

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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**Cardinal  
Newman College**

**June 1996**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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## **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

*The descriptors for the grades are:*

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

*By June 1995, some 208 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 208 colleges are shown in the following table.*

### **College grade profiles 1993-95**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Inspection grades</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Programme area	9%	60%	28%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	13%	51%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	11%	56%	29%	4%	<1%

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 73/96

**CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE**

**NORTH WEST REGION**

**Inspected September 1995-March 1996**

## Summary

Cardinal Newman College is a Roman Catholic sixth form college in Preston. Most of its students come from Catholic secondary schools. It aims to further the personal and social development of students within a Christian context. Governors are committed to the college and its values but have not yet taken a strategic view of the development of the institution. Within a revised management structure, managers are introducing new policies and administrative systems. The college offers a range of GCE and GCSE subjects and some vocational courses. In addition, students are offered an extensive programme of religious education and extra-curricular activities. Many GCE subjects are taught well. GCE A level results compare favourably with national averages but many students achieve below expectations based on their qualifications on entry to the college. There is a well-organised tutorial system. The college should address the following issues: the lack of a co-ordinated system of quality assurance; the absence of staff appraisal; poor attendance at some classes; unsatisfactory examination results on some vocational courses; inequitable workloads for staff; and the lack of success in recruiting adults to part-time courses.

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

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Mathematics and		Art and design	3
computing	2	Modern languages	2
Science	2	English	2
Business	4	History and geography	3
		Psychology and sociology	2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Cardinal Newman College was mainly inspected during the spring term of 1996. Thirteen inspectors visited the college for a total of 64 days. Enrolment and induction were inspected in September 1995. The inspection of science, mathematics and computing took place in May 1995; other curriculum areas were inspected at the end of January and beginning of February 1996. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected in March 1996.

2 Inspectors visited 96 classes and examined students' written and practical work. They looked at a range of documentation including the college's self-assessment report, strategic planning documents, draft policy statements and minutes of meetings. Inspectors held discussions with the college's governors, managers, staff, students, parents of students, headteachers from partner high schools, representatives of the Diocese of Lancaster, the careers service, Lancashire Area West Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), local employers, and other members of the local community. Inspectors attended a parents' evening, a meeting of the board of governors and the curriculum management group.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

3 Cardinal Newman College is a Roman Catholic sixth form college promoted by the Diocese of Lancaster and serving the Dioceses of Salford and Liverpool. The college was formed in 1978 from the amalgamation of three Preston Roman Catholic grammar schools. It has a well-established role in the provision of education for school leavers within the Church's mission in Preston and the surrounding areas. The main site of the college is in Manchester Road, a quarter of a mile from the town centre. A sports hall is situated some three-quarters of a mile from the main site, and the playing fields are located across the town, approximately four miles away. The college has a wide catchment area which includes Catholic high schools in Lytham and Chorley. Several institutions compete to recruit school leavers in the area. Preston College is two miles to the north, Runshaw College is eight miles away, and locally there are two 11 to 18 schools and a number of independent schools. The nearest Catholic sixth form college is St Mary's College, Blackburn.

4 In recent years, there has been a decline in some of the large industries which have provided employment in Preston. There is substantial long-term unemployment in some parts of the town. In January 1996, the unemployment rate for Preston was 8.6 per cent. In the Avenham ward of the town where the college is situated it was 17.2 per cent. The unemployment rate in Preston contrasts with that for the whole area covered by the Lancashire Area West TEC which has an unemployment rate lower than the regional or national average. There has been a significant fall in full-time jobs for males in the area, but a growth in part-time employment for females.

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5 The population of 16 to 18 year olds in Lancashire has declined from 64,000 in 1982 to 45,600 in 1995. Demographic data for Lancashire for the five years to 2001 show a steady rate of growth in the county. This increase in population is reflected locally in the numbers on roll in high schools and in the Lancashire Area West TEC's labour market assessment forecast for 1995, covering Preston and north east Lancashire.

6 In November 1995, there were 1,031 students enrolled at the college of whom all but four were full time. Ninety-six per cent were aged 16 to 18. 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. About 11 per cent of the college's students are from minority ethnic groups. The college recruits 73 per cent of its students from the nine Catholic high schools. At the time of inspection, there was a full-time equivalent staff of 75 teachers and 34 support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

7 In 1995-96, the college's average level of funding per unit is £20.46. The median for sixth form colleges is £19.37. Recurrent funding from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) constitutes 90 per cent of the college's income. On 1 November 1995, the college had exceeded its target for the number of students it hoped to enrol; however, by 1 February 1996, the number of students had fallen below the target. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

8 The college's mission is to provide academic and vocational education of high quality, primarily for Catholic students in Preston and the surrounding areas. A statement of the values which form the basis of the work of the college has been drawn up by staff and students and is shortly to be considered by the governors. It sets out how the college places the student first in its aim to 'offer all that is best in terms of Catholic provision for students, informed, guided and supported by the Church's teachings on education in a pluralist environment'.

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

9 The college has successfully established an environment based on Christian values in which students from Catholic and non-Catholic backgrounds are welcomed. Arrangements for acts of worship fulfil statutory requirements and sensitively accommodate faiths other than Christianity. Religious celebrations which relate to the liturgical calendar are arranged; retreats are organised, visiting speakers are invited and charitable works are encouraged. Funds have been distributed to a number of 'third world' countries and a special link has been established with a college in Rwanda. The college provides a well-balanced, compulsory programme of religious education for all students. The programme, whilst maintaining the Catholic ethos, accommodates all faiths, and is popular with students who complete it. It is not formally assessed or externally accredited but a college certificate is available. The

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programme also provides opportunities for students to develop their skills of communication and working in groups; attainment in these skills can be recorded in their records of achievement.

10 The college mainly provides programmes of general education. It offers 29 subjects at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and 14 GCE advanced supplementary (GCE AS) subjects; 12 subjects for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE); nine General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at advanced, intermediate and foundation levels; a course leading to the National Nursery Examinations Board (NNEB) diploma; computer literacy courses leading to qualifications of the RSA Examinations Board (RSA) at levels 1 and 2; and one post-16 certificate in further studies accredited by the Associated Examining Board. The college is planning to broaden its curriculum next year to include more opportunities for students who may not yet be ready for intermediate and advanced level courses. The college has had little success in developing part-time courses, provision for adults, evening classes and courses specially designed for particular clients such as employers.

11 In some GCE subjects such as art, biology, English or history students are offered a choice of examination syllabus. The syllabuses for nine GCE A level and eight GCE AS subjects are modular. Students on GNVQ advanced courses may also take GCE subjects as part of their programme. The college has not developed modes of learning which enable those who cannot come to college regularly to study at home or at their place of work. Similarly, the college has few facilities which permit students to come in at times convenient to them to study appropriate learning materials under guidance from staff.

12 All students may take part in an extensive programme of activities known as 'additional studies' which takes place at lunchtimes or on Wednesday afternoons. Currently, 370 students participate in this. In their first year, students can choose an activity from 22 options such as sports, including training for coaching or refereeing, performing arts, community service or other activities which further the students' personal and social development. Twenty students are working for the Duke of Edinburgh award. Another 20 assist a youth worker from the Preston youth and community service. A successful one-year programme gives students the opportunity to take GCE A level general studies as a fourth or, sometimes, a fifth subject; last year 180 students passed the examination.

13 The college organises a programme of work-experience placements over one week or occasionally two weeks, for all first-year advanced and intermediate level students. Placements are matched, where possible, to the students' career interests. All placements are evaluated. Separate questionnaires are completed by employers, students and tutors who visit students undertaking work experience. Some local employers, who provided work experience for between 20 and 25 students a year from a



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variety of schools, were particularly impressed with the knowledge and skills of students from the college. The visits of tutors to students on work experience were sometimes too brief and they took place at times inconvenient to the employer.

14 There are effective and carefully-nurtured links with the nine Catholic high schools of the 'Newman Catholic Partnership' and two other local 11 to 16 schools. Two members of the college staff are responsible for liaison with each school.

15 Only five students aged 20 years and over attend the college. Last year, the college offered some evening courses. These failed to attract sufficient students. In collaboration with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster the college plans to offer next year, a certificate for part-time youth workers and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in care and the organisation of voluntary and community organisations.

16 Only five students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are enrolled at the college. They are integrated with students on mainstream courses. In partnership with two schools, the college has obtained grants from the European Social Fund to help students improve their basic skills and acquire vocational skills and work experience.

17 The college has published a statement of policy on equal opportunities. There is, however, no system for monitoring its implementation and effectiveness.

18 The college has received funding from the Lancashire Area West TEC for the development of GNVQ courses run jointly with local schools and for a project which helps students use information technology for producing their records of achievement. The college makes limited use of market intelligence provided by the TEC when planning its provision. Liaison between the college and industry and commerce is undeveloped and is largely restricted to making arrangements for students and some staff to have work experience.

19 The college has established some limited contacts with institutions of higher education. The college is part of the North West Consortium of Sixth Form Colleges which meets with representatives of the universities of Liverpool and Salford. The college is part of a consortium with three schools, validated by the Open University, which provides school-centred initial teacher training for trainee teachers. The college also provides teaching practice placements for a nearby college of higher education.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

20 The governing body has 20 members. Twelve are appointed by the Trustees of the Diocese of Lancaster. The principal is a governor and there are two elected staff governors. One governor is from the Lancashire Area West TEC and one is a district councillor. At the time of the inspection, a vacancy existed for a councillor from Lancashire County Council. Two further governors are elected by parents of students at the college. Three

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governors are women and one is from a minority ethnic group. The chair of governors, a parish priest, is a former student of the college. Individual governors have experience in local government, accountancy, insurance, management, education, farming and music. Most are now retired, and apart from the Lancashire Area West TEC nominee and a managing director of his own company, governors lack current experience of business or commerce. Governors are highly committed to the institution and its values and they attend functions at the college to keep themselves in touch with developments. Attendance at board meetings has averaged 90 per cent over the last academic year.

21 The board meets three times a year. Five subcommittees, policy, premises and finance, curriculum, staffing and audit meet prior to the meeting of the full governing body. At board meetings there is little debate about the strategic direction of the college. Some governors make little or no contribution at meetings. A recent board meeting approved proposals to diversify the college's curriculum to cater for a broader ability range of Catholic students but little discussion took place about the implications of the decision. The board receives reports on the achievements of students but does not analyse or discuss these. Members have recently attended training days to help them fulfil their roles as governors but the board has yet to establish a clear framework for the governance and management of the college.

22 There has been little change to the college's strategic plan for the period 1994-97 since it was published in July 1994, just before the principal took up his post. In 1994-95, governors, staff and students devised a new mission statement and a statement of values which emphasises how the students are of paramount importance. The college has begun to develop a strategic plan for the period 1996-99. The college has, however, not published its objectives for 1995-96.

23 The college's management structure was introduced in September 1995. The deputy principal, director of studies, personnel manager, head of student support services and a vice-principal with responsibility for estates and internal communication report directly to the principal. Another vice-principal, who is the manager responsible for quality, reports directly to the deputy principal. The director of studies is responsible for the curriculum and is supported by four curriculum leaders each of whom manages groups of departments. Similarly, the head of student support services has responsibility for the pastoral care of students and works with five tutor team leaders.

24 The appointment of a new principal in 1994 provided the college with a different leadership style and approach to management which required some staff to change some long established attitudes and practices. Senior managers have demonstrated their commitment and ability to take the college forward. The curriculum committee which is chaired by the director of studies and comprises curriculum leaders and

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cross-college curriculum co-ordinators, is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the curriculum across the whole institution. It has produced the first draft of a curriculum handbook which specifies practices which all departments should follow in relation to the planning and review of subjects and courses in the curriculum. All members of staff now have job descriptions. The consultation committee deals with grievance and disciplinary procedures for staff. Its membership includes union representatives and it is chaired by the personnel manager. Senior managers are aware of the urgency with which some tasks need to be completed and are working vigorously to meet deadlines.

25 Having listened carefully to senior managers in the past and having responded to their requests for information, staff now work in an environment where there is a collaborative approach to decision making, a yearly cycle of related activities and an expectation that middle managers will take increased responsibilities for operational issues. The principal and other senior managers are easily accessible to staff and they are prepared to listen to and, if necessary, act upon their concerns. Some staff, however, are uncertain how they can contribute to the college's process of strategic planning. There is little provision of staff-development activity related to strategic planning.

26 There is no formally-constituted senior management team. A steering and support group which comprises the principal, deputy principal, vice-principals, director of curriculum, personnel manager, head of student support services, the learning support co-ordinator, one curriculum leader and one tutor team leader, meets informally once a week to review day-to-day issues. On other occasions, it meets to address management issues. This group is not a forum in which senior managers plan, monitor and review strategic objectives in a systematic way.

27 Within the management structure, lines of accountability are clear, but the roles and responsibilities of some postholders are not well understood by staff. The speed with which changes in procedures and practices have been implemented, has left staff uncertain about how the new structures work and which senior manager is responsible for what. The role of curriculum leader is still evolving as the postholders forge links with the departments for which they are responsible. Teachers identify strongly with individual departments rather than the groups of departments which make up a curriculum area. The well-defined method for allocating funds to departments is based upon the expected, rather than the actual enrolments of a department. If a department fails to reach its expected total of enrolments, its budget is not reduced.

28 The college has yet to take strategic decisions about its future size and the effects of growth on accommodation. An accommodation strategy exists only in draft. There is a policy on health and safety and an updated version of this is being drafted for the consideration of governors later this year. There are no equal opportunities criteria for the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff.

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29 The computer-based management information system is used effectively to generate accurate data for administrative purposes. Staff value the information which is made available to them. Access to data, is, however, only possible using equipment located in offices used by senior managers and administrative staff. There is little use of data by senior and middle managers. The college places little importance on the setting of targets and the use of quantitative measures against which to judge its performance.

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

30 The college gives a high priority to ensuring that new students are made welcome at the college. A team of staff responsible for liaison with schools, interviews prospective students either at their school or in the college. Seventy-three per cent of students come from the college's partner schools. The rest of the students come from about 40 different schools in the area. The close links between the schools and the college are sustained through the practice of designating two teachers from the college to liaise with each partner school. Prospective students can obtain advice and guidance on college courses at open days, 'taster' days, when prospective students sample the college's provision, open evenings and high-school careers events.

31 The college made significant improvements to procedures for the enrolment and induction of students at the beginning of the academic year. A new system for arranging enrolment interviews has minimised queues and delays. Staff were given a detailed briefing prior to enrolment. Tutors, working in teams got to know new students well and helped to ease their transition from school to college. There was a welcoming atmosphere achieved during enrolment and induction. An Asian youth worker was at hand to provide help where required. The records of achievement of students were not always readily available or consistently used to advise students on their choice of subjects or courses.

32 The two-week induction programmes provide a good introduction to subjects, courses and college activities and give students scope to review their choice of subjects or course. The college has not yet completed the evaluation of induction activities in 1995.

33 The students' council, set up in 1995, meets weekly. It organises fundraising events, acts as a liaison between students and staff and represents the views of students to college management. The college's charter is distributed to students but they are not informed, during induction, of their entitlements under the charter.

34 The tutorial system operates well. There are 30 first-year tutor groups and 25 second-year groups led by five leaders of tutor teams. Students have one hour a week and 10 minutes registration each day with personal tutors. A well-thought-out scheme of work for tutorials is implemented by personal tutors, all of whom have received training for their tutorial role.

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Some staff are not sufficiently aware of counselling services which are available outside the college. Many staff would welcome clear criteria and simple procedures for dealing with students whose behaviour or poor attendance give cause for concern.

35 All first-year students have their literacy and numeracy skills tested. Twelve students were identified in September 1995 as needing help with both skills at basic level; 35 students needed help with mathematics and approximately 20 needed help with English. The responsibility for providing additional support with literacy and numeracy is left to subject leaders. There is no system to monitor that such support has been given. The roles and responsibilities of teachers in relation to the provision of additional support are not clearly defined. Arrangements for identifying students who need such support are not implemented consistently in all departments. The college has purchased a specialist learning support software package, 'PLATO', which is networked across the college.

36 There are effective and well-organised arrangements for the review of students' progress. All full-time students maintain files of their work. Teachers keep a log of the students' progress which they discuss with them. After registration subject tutors also have the responsibility for monitoring students' attendance. Some tutors fail to take action on absenteeism by their students.

37 The college chaplaincy offers students spiritual guidance and support. The chaplaincy team, along with the college chaplain, organises three or four major events to coincide with the Christian calendar, together with a series of weekly meetings in the recently-refurbished chaplaincy centre. The chaplaincy has an ecumenical approach and a room is provided for Muslim students. The chaplaincy team, which includes the principal and a youth worker, meets monthly to develop an agenda of activities for all students of differing faiths.

38 There are appropriate arrangements for careers education and guidance for students. Two careers officers attend the college on one day a week and supplement the college careers team of six staff. The college has invested in a number of appropriate computer software packages for the students' use. These cannot, however, be used in the careers library. Students attend higher education fairs and careers events.

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

39 In 58 per cent of the 96 sessions inspected the strengths outweighed the weaknesses. This compares with a national figure of 64 per cent for colleges inspected in the academic year 1994-95 according to figures published in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1994-95*. Weaknesses outweighed strengths in 10 per cent of lessons. The standard of teaching and learning was generally higher in GCE A level classes than in those for GCSE and GNVQ. In a minority of cases, teachers have failed to adapt their teaching and learning styles to cater for the broader range of students'

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ability now found in the college's classes. The following table summarises the grades awarded.

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

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
GCE AS/A level		14	31	19	4	0	68
GCSE		1	6	5	1	0	13
GNVQ		0	2	6	5	0	13
Other		0	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>96</b>

40 The average level of student attendance in lessons inspected was 80 per cent of those on roll. The highest average attendance of 86 per cent was in English and modern languages. The lowest, 64 per cent, was in business studies. The average number of students present in the classes inspected was 10. The largest groups, averaging 13 students were in psychology, sociology and English. The smallest were in business studies where attendance averaged eight students. In some classes attendance is poor. In half of the sociology and psychology groups observed during the inspection absence rates were 25 per cent or more and in two groups 35 per cent of students were absent.

41 In science, courses are well planned and organised. Homework is set regularly to extend and reinforce the learning which takes place in class. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly and return it to them promptly. Assessment tests are used at regular intervals to monitor students' progress and are marked to an appropriate standard. Teachers make themselves available to give advice and support to students outside lesson times. Practical work is well organised and due attention is paid to issues of health and safety. In a GCE A level chemistry class students worked competently on a practical demonstration of titration. The teacher moved around the class providing help and support and assessed the practical skills of students using a prepared checklist. A minority of lessons lacked momentum and failed to offer sufficient challenge to students. Insufficient use is made of information technology in the teaching and learning of science.

42 In mathematics and computing, lessons are well planned. In the better lessons students were continually challenged and information technology was used to good effect. In one practical session in mechanics, students worked in small groups to conduct a variety of experiments to establish the co-efficient of friction. The teacher monitored the progress of individuals who co-operated well together and used their initiative to devise alternative ways of finding the solution. In a minority of lessons, teachers did not make the best use of the time available and failed to excite the students' interest.

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43 In business studies schemes of work are prepared for all classes but their quality varies. Course documentation is poor and there is little evidence of handouts, course handbooks or manuals which could assist students to plan their learning and to understand how their courses will develop. There is not enough collaboration between staff to make sure that students can perceive links between different elements of their course. In the better lessons there was good use of question and answer techniques to check that learning had taken place and students were given opportunities to demonstrate an awareness of current business theory and concepts. In many classes, however, students spent too much time taking down notes from overhead transparencies, the blackboard or from teacher dictation on information they could have discovered for themselves. In some lessons, opportunities were missed to encourage students to seek out further information to inform the views they express in class. Students' files contain some evidence of up-to-date examples which are used to illustrate business theory.

44 In art and design, lesson plans and schemes of work are well designed. Students are clearly informed about the aims of assignments. Teachers have devised a system of assessment common to GCE A level and GNVQ work. Students are given challenging assignments which excite their interest and strengthen their motivation to learn. Students are regularly informed of their progress and teachers help them to identify ways in which they can improve their work. There is insufficient co-ordination of the various activities students carry out in their GNVQ work and as a result, their learning is somewhat fragmented. GNVQ students are also given insufficient opportunities to learn to work on their own without direction from the teacher. Course planning in art and design for both GCE and GNVQ does not always ensure that students are given an appropriate balance of theoretical study and practical activities.

45 The quality of teaching and learning in both sociology and psychology is high. A variety of teaching strategies is used which motivates students and maintains their enthusiasm to learn. Lessons are well planned and activities are properly varied. When new work is introduced teachers present this to the whole class. Students also work well in groups. Carefully-designed handouts promote discussion in class. Students' files of work are well organised and contain notes and handouts which demonstrate that the syllabus is well covered. Teachers give students good advice on examination techniques. In some groups, however, absenteeism is high and has an adverse effect upon the progress of the class.

46 In history and geography, schemes of work are, with a few exceptions, well planned and structured. Teaching is effective and students respect the thorough grasp of their subjects which the teachers displayed. Teachers know the individual capabilities of their students well. Students, in turn, value the conscientiousness of their teachers. The students are set work regularly and the teachers mark this carefully and return it to them

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with constructive comments. In some classes, the teacher's skill in framing questions was poor. Questions were insufficiently demanding or were not addressed to the whole class. The quality of some handouts was poor because their content was superficial or badly presented.

47 In English, teachers use a wide range of activities to excite and sustain the students' enthusiasm and interest. Teachers have high expectations of their students. Most GCE A level students write well. Students debate issues well in groups, are able to back up their arguments with appropriate evidence and speak with confidence. In one GCE A level lesson, students were in the final stages of preparing six different topics from their study of *The Color Purple* for presentation to the whole class. They had been provided with a handout which provided guidance on how to organise the presentation and which clearly identified its objectives. The standards of the presentations given were particularly good for a first-year class. Students are encouraged and helped to work on their own. There is little use, however, of information technology in the teaching and learning of English. Teachers mark work carefully and thoroughly. They provide students with constructive comments on their work and indicate areas where they can improve. Printed resources, both those commercially produced and those devised by staff, are of a high quality but there is no central bank of resources to support the teaching of GCSE. In a minority of sessions, teachers failed to consolidate the learning which had taken place by questioning the students and checking they had understood the lesson.

48 In modern languages lessons, staff often teach in the language being studied throughout the lesson. Lessons are lively and have a sense of purpose. Teachers and foreign language assistants work as a team and provide the students with a suitable variety of learning activities. Students work as a whole class, in pairs and in groups. Activities in class require the students to use a range of language skills. Teaching materials are imaginative and well designed. The students' work experience is used as a topic for stimulating oral work. In a minority of sessions the teacher dominated the classroom discussion at the expense of the students who were not given enough opportunities to speak the language being studied. In some lessons, translation was over used as a means of teaching new vocabulary and opportunities were missed for students to work out the meanings of words for themselves. In some lessons, teachers gave too little attention to the needs of some less able students.

### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

49 Students are well motivated. The majority respond well to the demands of their courses. In mathematics, students make good use of their skills in information technology; they also make and use notes effectively. Almost all students in GCE A level English write clearly and make good use of evidence to support their arguments. In most subjects, students develop speaking and listening skills. Many students work



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confidently in groups. In psychology and sociology, many students demonstrate high levels of oral and written skills. In modern languages, students are able to read a complex text and express it in their own words, using the language being studied. Students in media studies can use complex video and recording equipment at an early stage of their studies.

50 GCE AS/A level students achieved an average points score per entry of 5.0 (where A=10,E=2) in 1995 according to the tables produced by the Department for Education and Employment. This places the college in the top third of institutions in the further education sector based on this performance measure.

51 The college subscribes to the Advanced Level Information System whereby the achievement of students at GCE A level can be compared with their GCSE results and a 'value-added' factor calculated which indicates the extent of their progress and attainment. In 1995, students taking 26 subjects at GCE A level had GCSE scores above the national average in the same or comparable GCSE subjects. The students achieved GCE A level results higher than the national average in only 14 of these subjects. In only 10 subjects were their results better than those predicted for them, using the Advanced Level Information System, on the basis of their GCSE results. In no subject were results 'significantly better than expected' and in seven subjects they were 'significantly worse than expected'. Fifty-seven per cent of GCE A level candidates in 1995 gained a lower grade than that predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results.

52 In 1995, 86 per cent of students who entered for GCE A level obtained passes and 53 per cent obtained grades A to C. This compares with national pass rates for sixth form colleges of 84 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively. Six subjects had pass rates of 100 per cent, with the largest entry in psychology, where 74 per cent of students achieved grades A to C, some 20 per cent above the average for sixth form colleges. Of the 106 students who entered for four GCE A levels, all achieved grades A to E. The 13 students who entered for five subjects at GCE A level passed in all of them. Results were above the national average in 12 subjects and below the national average in six subjects.

53 Eighty students entered for examinations in GCE AS subjects in 1995. Results were lower than those for GCE A level with an overall pass rate of 63 per cent at grades A to E. This compares with the national average for sixth form colleges of 73 per cent. Nineteen per cent of candidates obtained grades of A to C compared with 37 per cent nationally. Pass rates varied from 100 per cent in biology, information technology and further mathematics to 45 per cent in chemistry.

54 Sixty-seven per cent of the students achieved the vocational awards they were seeking according to the tables published in 1995 by the Department for Education and Employment. This places the college in the bottom third of institutions on this performance measure. On the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in health and

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social care results were poor. Only four of the nine students who completed the course obtained the full award. At the GNVQ intermediate level in health and social care only eight of the 19 students who completed the course achieved the full award. In 1995, 67 per cent of students who completed their GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism course passed. A similar percentage passed at intermediate level where the results showed an improvement on the 54 per cent pass rate of 1994. In 1995, 71 per cent obtained their BTEC national diploma in business studies compared with 92 per cent in 1994. Sixty-four per cent passed GNVQ intermediate in business in 1995 compared with 83 per cent in 1994. Two of the three students who completed their GNVQ intermediate art and design course obtained the award.

55 Of the 306 students who entered for GCSE examinations at the college in 1995 only 48 per cent obtained A to C grades. This is in line with the national figure for sixth form colleges. Good results were in media studies (92 per cent); psychology (at 80 per cent, 31 per cent above national averages) and English (55 per cent). There were poor results in mathematics, science, geography, and no student obtained a pass above grade D in history.

56 Ninety per cent of students completed their courses in 1995 compared with 96 per cent in 1994. Most of the students who left their course early had enrolled on GNVQ and GCSE courses. Most of the students who leave before completing their courses do so in the early part of their course. The majority of GCE A level subjects have retention rates of 100 per cent in the second year. Retention rates in GCE A level mathematics are good and the modular structure of the mathematics course allows students, if necessary, to change from GCE A level to AS. Three GCE AS subjects, German, history and religious studies had retention rates of 100 per cent. Retention rates for the 14 GCSE subjects vary from 50 per cent in geography to 100 per cent in German, psychology and chemistry. Retention and success rates were poor in 1995, for the BTEC national diplomas in business studies and in health and social care.

57 The college records the destinations of students who gain awards. Of the 422 students who gained awards in 1995, 57 per cent went into higher education, 19 per cent continued in further education, 12 per cent entered employment and a further 12 per cent either took up other opportunities or had unknown destinations. Most subject tutors take an interest in and are aware of the destinations of students in their subject area. In 1995, of the 122 students who completed GCE A level English, 70 per cent progressed to higher education and 19 per cent went into employment. Eighty-eight per cent of geography and 71 per cent of history students progressed to higher education. Of those completing the BTEC national diploma in business studies in 1995, half progressed to higher education and most of the remainder obtained employment. Sixteen of the 29 students completing the GCE A level business studies course progressed to higher education.

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## QUALITY ASSURANCE

58 The college's mission commits the institution to provide academic and vocational education of high quality. During the past three years progress has been made, through separate initiatives, to develop a college charter, a quality assurance system and procedures for course review and evaluation. The college does not have a programme for staff development which is related to the outcomes of quality assurance and course review and evaluation. Although the job description for the manager of quality, the director of studies and the personnel manager all contain reference to the monitoring of quality, it is not clear who has overall responsibility for quality assurance in the college. The college's procedures for quality assurance lack co-ordination and coherence and staff do not have a clear understanding of their responsibility to ensure the continuous improvement of quality.

59 In practice, few courses are reviewed rigorously and thoroughly. Although there are quality standards for each department, these are too vague, as are the criteria for self-assessment by departments. For most courses, patterns and trends emerging from the analysis of enrolments, retention rates, examination results and data from the Advanced Level Information System are rarely discussed by managers or used to inform strategic planning. Because each department is free to gather and present information in different ways, senior managers are unable to bring the reviews together to provide a comprehensive picture for the college. Recently-introduced arrangements for planning and reviewing courses place greater importance on the collection, analysis and use of data, the use of a standard questionnaire for all departments, and the formulation of action plans to tackle weaknesses.

60 The college charter is comprehensive but sets few measurable standards that can be monitored and reviewed. Although students are given a copy of the charter during induction, some of them are unaware what the charter is. Procedures for dealing with complaints are vague. Recently, the college has made the decision to identify an ombudsman to whom students can appeal if they feel the college is not providing the levels of service they might expect. This arrangement has not been included in any formal complaints procedure.

61 In reviewing aspects of cross-college provision, the college is beginning to make more use of questionnaires to collect the views of students and employers. For example, responses from 150 students who left the college in 1995 were analysed by the manager of quality. One area highlighted for improvement was the timing of daily registration. As a result, students are now expected to register at the end of the first period instead of at the beginning. Responses from 87 per cent of the 325 employers who accepted students on work experience placements, and from 67 per cent of the students who participated, show high levels of satisfaction but also identify areas for improvement. An action plan has

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been generated by the director of studies to rectify weaknesses and improve the experience of both students and employers in the future.

62 The college's self-assessment report is written to the headings in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. It was compiled by the deputy principal, and draws on information provided by senior managers but is not linked to findings identified through implementation of quality assurance. The report identifies clearly and concisely strengths and weaknesses of provision but does not cross-reference these to supporting evidence. The report does not include numerical grades. The college overestimates the quality of some aspects of its provision.

63 The appointment of a personnel manager has given a sharper focus to staff-development issues. A programme of induction activities provided essential information and support for 22 new staff who joined the college in this academic year. The immediate training needs of staff have been identified together with action required to meet those needs. For example, nine staff are developing their information technology skills by taking a course which is delivered in the college by a specially-appointed trainer. There is now a system to approve requests for training, and afterwards, to ensure that staff evaluate the quality of their training and disseminate what they have learned to colleagues. A policy for staff development, and initial proposals for reviewing the professional development of teaching and support staff every year, is emerging from the work of a staff-development group which was established in October 1995. Until now, the college has not had a system to review the performance of its staff.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

64 Teaching staff are well qualified. The majority have first degrees, a quarter have higher degrees and 80 per cent have qualified teacher status. The teaching experience of many staff has been acquired within schools and sixth forms; some staff have little knowledge of vocational contexts and current industrial practice. Fourteen, out of a total of 68 full-time teaching staff, have been appointed since September 1995. Many of these have experience of teaching in a further education college and some have recent and relevant industrial experience. Of the 22 staff involved in GNVQ provision, all are now working towards Training and Development Lead Body accreditation; eight have achieved assessor awards and three have achieved the internal verifier award. The knowledge and experience of some teaching staff in the use of information technology are inadequate. In art and design there are few part-time staff with up-to-date commercial and industrial experience.

65 Most teachers and support staff are appropriately deployed. The ratio of students to teaching staff has increased since 1994-95 from 12.7:1 to 13.8:1. The ratio of support staff to teaching staff is 0.32:1. Eleven per

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cent of students are from minority ethnic groups; no member of staff is from such groups. There are specialist technicians for biology, chemistry and physics, three foreign language assistants and new appointments of support staff for the learning resources centre. Recent appointments in reprographics, administrative support and information technology are having a positive impact on the development of college services. A personnel manager was appointed at senior level in September 1995 and a personnel assistant was appointed in January 1996.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

66 There is enough equipment and resources to support teaching and learning in most curriculum areas. Apparatus for science subjects is contained in purpose-built laboratories. Up-to-date computers are available with compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database and dedicated software. Each classroom used for modern languages has a listening booth and there is a well-appointed modern languages specialist room with 15 computers. The sports hall is well equipped for games and gymnastics along with a multi-gym, although its position away from the main college site is less than ideal. The graphic design workshop has limited space but has recently been furnished with multi-media computers and other specialised equipment of industrial standard. Recent investment and equipment purchases in other areas, including music technology, performing arts, science, mathematics and the learning resources centre, have enhanced curriculum delivery. The range of equipment for some areas of art and design, such as printmaking, textiles and photography, is limited. In several areas there are no whiteboards and some blackboards are of a poor standard and need replacing or resurfacing.

67 There is a good range of textbooks, journals, audio and video tapes and a rapidly expanding CD-ROM collection in the library. Significant efforts have been made by the library management to develop the facility as a learning centre. It now accommodates 15 networked computers with a good range of software packages. There is a total of 116 workplaces of which 91 are for individual study. There is a spacious, silent area upstairs for individual work and a quiet working area downstairs where groups of students can work together. The library is well managed and staff evaluate carefully the appropriateness of its books and the views of its users. There is a well-stocked careers library in a careers room together with good careers computer software networked in the library. Not all curriculum teams co-operate closely with the library in identifying resources needed to support teaching and learning, such as textbooks and other materials. Some textbooks held by departments are out of date. The quality of learning materials, such as handouts produced by staff, is variable and in several cases it is poor. Many staff fail to make adequate use of the information technology facilities available to them to improve the quality of their teaching materials.

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68 There has been substantial investment in information technology at the college and the overall ratio of computers to students is 1:8.5, compared with 1:25 in 1994. Sixty per cent of students are registered on the college network which links with 80 new computers. A fibre-optic cable linking installations in the main building has now been extended across the street to the St Mary's building to provide an academic and administrative network. In some subject areas, however, students have limited or no access to information technology facilities. The college has produced a detailed handbook about its information technology resources and a plan for their future use and development.

### **Accommodation**

69 The college is housed in a main building dating back to 1798 on a site of 1.8 hectares. It is surrounded by residential development which restricts the scope for expansion on the site. The St Mary's building was built in 1986 for the teaching of science and technology. There is limited space for car parking. Access to buildings for students with restricted mobility is also difficult. There is a good sports hall but it is located some distance from the college in the town centre. There is a substantial sports field with a pavilion which is also some distance from the main site.

70 The majority of teaching rooms are of adequate size for the classes they accommodate. Most of the main college and the St Mary's building is appropriately decorated and maintained. The majority of subject areas have specialist rooms, often in close proximity in a corridor or suite. Many contain good displays of subject-related materials. There is little display of learning materials in the mathematics suite and there is not enough suitable reference material in art rooms. There are some rooms which have no carpet and are drab. Art rooms are poorly furnished and the graphics room is unsatisfactory for its purpose.

71 Several areas of the main building have maintained their distinctive original character. There is a chapel with architectural features of interest. Netball and tennis courts have been provided on the main site. Social and communal accommodation is inadequate for over 1,000 students and there is serious congestion in certain corridor areas during break times; there is no staggered lunchtime. There is little analysis of current space or room utilisation and the college has not yet published an accommodation strategy. A draft accommodation strategy exists which gives a detailed analysis of the college's needs in relation to curriculum areas.

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## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

72 The strengths of the college include:

- its good reputation amongst parents and partner schools
- the opportunities for students to take additional studies
- a well-balanced programme of religious education which caters for all students
- the tutorial system and arrangements for the review of students' progress
- good examination results in several GCE A level subjects
- good retention rates of students on many courses.

73 To make further progress the college should address the following issues:

- gaps in the range of courses below GCE A level
- poor examination results on some vocational courses
- the effectiveness of the board of governors
- the monitoring of students' attendance
- the identification of a senior management team to ensure that strategic and operational decisions are planned, monitored and evaluated
- the absence of a coherent quality assurance system
- arrangements to review the performance of staff
- some teaching methods which fail to motivate students
- more equitable workloads for staff
- the recruitment of part-time students and adults.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)

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  - 2 Percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)

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  - 3 Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)

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  - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)

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  - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

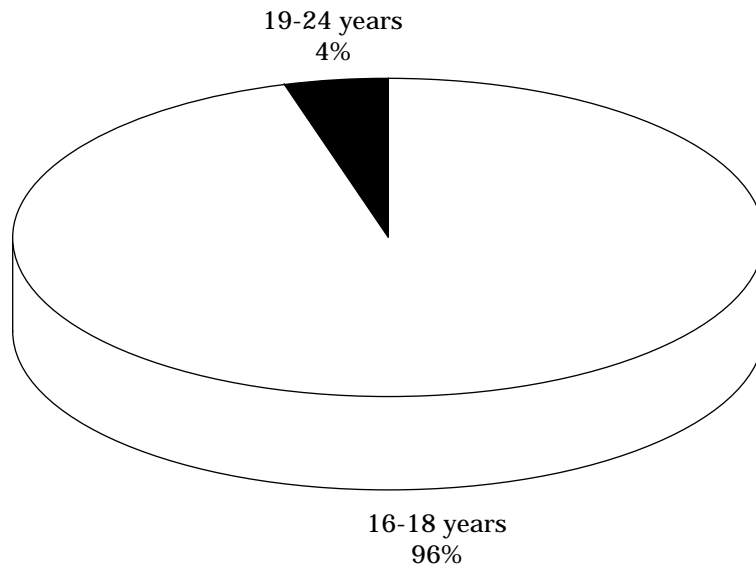
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**Figure 1**

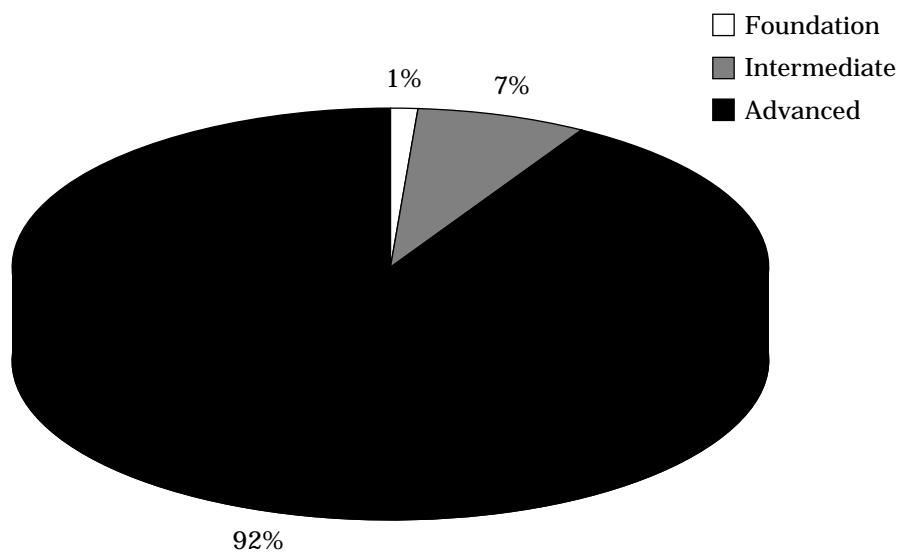
**Cardinal Newman College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)**



Student numbers: 1,031

**Figure 2**

**Cardinal Newman College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)**

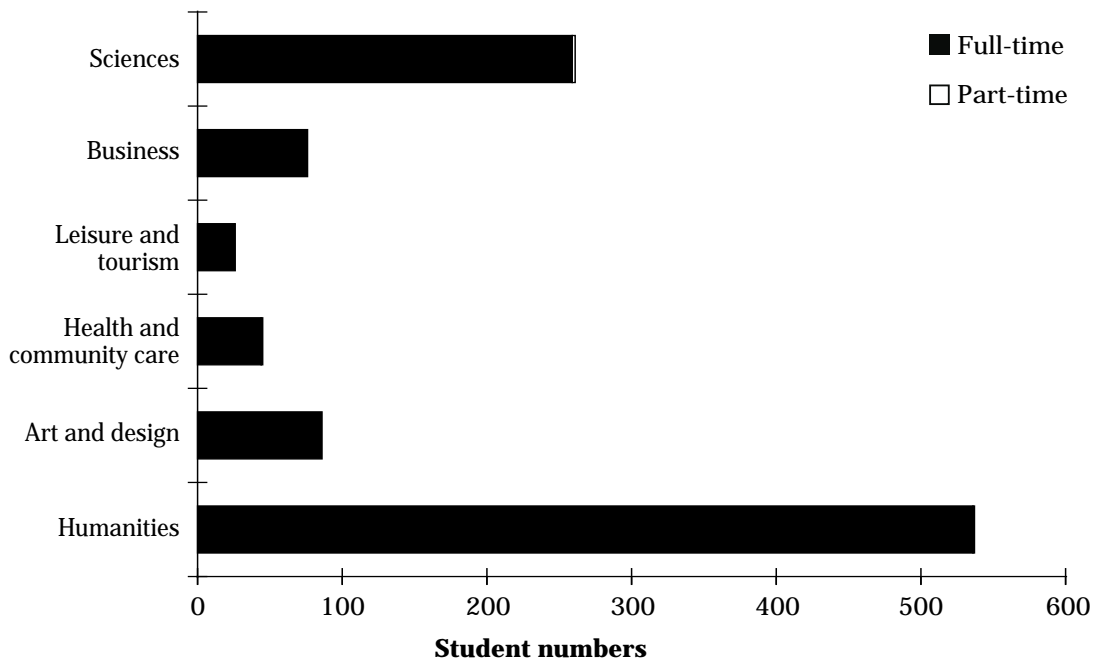


Student numbers: 1,031

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**Figure 3**

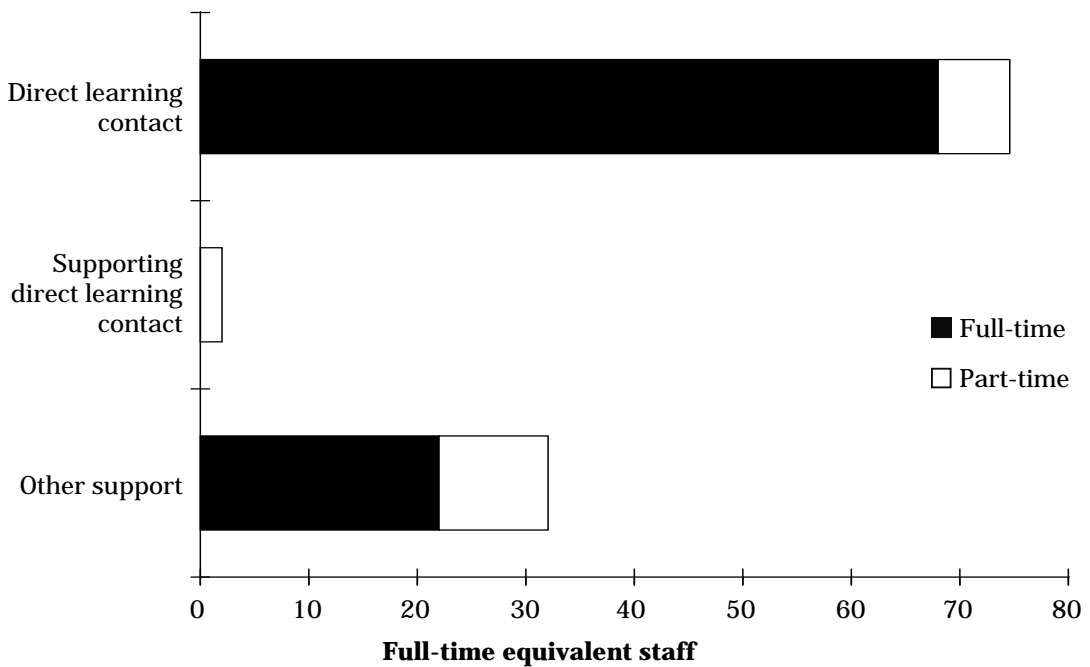
**Cardinal Newman College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)**



Student numbers: 1,031

**Figure 4**

**Cardinal Newman College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)**



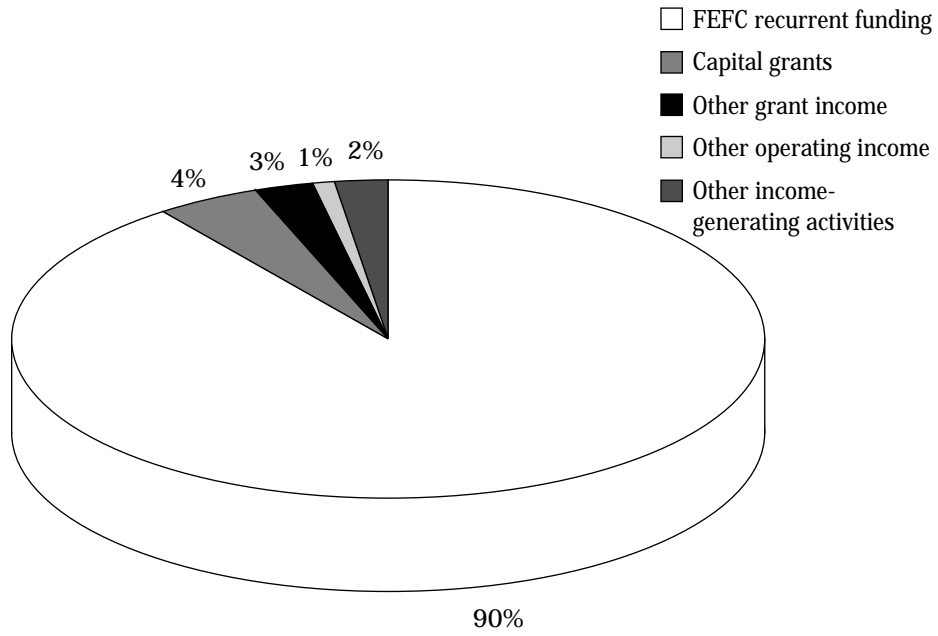
Full-time equivalent staff: 109

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**Figure 5**

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**Cardinal Newman College: income (for 12 months to July 1995)**

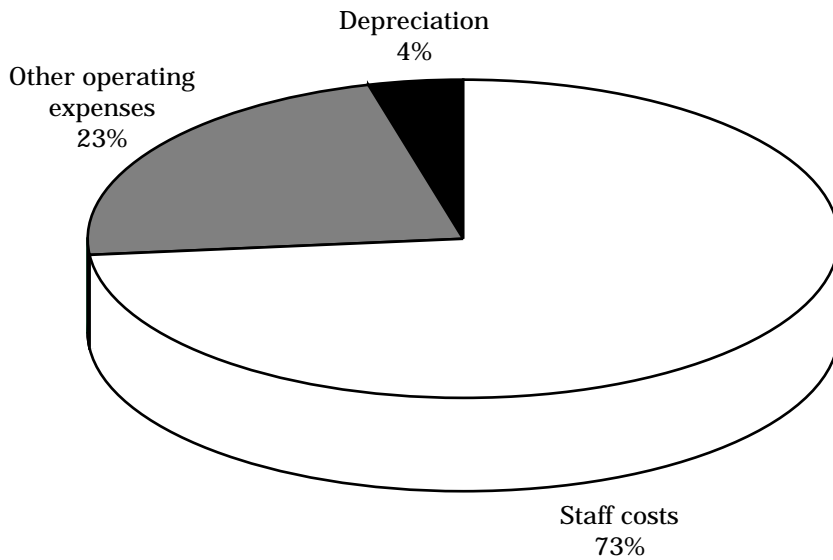


Income: £3,111,000

**Figure 6**

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**Cardinal Newman College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)**



Expenditure: £2,936,000

Published by the  
Further Education Funding Council  
June 1996