribute to class discussion which is controlled skilfully by the teacher. Other lessons are less effective, for example in one case the teacher arrived breathless from a lesson which had finished late and tried to start whilst students were still arriving. There were several false starts resulting in some confusion and a declining sense of purpose. Some three-hour teaching periods do not make efficient use of time. In the final hour both teachers and students are tired and, despite valiant efforts, little learning of any value takes place.

42 The development of key skills is poorly recorded in science, and in catering valuable opportunities for their introduction are sometimes overlooked. In engineering, there are a number of interesting initiatives, such as an overnight hike which contributes to students' teamworking and communication skills. In some performing arts and art and design programmes, there is little evidence of the development of numeracy skills. The extent to which skill in information technology is either required or developed varies considerably, and in English it is wholly lacking.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

43 Most students develop a good understanding of their work and are able to speak confidently about it. Most written work is of an appropriate standard. Students work well together and are articulate about their future plans. Practical skills in performing arts, art and design and catering are good, and in modern foreign languages students participate confidently in oral work.

44 The college has 700 students, mostly under the age of 19, taking 39 subjects at GCE A level. In 1995, for students aged 16 to 18, the average pass rate was 82 per cent at grades A to E. Students under 19 years of age scored, on average, 4.0 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2), compared with an average of 3.1 for general further education colleges nationally. In 1996, the average point score was 4.1. In both years the college was among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the tables published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The college offers 11 GCSE subjects, but only 21 full-time students study GCSE alone. Many other full-time students study for GCSE mathematics and English in addition to their main course. The college has an embryonic value-added system which aims to compare students' actual performance at GCE A level with their predicted performance based on GCSE achievements. The system is not yet providing useful data.

45 Seventy per cent of students aged 16 to 18 in their final year of study on the advanced vocational courses included in the DfEE's 1996 performance tables were successful. This places the college in the middle third of colleges in the further education sector, based on this performance measure. In 1995, 82 per cent of students were successful. On the same performance measure for intermediate vocational courses, 59 per cent of students were successful in 1996. This again places the college in the middle third of colleges, based on this performance measure.

46 In mathematics and computing, examination performance is variable, but most students progress to more advanced further education or to higher education courses, or to employment. GCE A level results in computing have compared favourably with the national averages for general further education colleges for the last three years. In GCSE mathematics, the percentage of students achieving A to C grades significantly exceeds the national average. Results for the various GCE A level mathematics options are mixed. In 1994, they were well below the general further education college average for mathematics, but well above it in pure mathematics. Mathematics and statistics results were above the national averages in 1994 and 1995, but well below in 1996. There are high success rates for students following City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) courses in computing. Pass levels on the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in computer studies are mediocre. Only 50 per cent of students passed in 1994 and 1995, although 64 per cent were successful in 1996. No student has been awarded a merit or distinction in the last three years. Student retention rates in 1996 were poor, at 65 per cent.

47 Science results are equally mixed. Pass rates in GCE A level physics have been below the national average for general further education colleges for the last two years, and were poor in chemistry. There has been a significant improvement in human biology results over the last two years, with a 100 per cent pass rate in 1996 but only 55 per cent retention. A 100 per cent pass rate was achieved in environmental science in 1996. Results are well above the sector average for geology, with a small but stable cohort of students. Results in GCSE physics are at the national average for grades A to C. GCSE chemistry results were well above the national average in 1995 and at the national average for all institutions in 1996. GNVQ intermediate results in science have been well above national averages for the last two years, but retention was poor in 1996. At GNVQ advanced level, 44 and 64 per cent of students achieved the full award in 1995 and 1996, respectively, but the apparent improvement was marred by very poor retention in 1996.

48 Examination results in English are uneven. The first cohort of GCE A level English language students achieved a 79 per cent pass rate, compared with the national average of 92 per cent, and the pass rate at grades A to C was low at only 14 per cent. GCE A level English literature results have improved over the last three years, and are now above the national average

for general further education colleges. Achievements in GCSE English language and English literature have improved over the last two years, with grade A to C passes now close to the national averages. GCSE results in French, German, Spanish and Italian have been well above national averages for A to C grade passes for the last two years. Those at GCE A level are more varied. Pass rates are improving in German, Italian and Spanish. In 1995, passes at grades A to E were below national averages. In 1996, pass rates were well above the national averages at grades A to E, but below them for grades A to C. French results are poor, and have been well below the averages for general further education colleges in both 1995 and 1996. In the social sciences and humanities, pass rates hover around the national averages, with variations from year to year. For 1995, subjects with good pass rates included sociology, psychology, law, and government and politics. In 1996, history and geography joined the list with significantly improved results. Retention rates were poor in law and psychology.

49 Results in engineering examinations are mixed. In electronic servicing and mechanical engineering at craft level both retention and achievement rates have been poor. In contrast, the pass rate for the NVQ level 2 in engineering has exceeded 80 per cent for the last two years. Those for the first diploma in general engineering have been good for the last two years, although they fell from 70 to 60 per cent in 1996. The pass rates for the national certificates in general and electronic engineering and for the higher national certificate programmes, are close to the national averages at 55 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively. For the national diploma in electronic engineering in 1996, results were poor. Almost half the students failed to complete the course and only 34 per cent of those who originally enrolled achieved the award. In aeronautical engineering in the past two years, 95 per cent and 94 per cent respectively of students enrolled for the national certificate in aerospace engineering achieved the award. Full-time students taking the national diploma over the same period, achieved results above the national average. Pass rates on the aeronautical engineering competencies course have exceeded 80 per cent in each of the last two years. Students' achievements on motor vehicle courses have been very poor with only three of the 29 students who started the national diploma achieving it.

50 Students' achievements in business, administration and management studies are mixed. The poorest results in either of the last two years were in the Association of Accounting Technicians courses at level 4; GNVQ business at intermediate level; NVQ in administration at level 2; and in the RSA Examinations Board (RSA) secretarial diploma course. There were some particularly poor results, with nobody passing the NVQ administration at level 1 in 1995, and only 20 per cent of students gaining NVQ level 2. In both cases, these results improved slightly in 1996, but they remained low. The pass rate in GCE A level business was well below the national average in 1995, rising only to match it in 1996. In GNVQ

business at advanced level, in the higher national certificate and in Association of Accounting Technicians foundation and Institute of Personnel and Development programmes, results were good. Retention rates varied, from over 80 per cent to as low as 33 per cent in 1995 and 23 per cent in 1996. The majority of retention rates for courses were below 50 per cent in both years. The college needs to take decisive action to improve results in these areas.

51 In catering, students' achievements are good in NVQ level 2 bakery, but below national averages for the GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering and for NVQ levels 1 and 2 in catering and hospitality. Retention is also poor on these courses. Achievement and retention are good at NVQ level 2 in sport and recreation. Achievements and retention levels are above the national averages in the GNVQ intermediate and advanced level courses in leisure and tourism and travel services.

52 In performing arts and media studies, results at GCE A level are generally good. Those for 1996 were better than for 1995, with dance and theatre studies above the sector average. Grades A to C passes were well above national averages in dance and film studies. Results on the national diploma in performing arts were good in 1995, but the pass rate fell to only 56 per cent in 1996. Art and design students achieved well, both in examinations and in progressing to higher education and employment. On average, 90 per cent of those completing their courses and 80 per cent of those enrolling on them gained their qualifications. Pass rates in national diploma and GNVQ advanced courses over the last three years have not fallen below 93 per cent; all with excellent retention. Results in the first diploma and foundation studies are equally good.

53 Students with moderate learning difficulties are entered for a variety of awards and often achieve well. In 1995 and 1996, 82 per cent and 100 per cent of students, respectively, gained units for the 'towards independence' award. Most students also gained other awards, such as those on the youth award scheme and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry vocational access certificates.

54 The college samples college leavers to ascertain their destinations. Of a sample of 750 in 1995, 21 per cent progressed to higher education, 50 per cent continued with further education, 28 per cent found employment and the destinations of 1 per cent were unknown. Some reliable data are kept within faculties showing, for example, that in 1996, 57 per cent of GNVQ advanced business students went on to higher education.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

55 Over the last year the college has made efforts to develop a comprehensive quality policy and system, and as a result there is now a greater awareness among staff of the need for quality improvement. The director of curriculum and quality is responsible for ensuring that the

policy for quality assurance is implemented according to the quality manual. The director is supported by the three associate heads of faculty. There have been quality workshops for staff and one for governors, to develop college quality standards. The workshops were enthusiastically received and staff are committed to the scheme. Quality standards are set out in the college quality manual which forms the basis of the 'quality improvement through evaluation' system. The standards relate only to student satisfaction, and not to levels of student achievement.

56 Quality improvement through evaluation was introduced in 1995 and has completed its first full annual cycle. It has been welcomed by teachers as one useful method of assessing and improving quality. The system is based on three student questionnaires completed at induction, during the course and on completion. Answers to questions are scored and totalled. Totals below a defined level prompt a directive from the director of curriculum and quality, which requires the recipient to explain the issues which caused the low score and to propose action to improve matters. The associate heads of faculty are also sent a copy of these memoranda and they monitor responses and results. As a consequence, improvements have been made in such areas as student interviewing, induction and tutorials.

57 A course team questionnaire is also completed by staff at the end of the year. These are supposed to result in action plans, but in practice many do not have action points and monitoring of achievement is inadequate. There is little opportunity for students or staff to express their views about issues which are not covered specifically in the questionnaires. Analysis of trends will be provided by comparing results year on year. Many staff do not yet realise the potential of this approach to improve what they do. Areas of work which achieve an average or above average score do not have to set quality improvement targets so that the system succeeds in drawing attention to problem areas but largely ignores others. The information collected from student questionnaires is not compared with the results of the staff questionnaire.

58 There are curriculum boards which report to the academic board about developments in higher education, general education, NVQs, and GNVQs. The boards provide a link between each faculty and the central quality system. The director of curriculum and quality and the associate heads of faculty, each chair a curriculum board. Common issues related to the quality of provision are discussed and it is intended that good practice should be shared but this has not yet been achieved to any significant extent. The boards discuss areas of strength or weakness highlighted by quality improvement through evaluation, and examine responses from programme managers to external verifiers' and assessors' reports.

59 There is no college system for course evaluation. There is little evidence that course teams analyse student retention and achievement in relation to previous performance in the college or against national averages. Neither the academic board nor the governors are provided

with detailed data or trends relating to student retention, achievement and progression. Such discussions as do take place are based on generalised information and as a result the academic board's and the governors' views of the college's level of success are not as detailed as they should be.

60 Some sections of the college analyse client satisfaction and other performance indicators beyond the requirements of the quality improvement through evaluation system. For example, the library has conducted a survey which provides detailed information on satisfaction with their service. Some course teams operate their own review systems and act on the information received. In one course, for example, staff rearranged the sequence of topics in response to student evaluation. The student support services operate suggestion boxes and work closely with the student union to take account of students' views.

61 The director of personnel, who is responsible for staff training and development, carries out this work with the advice of a training panel. The panel comprises staff from various areas of the college. It oversees the staff-development budget, ensuring that it is allocated on a basis which is relevant to the college's work. There are plans for training needs to be identified through appraisal. There are guidelines to ensure that staff are aware of the process for requesting staff development. The staff-development budget is 0.8 per cent of the total college budget. Funding is allocated according to college priorities. The college has recently introduced a staff training plan, an annual proposal plan, and an evaluation form to follow up training. The information supplied on evaluation forms is often superficial and does little to inform future plans. The college is working towards Investor in People status, and aims to achieve it in the spring of 1997. Progress so far has been slow, interrupted by the introduction of new lecturer contracts, the programme of staff redundancies and reorganisation.

62 Appraisal workshops have been in operation since 1995. To date, 85 per cent of managers and 36 per cent of appraisees have been trained. At the time of the inspection, less than half the teaching and support staff had been appraised. There is a significant time lag between appraisal training and appraisal, making it difficult for staff to put their training into practice. A voluntary system for classroom observation by peers has been introduced recently. There is a well-structured and informative induction programme for all staff. It is conducted in three stages: the first is a formal half-day induction; the second a departmental induction; and the third an evaluation review with a line manager. A comprehensive handbook describes the programme. Induction is well regarded by new full-time and part-time staff.

63 The college produced its first self-assessment report in August 1996 in preparation for the inspection. Its contents follow the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The document is not

self-contained and plans for action are listed separately in the college strategic plan. In parts, the report is insufficiently precise to form a basis for improvement. The statistical information provided by the quality improvement through evaluation system is the main source of evidence for strengths and weaknesses, and academic performance is relatively neglected. Many of the judgements in the report are in line with inspectors' findings, the main exceptions being those which relate to governance and management and quality assurance.

RESOURCES

Staffing

64 The college has 162 full-time teachers and 119 part-time teachers. Of these, 49 per cent are women. There are 104 full-time support staff, of whom 64 per cent are women. Only 29 per cent of the managers at the college are women. Restructuring over the last 18 months has resulted in approximately 70 redundancies. At the time of the inspection, 23 per cent of staff had 10 or more years of service at the college, compared with 34 per cent in 1994.

65 Consolidated information on teachers' qualifications is unavailable. For the purposes of the inspection, staff were asked to complete a qualifications questionnaire. Eighteen per cent of full-time teaching staff and 76 per cent of part-time teaching staff did not do so. Of 140 full-time teachers who responded, 93 have a first degree, 43 also have a higher degree, and 28 have other professional qualifications. One hundred and seventeen have a teaching qualification, 50 have the qualifications of the training and development lead body and a further 41 are working towards them. The redundancy programme has resulted in the loss of well-qualified teachers in motor vehicle engineering. The staff who remain are not qualified to teach at national diploma level and above. About half of the 100 teachers who responded to the relevant question had had industrial experience since 1988. Ninety-three per cent of the 120 technical and support staff responded to the questionnaire. Twenty-two have a first or higher degree, and 49 have no formal qualifications. There are appropriate levels of technical and administrative support staffing in many areas, such as catering, science, and leisure and tourism. There are no clerical or technical staff in modern languages. No analysis of technical and administrative staffing has been undertaken since restructuring.

66 The college has a qualified director of personnel, assisted by two full-time personnel officers, a part-time personnel assistant and a full-time senior secretary. The director is also clerk to the governors. There are detailed procedures for appointing staff. There are appropriate staffing policies for equal opportunities, discipline, grievance and sexual harassment. The college does not calculate a staff to student ratio. The staff pay bill for the year to July 1996 was 68 per cent of total expenditure. For the year 1996-97, pay costs are expected to be 66 per cent of expenditure.

Equipment/learning resources

67 The college has a broad range of teaching aids, including overhead projectors, screens and whiteboards in most rooms. The quality of classroom furniture varies, but it is mostly satisfactory. Some fabric whiteboards, especially those in the science areas, are so badly marked as to be almost unusable. Some rooms do not have retractable screens for overhead projection, and reflection from the whiteboards, which are used instead, spoils presentations. Some overhead projectors do not work properly. The specialist equipment in curriculum areas such as mathematics, computing, science, art and design and some of the social sciences is generally good. Although the equipment for mechanical and electrical engineering is in fairly good condition, much of it will soon need replacing. Some of that for catering is also old.

68 Specialist equipment in some other curriculum areas is inadequate. The electrical installation workshop is poorly equipped and does not enable the college to provide realistic work for students. In media studies, extraneous noise affects work in the recording room. Video and sound recording equipment is old and of poor quality. Sports and leisure equipment is very limited and old. There is some equipment which needs replacing in the physics laboratory, and there is only a limited range of equipment in textiles. The college has an assets register, but it does not have an equipment replacement plan.

69 The college library is just large enough for the number of students using it. It has 52,000 books, subscriptions to 320 journals and compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database facilities. The library has a budget of £59,000 this year; £22.00 per full-time equivalent student. Books are listed on a computerised catalogue, and the library monitors their usage. Study facilities in the library are good with seating for 64 students in the main area and a room for silent study with 67 seats. There is also a seminar room, a group study room, and a staff education resources room. In addition, there is a students' resources room containing photocopiers, video playback machines, CD-ROM facilities and multimedia computers. Some teachers work closely with library staff to update books and materials and to weed out old stock. However, staff in mathematics, for example, are less active in this respect; there are old books in the mathematics section and no mathematics journals. There are some out-of-date business technology books. Some books have not been borrowed for more than six years. This term, the library has closed at 18.30 which makes it difficult for students who attend only in the evening to use it.

70 In recent years, the college has invested heavily in computers and computer software. There is an information technology equipment strategy which aims to further improve the number and specification of computers. At the time of the inspection, there were 478 computers in the college, of which 377 were of the latest specification. This is a good level of provision with one machine for every six full-time equivalent students.

Computers are located in various buildings and each of the three faculties provides some computers on open access to students. The college has recently opened a new information technology centre, for use mainly by the public on payment of fees. Some students are not yet aware that they too can use the centre. Some evening students cannot use computers because the rooms in which they are kept are locked in the evenings.

Accommodation

71 The college is set in 50 hectares of attractive woodland, close to the centre of Weybridge. There is a residential conference centre about half a mile away. The main grounds once formed the Brooklands Farm estate, bought by the Duke of York in 1804. The Locke-King family acquired it in 1861 and built a large house which is now a listed building and is used for teaching. The Vickers building, designed to be indestructible, was constructed in 1939 and was used for designing the dambusters' bouncing bomb during the Second World War. It is now used for drama and arts courses. The sports hall, built in 1944 as an aircraft hangar, has a basic steel frame with part-metal sheeting for walls. The engineering workshops were also built in 1944, with pre-cast concrete panels. The catering block is partly of two storeys and partly of one; it was built in 1964. The five-storey tower block, a steel frame construction with concrete cladding, was added in 1971. The single-storey library was built in 1973. A purpose-built science block on three floors was constructed in 1984. The two-storey Berkeley Centre for computing and information technology, the single-storey mathematics centre, and the single-storey student centre were built in 1992. There are approximately 25 huts, sheds and assorted temporary buildings erected in the 1960s and 1970s. The Caenshill Residential Centre is a large detached house built in the late nineteenth century and extended at intervals subsequently.

72 The age of most of the buildings and the legacy of low investment in accommodation prior to incorporation, have resulted in urgent needs for repair, upgrading or replacement. There is a comprehensive accommodation strategy and the college is energetically pursuing private funding. The hatted accommodation is old and unattractive, and it is nearing the end of its useful life. Some staffrooms are crowded and most lack adequate storage space. The dance studio in the Vickers building has a low ceiling which limits the possibilities for performance. There are no showers in the changing room and only one men's toilet and one women's toilet in the building.

73 Most accommodation is kept clean. Internal decoration and maintenance are satisfactory or better. The estate is professionally managed. There is a 10-year maintenance plan and a central purchasing policy. The grounds are well kept, with the exception of the car parks which are potholed. Signs are not always adequate in number or sufficiently clear.

74 The college calculations show that the level of use of rooms is low. The best use is not always made of the variously-sized rooms. Rooming is controlled independently by the faculties. The college intends to centralise the allocation of rooms next year.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

75 The main strengths of the college are:

- the effective steps taken to improve efficiency
- the wide range of courses
- the close and effective working relationships with industry and commerce
- the high standard of guidance for prospective students
- the good-quality library
- the good examination results in aeronautical engineering and in art and design
- the information technology facilities for students.

76 If it is to further improve its services, the college should address the following issues:

- the substantial amount of poor teaching
- the poor student retention on many courses
- the poor examination results in some areas
- the lack of monitoring of quality by senior managers, by the academic board and by the governing body
- the inadequate analysis of students' achievements
- the inadequate quality assurance systems
- the low awareness of the students' charter among staff, students and parents
- the uneven implementation and monitoring of the equal opportunities policy
- the poor state of some of the accommodation.

FIGURES

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

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

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

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

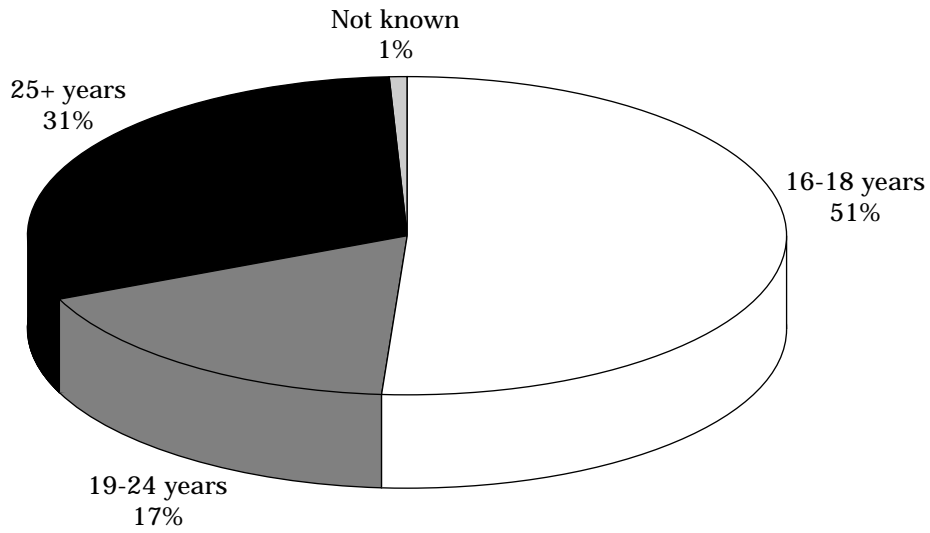
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1996)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

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

Figure 1

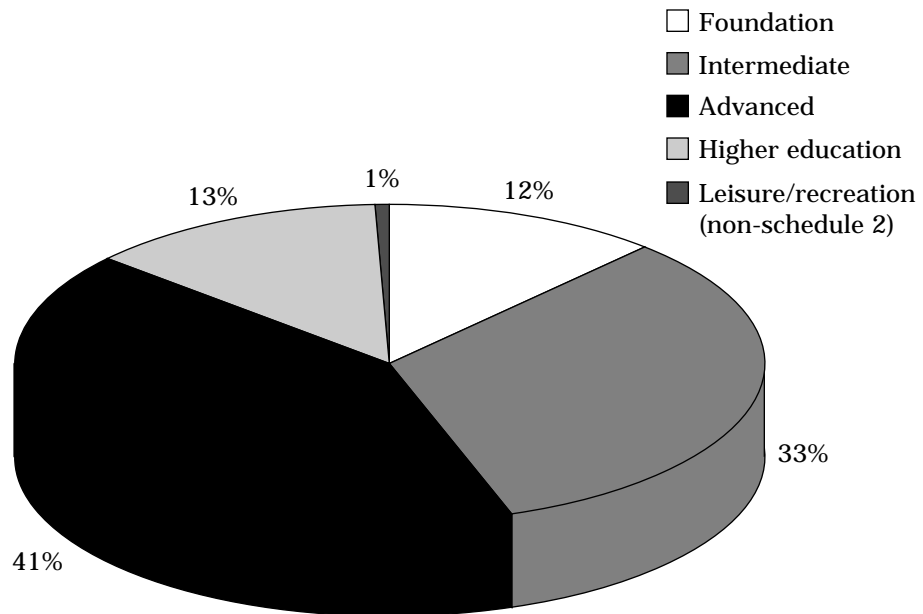
Brooklands College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1996)



Student numbers: 4,093

Figure 2

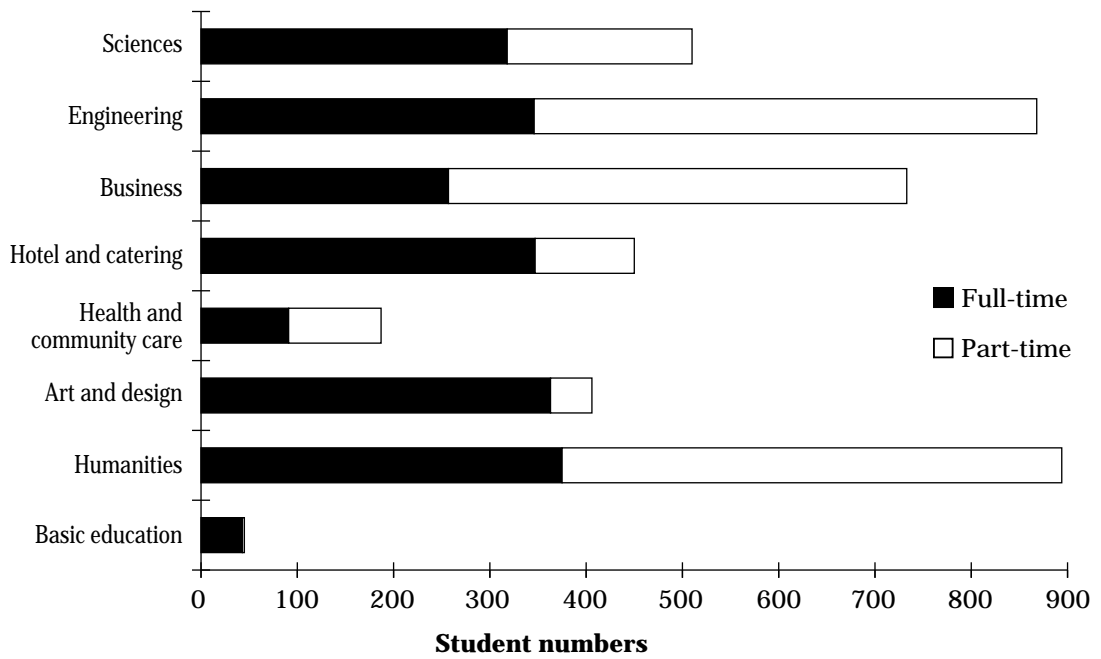
Brooklands College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1996)



Student numbers: 4,093

Figure 3

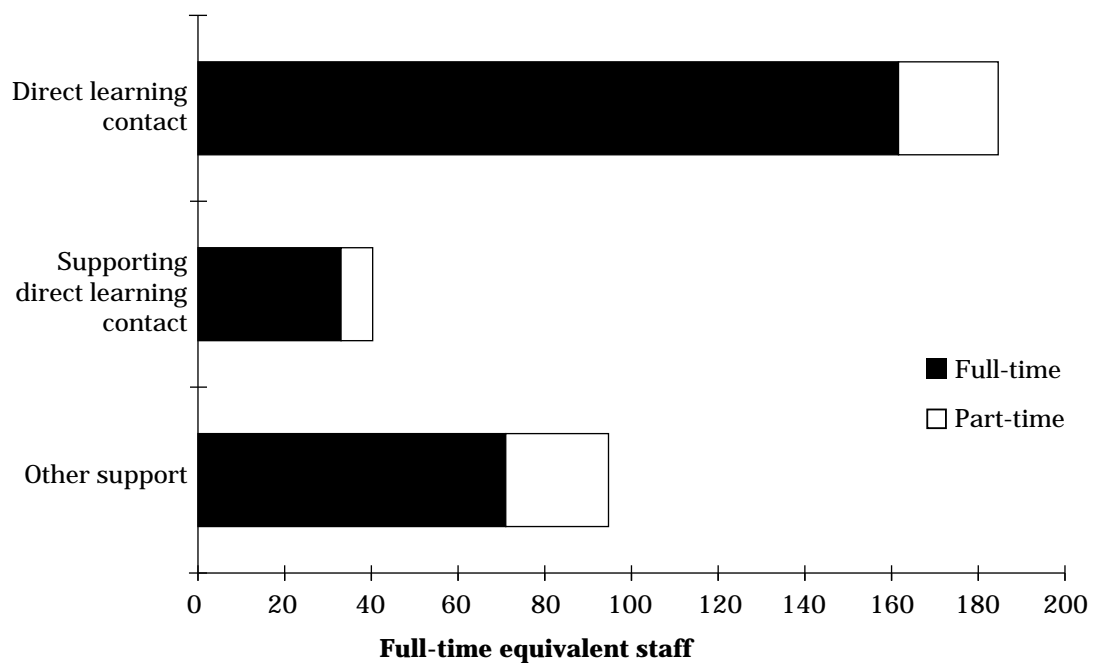
Brooklands College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1996)



Student numbers: 4,093

Figure 4

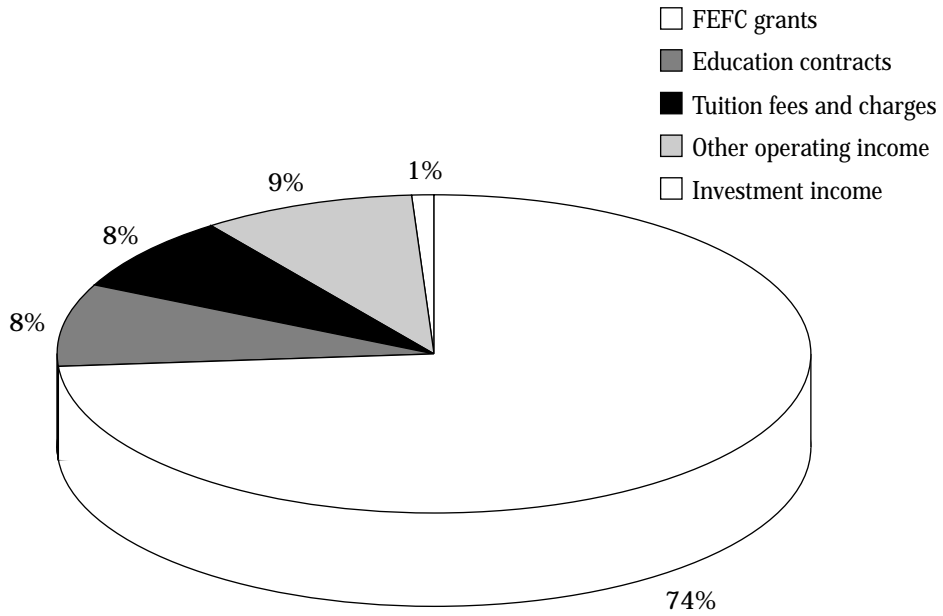
Brooklands College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)



Full-time equivalent staff: 320

Figure 5

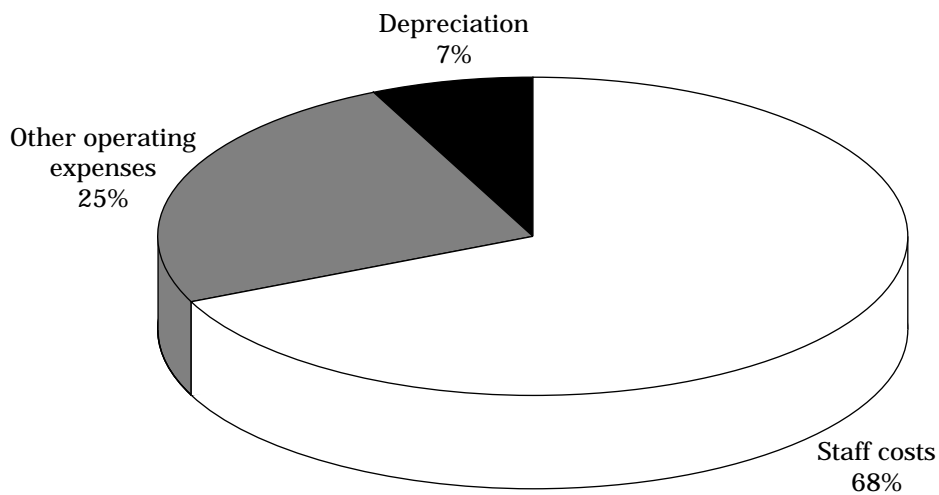
Brooklands College: income (for 12 months to July 1996)



Income: £11,977,000

Figure 6

Brooklands College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)



Expenditure: £12,314,000

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