Carlisle College

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are described in the Council Circular 93/28. In the course of inspecting colleges, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also summarise their judgements on the balance between strengths and weaknesses using a five-point scale. 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.

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 76/94

CARLISLE COLLEGE
NORTH WEST REGION
Inspected September 1993 - May 1994

Summary

Carlisle College is the largest post-16 provider in Cumbria and is the only general purpose further education college within a 35 mile radius. Members of the corporation board have a wide range of experience and expertise. A well-structured strategic plan is based on a detailed analysis of the college's needs. Links with schools, higher education institutions, and industrial and commercial organisations are excellent. There is a wide range of provision with an emphasis on vocational courses and programmes for mature students. Senior managers provide sound leadership and work together as an effective team. Much of the teaching has strengths which clearly outweigh the weaknesses. The examination results in vocational areas are generally good. Teachers are suitably qualified and relate well to their students. There is a well-resourced independent learning centre. Some statements of policy need to be translated into effective implementation strategies. These include the pursuit of total quality management. The college should improve its provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and increase the numbers achieving nationally recognised qualifications. It should also strengthen its tutorial provision, encourage students to maintain their personal records of achievement, improve the quality of information about students' destinations, provide more opportunities for students to use up-to-date computers and improve the quality of accommodation so that more areas provide a stimulating and supportive environment.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science, mathematics and computing	3	Catering, leisure and tourism, and hairdressing	2
Construction	2	Care	3
Engineering	3	Art and design	3
Business and administration	3	Humanities	2

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INTRODUCTION

1   Carlisle College was inspected in three stages. Enrolment and induction procedures were inspected in September 1993. During April and the early part of May, 74 inspector days were used for the inspection of specialist subject areas. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected by a team of five inspectors who spent 25 days in the college from 16 to 20 May 1994. Inspectors visited 221 classes, examined representative samples of students' work and held discussions with members of the corporation, senior managers, staff and students, local employers, head teachers, a member of staff from the University of Northumbria at Newcastle who is based at the Carlisle campus, the careers service, the probation service, two representatives from the local education authority and representatives from the Cumbria Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The inspectors also had access to an extensive variety of documentation relating to the college and its courses.

2   The inspection was carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. The framework describes a four-year inspection cycle. When this cycle becomes fully established, colleges will have the opportunity to respond to the findings of earlier inspection visits before their quadrennial inspection and the subsequent published report. As the inspection of Carlisle College occurred in the first year of the cycle, the opportunity for such a response was not available.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3   Carlisle College is the largest post-16 provider in Cumbria and is the only general purpose further education college within a 35 mile radius. It operates from a main site in Carlisle city centre. Five annexes within a four-mile radius house an adult training unit, an information technology enterprise centre, a training workshop and facilities for carpentry and joinery and trowel trades. Cumbria College of Art and Design is located within the city and Newton Rigg College of Agriculture is situated at Penrith, 20 miles away. Thirteen of the 15 schools within the catchment area cater for 11-18 year olds and many provide adult education. Five of the eight schools within a 10-mile radius have achieved grant maintained status and are subsequently strengthening their sixth form provision. In 1993, 60 per cent of the school leavers in the Carlisle area stayed on in full-time education, 46 per cent in schools and 14 per cent in the college. Forty per cent of the 15+ age group in Cumbria obtained five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades at A-C.

4   The college serves the needs of both urban and rural economies. Its catchment area includes 300,000 square kilometres of north east Cumbria, south east Dumfries and Galloway, and west Northumberland, and contains some 200,000 people. The economic infrastructure consists largely of small to medium-size, locally-owned enterprises, most employing less than 50 people. The college services a diverse local economy whose

four main sectors, agriculture and related services, food processing, road transport and distribution, and hotel and catering, account for 25 per cent of employment. Sixty-five per cent of those in employment work in the service sector. In a number of vocational areas, the college is the only provider within a 50-mile radius.

5　The college has grown by 30 per cent since 1990. There are 8,055 students on roll; 6,044 of these are funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Some 1,566 students attend on a full-time basis. In addition, 314 students are enrolled on higher education courses and 897 pupils from local primary and secondary schools attend the construction curriculum centre. Since 1991, the college has significantly increased provision for adults. Changes in methods of delivery, new courses and, from 1992, the introduction of an adult education programme have brought in more adult students. Consequently 66 per cent of students are over 18 years of age with 44 per cent aged 25 and over. FEFC-funded enrolments by age are shown in figure 1; FEFC-funded enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by level of study are shown in figure 2.

6　The college offers a wide range of vocational and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses. These are delivered through six departments: business studies, community studies, leisure and hospitality, humanities and science, construction and engineering. FEFC-funded enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by curriculum area and mode of attendance are shown in figure 3. Full-cost courses to industry are managed through the college company Pro-Act. Cross-college student support is provided through two units: student services which includes guidance and counselling, and learning resources which includes the library. Other support services are organised in seven functional areas: marketing, personnel, management information systems, estates, finance, health and safety, and refectory services. There is a full-time equivalent establishment of 172 academic staff and 125 support staff (figure 4).

7　The college's unit of funding for 1992-93 was £2,591 per weighted full-time equivalent student. The median for general and further education colleges and tertiary colleges was £2,444. The FEFC allocates about 62 per cent of the college's total income. A further 15 per cent results from contracts with Cumbria TEC and 7 per cent from commercial activities which include the work of Pro-Act. Figure 5 provides a summary of estimated income for 1993-94; figure 6 shows the proposed pattern of expenditure. The college is budgeting for a deficit in the current financial period.

8　In its mission statement, the college states that its role in the community is to achieve excellence in education, economic and social development. The aims of the college include the provision of effective learning at all levels, providing support for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, increasing participation whilst maintaining efficiency and effectiveness, providing equality of opportunity and

flexibility of delivery, ensuring customer satisfaction through continuous improvement in quality, and active involvement in the social and economic development of north Cumbria. The college accepts the challenge of maintaining its breadth of provision while trying to achieve efficiency gains.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

9   The college is responsive to the communities which it serves. There are excellent links with a range of external agencies and effective systems for identifying the needs of local employers and the community. A substantial project, Investigation of the Training Needs of Northern Cumbria, was funded as part of the Professional, Industrial, Commercial Knowledge Up-dating programme and undertaken by a member of staff. The outcomes of this project have enabled the college to match more systematically its provision to local needs.

10   Full and part-time courses offered include:

- vocational courses leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and awards of the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) and Royal Society of Arts (RSA)

- General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in health and social care, art and design, business studies, leisure and tourism

- GCE A level and GCSE courses

- provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- programmes for adults

- courses in higher education, some of which are operated in conjunction with universities in the region.

Students are able to progress from foundation to advanced level within several programme areas.

11   The portfolio of courses meets the needs of most students, employers and other clients. There is a strong emphasis on vocational work. However, the development of GNVQs has been slow in several vocational areas. There is a limited range of part-time courses in science. Some courses, particularly those leading to GCSE and GCE A level, have small numbers of students.

12   There are appropriate courses for adult students. The access initiative for mature students provides opportunities for those without traditional qualifications to gain entry into higher education or to enhance their job prospects. Several courses have flexible attendance patterns which allow students to meet family commitments. A growing proportion of the courses is modular which also increases the opportunities students have for determining preferred methods of study and attendance. Further outreach work is being developed to attract more adult students.

13   There is a good range of courses specifically for women to prepare them for self-employment, management or work using information technology. Elsewhere in the college, however, there are few female students enrolled on the full-time computing course provision and on engineering courses. By contrast, the full-time modern languages provision has a high proportion of women. Although the college is increasing its provision for mature students, at present there are no crèche facilities.

14   Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to follow separate specialist programmes of study. Several of these are offered in conjunction with the local TEC. However, the lack of external accreditation for aspects of this provision limits the opportunities for some students to progress to mainstream courses.

15   There are productive links with local industrial and commercial organisations. These are strengthened by active industrial liaison committees which are a feature of each department. The college company, Pro-act, which provides advisory, consultancy and training services to industry, has been successful in its first year of operation and has exceeded its target turnover of £250,000.   For a number of years the college has offered a range of courses funded by the local TEC, though recently there have been substantial cuts in budget allocations, particularly for the training for work scheme. There is a successful partnership between the police, probation service, youth service and the college whereby young offenders are able to learn about motor vehicle repair and maintenance.

16   There are positive links between the college and local schools, despite strong competition for students at the end of their period of compulsory schooling. Pre-16 school pupils are able to broaden their curriculum by undertaking vocational studies in the college. Some of the college's GNVQ work is offered to local schools on a franchised basis. There are also opportunities for students to combine particular GCE A level courses at the college with subjects they are studying in school.

17   Links with the University of Northumbria at Newcastle and other higher education institutions are developing well. The Carlisle campus of the university works in close collaboration with the college and there is an increasing range of higher education courses to which college students can progress.

18   Programmes of study are marketed effectively. The college recently received a national prize for its corporate marketing strategy. A centralised approach has been adopted to promote the college's image.   Leaflets and publicity material are informative and appealing. There is a detailed marketing plan which identifies potential audiences and appropriate actions to attract new students. At present, there are very low numbers of students from ethnic minority groups and this reflects the catchment area which the college serves. Attempts to recruit more overseas students to the college have begun. A few students take part in exchanges with European institutions, particularly in France.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

19   The members of the corporation have a wide range of experience and expertise which is used to good effect in supporting the work of the college. At the time of the inspection there were 19 members and one vacancy. There are 11 independent members including a bank manager, a chartered surveyor, a personnel officer, a solicitor and a member of staff from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Other members of the corporation include the nominee of the local TEC, two co-opted members who have experience of city and county council work, a clergyman, two college staff, a student and the principal. Five of the members are women. There is a designated governor who takes a special interest in the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

20   The systems and procedures required by the corporation are in place. The terms of reference and delegated powers of subcommittees are clearly defined and there is a well-planned schedule of meetings which makes efficient use of time. Members take a keen interest in the affairs of the personnel, finance and estates subcommittees where their professional and industrial experience is beneficial. The corporation could give more attention to its role in determining the educational character and mission of the college. There are no training programmes for members and no procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the corporation's performance.

21   The well-structured strategic plan is based on a detailed analysis of needs and influenced by contributions from staff in all sections of the college. Objectives are clearly stated and strategic implications and targets are identified. Departmental plans are linked clearly to the college plan and most have realistic targets and timescales. However, plans for the development of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities give insufficient detail, and responsibilities for implementation are not clearly identified. There are no college-wide plans for the development of individual subject areas, such as English, modern languages, science and mathematics.

22   There are clear statements of policy for many areas of college work. Many of these have been re-written recently and strategies for their implementation are only just being developed. For example, a newly-established equal opportunities working party is developing a code of practice and action plan. The future development of information technology and computing across the college is currently being considered by another working party. Generally, there is much work to be done to translate statements of intent into practice, and to arrange appropriate monitoring procedures. However, the responsibility for implementation of the college's health and safety policy is clearly allocated and record keeping is good.

23   The existing management structure was introduced in September 1993. Each of the six departments is headed by a director who has two deputies; one deputy has responsibility for curriculum and development,

the other for resources. In each department there are programme managers who are responsible for managing teams of staff to deliver the curriculum. The student services manager and the learning resources manager, with their teams, support curriculum delivery across all departments. Each of the functional areas and the college company, Pro-Act, is headed by a business manager. Several cross-college committees, which are chaired by directors, bring together deputy directors and business managers for specific tasks. These include the marketing of courses, the development of learning resources and the planning of staff development.

24   The new management structure is generally working well. There is good leadership from the principal, vice-principal and directors who work together as an effective team. Lines of communication between the directorate and the business managers are clear and encourage understanding as well as systematic integration of each others' work. The cross-college committees strengthen the responsibility and accountability of the directors and their deputies. Programme managers have well-defined roles and responsibilities and are able to combine their main task of managing courses with substantial teaching commitments. They hold regular meetings with their teams but, in some cases, these are informal and there are no minutes which record the points for action. Staff are kept informed of college-wide issues through meetings twice a term with the principal.

25   There are some weaknesses to be resolved. Staff in some departments do not understand fully the new management structure and lines of accountability. In particular, they do not have a clear perception of the roles and responsibilities of the deputy directors and are uncertain about whom they should approach to discuss matters of concern. Some programme managers feel detached from cross-college activities and have yet to come to terms with their new roles. There is no single focus for the leadership and management of individual subjects such as English and mathematics across the college as a whole. As a result, teachers in these areas report to different people for different aspects of their work and have difficulty in prioritising the requests that are made of them. Communication within individual subject areas relies too much on informal arrangements.

26   Resource needs are being identified effectively through the new management structure. In this first year of operation, only the budgets for the purchase of materials and equipment have been allocated fully to departments. The amounts allocated were historically based and adjusted to reflect enrolments. This year the college is moving away from allocating funding on an historical basis to developing a methodology which depends on courses and departments costing their activities carefully. This costing exercise is sharpening understanding of the new funding arrangements as well as matching funding more accurately to need. In several subject areas, for example in secretarial studies, science, catering and leisure, the

numbers of students in teaching groups are not monitored carefully enough. At the time of the inspection, some classes had very few students.

27   The college is making good progress towards the development of a single integrated computer-based management information system. In most subject areas, staff have confidence in the wide range of information that is provided. For example, there is detailed information about enrolments, completion rates and budget expenditure. Senior managers are beginning to use this information to aid planning. However, the systematic use of performance indicators in course monitoring and review processes is not fully exploited by programme managers and course tutors. Student attendance is monitored and appropriate action is taken when this is necessary.

28   The destinations of students who complete their courses are recorded by course tutors and the information is presented to the industrial liaison committees. Overall, however, the college does not know the destinations of almost 45 per cent of the full-time students who completed courses in 1993. The college should improve its monitoring of destinations and reach a reliable value added analysis of its work by comparing students' achievements at the end of their courses with their entry qualifications.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

29   The student services unit is located in attractive accommodation close to the main entrance to the college. There is a manager with a team of five staff who work as information officers, counsellors and careers advisers. They provide confidential information and advice to potential and existing students. Pre-course guidance and counselling, information about accommodation and grants, careers advice and help with personal problems are all available through the unit. Records are kept of enquiries about courses and careers interviews, but the use of other services is not recorded.

30   There is a comprehensive range of recruitment activities. A college open day, departmental open evenings, presence at local shows and attendance at careers conferences in local schools are all used effectively to publicise the college and its courses. A bus, bearing the college's name and logo, has been converted into a mobile learning centre for the community.

31   Generally, the arrangements for enroling students work well. Particular groups are able to enrol at different times, and this helps the planning and improves the efficiency of the process. For example, evening class students can enrol by telephone before the beginning of the academic year. All full-time students receive pre-course guidance and counselling when they apply to the college. However, during the enrolment sessions some part-time students enrol on courses before they have received any guidance or counselling.

32   Induction arrangements for full-time students are well planned. Students are provided with a useful, well-presented student handbook and diary, and a student agreement. There is a comprehensive document which suggests suitable introductory activities. However, the delivery of the induction programme varies in quality. Some of the key elements have not been carried out by tutors. For example, 50 per cent of a large sample of students did not receive the information packs from the independent learning centre or the library. The induction of part-time students is unsystematic. A student survey has revealed some deficiencies in the present arrangements. The college plans to use this information to improve future activities.

33   The policy of testing first-year full-time students to identify those who require additional help with basic skills is sound. In practice there are a number of difficulties. From a sample of 1,100 students, only 37 per cent were informed of their results. Of these students, only 70 per cent are receiving additional help, although all were offered it. Feedback to tutors on the progress of those receiving support is not systematic. Part-time students should also be eligible for basic skills diagnosis and support.

34   There is a timetabled tutorial period of at least one hour per week for all full-time students. In the main, this time is used effectively and students value the support they receive. In the best cases, tutorials are used as opportunities for the review of progress, setting of targets and careers advice. Individual departments are responsible for their own tutorial programmes. There is no monitoring of tutorial activity across the college and so opportunities to share good practice are lost. Most part-time students do not have timetabled tutorial support, although all have a tutor assigned to them. In each department there is a named person who works with specialist staff to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are integrated into mainstream courses.

35   Students are not encouraged to update or use their records of achievement. The extent to which individual action plans are effectively compiled varies. Sixty per cent of the sample of 1,100 students had made a start. Some very good practice is evident in art, care and hairdressing courses, but there is also some unsatisfactory practice.

36   Arrangements for careers guidance are comprehensive. Firm links exist with the local careers service; each course has a named officer as a point of reference. Students are also able to make appointments with one other careers officer who comes into the college for a half-day each week. Within the student services unit there is a full-time student adviser who has substantial experience of careers service work. Some departments make good use of her expertise by inviting her to talk to groups of students. Generally, however, careers education is not provided routinely through the tutorial programme. Careers guidance is not available to students in the evenings or in any systematic way to part-time students. The careers section in the library is adequate.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

37   The following table summarises the grades awarded for the 221 teaching sessions which were inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A	2	12	6	1	0	21
GCSE	1	6	9	1	1	18
GNVQ	3	10	11	1	0	25
NVQ	4	22	16	1	1	44
Other	12	49	41	10	1	113
Total	22	99	83	14	3	221

38   The strengths of the work clearly outweigh the weaknesses in over 54 per cent of the classes inspected. In the majority of sessions, the teaching is lively and effective. There is a variety of learning activities which are generally matched to the needs and abilities of students. Most lessons are generally well organised and thoroughly prepared, and there is good practice in catering, construction and education courses. In many areas good use is made of demonstrations and teaching aids.

39   There are, however, instances of poorer teaching. Dull presentations by teachers and uninspiring activities fail to interest or challenge students. In some classes, teachers take insufficient account of the work which has already been covered and there is unnecessary repetition. In a number of engineering and business and administration courses there are examples of too much work being covered in too short a time. Some of the teaching materials used with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not appropriate.

40   Relations between staff and students are generally friendly. In almost all areas, there are knowledgeable teachers who set and expect students to achieve standards of work which are wholly appropriate to the level of their course. However, there are also instances where the standards are insufficiently demanding. For example, some of the tasks on the GNVQ advanced course in leisure and tourism are set at too low a level.

41   Courses are generally well documented and aims and objectives are clearly defined. In some areas of business and administration and in education courses, the core skills of numeracy and communications are well integrated. In some other areas, however, there are weaknesses in curriculum design. For example, some aspects of the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities lack a rationale and a clear focus. In some of the GCSE and GCE A level courses the schemes of work are bare frameworks and there is no mention of the development of core skills. There are few opportunities for students to develop information technology skills within the context of science, mathematics and art and design courses.

42   Many courses incorporate written assignments and assessed work which challenge students. The value of this work is enhanced by the good guidance and conscientious marking provided by teachers. This is a positive feature of some business and administration, engineering, psychology, geography, social care and construction courses. There were some instances of weaker assessment procedures and insufficient advice from teachers on students' work in English, science, catering and tourism and leisure courses. In construction, some students' coursework was over-generously marked and assessment methods were inconsistent.

43   Teachers generally maintain clear and detailed records of students' progress, and these are often used to good effect to monitor and develop further their learning. Good examples occur in some aspects of business and administration, construction, engineering, education, geography, social care, catering and art and design. In English, mathematics and modern foreign languages the records of students' progress are maintained and used less effectively.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

44   The examination results in vocational areas are generally good. In 1993, the 127 students aged 16-18 years in their final year of study for the BTEC or CGLI national diplomas achieved a 96 per cent pass rate. This places the college within the top 15 per cent of all institutions within the sector. Mature students also performed well. There was a 100 per cent pass rate for the higher national certificate courses in business studies and mechanical engineering.

45   There are some good examination results from students following the access initiative programme for mature students. For example, 90 per cent of the students who took the physical and human environment examinations and all of the students who took the English examinations were successful. Pass rates on teacher education courses were also good. However, very few students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have achieved nationally recognised qualifications through the specialist courses and these students have limited opportunities for progression.

46   The college has a small proportion of students aged 16-18 who were entered for two or more GCE A level subjects. The average points score of these 34 students in 1993 was 7.1 (where A=10, E=2) which places the college near the bottom of institutions within the sector. The college had a pass rate at grades A-E across all subjects, of 67 per cent, just above the national average of 66 per cent for further education colleges other than sixth form colleges. Most GCE A level students were following one-year courses rather than the two-year courses offered by most institutions. Pass rates of 100 per cent were achieved in subjects with small numbers of students: art (seven students), communication studies (three students) and government and politics (nine students). The pass rate for 20 students taking English language and literature was 89 per cent. In history (four students), mathematics (seven students) and law (13 students) the pass rates were all less than 30 per cent.

47   In 1993, there were 245 entries for GCSE examinations. The average pass rate at grades A-C was 55 per cent. However, only 15 of the 61 students who enrolled for English language and 25 of the 91 who enrolled for mathematics achieved grades A-C.

48   Students in all areas of the college exhibit positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy their studies, are well motivated and strive diligently to achieve their goals. In engineering, business and administration and mathematics courses and on the access initiative programme for mature students, there are examples of mature students who have high levels of commitment. Some younger students, however, are inattentive and lack motivation. In geography, a minority of students have records of erratic attendance and in psychology the level of absenteeism is sometimes high.

49   Students are developing appropriate skills and levels of knowledge and understanding. For instance, mature students of English have good analytical skills. In geography, students' levels of understanding vary but even weaker students are able to cope with the demands of their course. Some science students have difficulty in relating their current work to previous topics. The work of students in art and design displays technical competence and creativity. Students in catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, construction and engineering apply their knowledge and understanding well in practical situations. Students on higher level courses in education are able to link educational theory effectively to practice, but a few do not readily understand how their learning can benefit their teaching skills.

50   Many students are developing good oral and written communication skills. For example, in psychology and education classes, they are articulate and able to contribute confidently to discussion. Engineering students produce clearly written workshop log-books and class notes. In catering, students' course files are of a high standard. Some assignment and project work submitted by computing and business administration students is good. By contrast, many students in science are unable to speak confidently about their work and some GCE A level English students have poor language skills. In social care, some students' work is full of grammatical and spelling errors.

51   There is appropriate development of students' mathematical skills. For instance, students on GCE A level courses in psychology and geography have a good understanding of statistical techniques. Numeracy is included in some practical work in catering. In engineering, students' numerical skills are generally adequate although there are some students with weaknesses in basic mathematics; their tutors, one of whom is a mathematician, provide additional support. Some students of construction have weaknesses in mathematically-based topics such as structural mechanics.

52   The extent to which students develop information technology skills within their programmes of study varies. For example, some engineering

and catering students make use of computer-aided design and spreadsheets are used by GNVQ care students to analyse data. In business and administration courses many students are expected to use word processing skills when submitting assignments. However, in other curriculum areas, including modern foreign languages, science, mathematics, geography, motor vehicle engineering, and art and design, students' information technology skills are under-developed.

53   Students on vocational courses generally achieve good levels of practical skill. Construction students are anxious to achieve high standards and display a strong sense of pride in their work. In catering, students demonstrate high standards of competence. These students, and others in engineering, science, business and administration, hairdressing and beauty therapy, are conscious of the need for safe and hygienic working practices and carry out tasks safely.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

54   One of the college's strategic objectives is to develop as an organisation committed to total quality management. Some early attempts to develop policies and procedures were successful in raising staff awareness of quality issues but they failed to provide a comprehensive framework for implementation. Changes in the management structure provided the opportunity to take a fresh look at the whole process. As a result, the principal is now leading this initiative. He is supported by a quality manager and a steering committee of senior managers. In each department, the deputy director for curriculum and development has overall responsibility for monitoring the quality assurance systems. There is a revised quality policy and the key processes which affect students' experiences of college have been identified. These are the foundations on which the new quality assurance systems are being built.

55   The development of total quality management is progressing slowly. The philosophy and purpose are not well understood by staff. Procedures are being documented although as yet there is neither an overall plan nor an implementation strategy. The management information system is able to collect and analyse data for quality assurance purposes but quality standards which can be measured, monitored and evaluated have not yet been identified.

56   Procedures for evaluating the quality of courses are generally effective. Course tutors across the college are responsible for the maintenance and control of course files which contain forms and checklists to support the development, review and evaluation of provision. These files are comprehensive and provide the basis for regular and end-of-course reviews by course teams. Good use is made of questionnaires to find out students' opinions of courses, but the response is limited. The moderators' reports for vocational courses are generally good. In most instances, the end-of-course reviews generate action plans which are linked to departmental plans and the college strategic plan.

There is an effective process which evaluates new course proposals and identifies resource needs.

57   Staff appraisal has begun. Newly-appointed managers have been appraised and their training and development needs have been identified. The implementation of the appraisal scheme for teachers will proceed once appraisers have been trained. There is no appraisal scheme for support staff but an audit of their skills has been carried out.

58   Great importance is attached to staff development. Individuals are encouraged to discuss their training and development needs with their line managers. There is an effective induction procedure for new staff and people without teaching qualifications are encouraged to obtain them. There are criteria for approving applications to attend training activities but the benefits of these activities to individuals, and to the college, are not monitored systematically.

59   Staff are aware of the requirements of the Charter for Further Education. The college is now developing its own charter, which it intends to distribute to all students who enrol for courses in the new academic year. A student agreement which identifies entitlements and obligations is being used at present but students are not fully aware of its purpose and value.

RESOURCES

Staffing

60   Teaching staff are suitably qualified. Most teachers deployed on the specialist courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have relevant qualifications in this area of work. In the vocational areas, many staff have useful commercial and industrial experience although it is sometimes out-of-date. There are sufficient teachers for the courses which are offered with the exception of specialist teachers of mathematics, law and accounts. Mathematics, secretarial studies and leisure and tourism courses have large proportions of part-time staff. In most areas of work there is sufficient support from technical, administrative and clerical staff. The exception is information technology where there are not enough technicians to provide an effective service. The college is taking steps to improve this.

Equipment/learning resources

61   There is a satisfactory range of equipment, teaching materials and consumables in most subject areas. However, there is insufficient reference material for students in English and mathematics classes, and much of the equipment in engineering is dated and some of it is obsolete. Overall, the number of computer work stations is adequate; those that are located in the independent learning centre are well-used and easily accessible to students, but the majority of computers are in classrooms

which are timetabled for teaching and locked at other times. Only about half of the total number of computers can support the latest versions of software.

62   The library has sufficient study spaces, computers and video-viewing equipment. There is a good selection of periodicals and newspapers. The stock of books varies in quality. It is good in engineering, education and geography but inadequate in business studies, science, hairdressing and modern foreign languages. Use of the library is monitored.

Accommodation

63   There are sufficient classrooms and other teaching areas for the range of courses. Generally, there is a good match of rooms to class sizes but often the classrooms used by particular courses are scattered across the college and do not provide specialist learning bases for students.

64   Public areas of the college are welcoming and well-maintained. The foyer, the independent learning centre and the refectory are bright and cheerful and entirely suitable for their purpose. Wheelchair users are able to use the facilities. Specialist accommodation varies in quality. For example, there are spacious, well-equipped areas for construction and for art and design, and commercially realistic working environments in business administration and hairdressing. However, engineering accommodation is gloomy and presents a poor image of the subject. The travel centre used by leisure and tourism students is poorly located. Some classrooms are poorly furnished and decorated and across the college there is little display of students' work.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

65   Carlisle College is working towards the aims expressed in its mission statement. Particular strengths of the provision are:

• the experience and expertise of members of the corporation

• a well-structured strategic plan which is based on a detailed analysis of needs

• the leadership and effective teamwork of senior managers

• excellent links with schools, higher education institutions, industrial and commercial organisations

• a wide range of courses with a strong emphasis on vocational provision and programmes for mature students

• good teaching

• good levels of achievement on many vocational courses

• a well-resourced independent learning centre.

66   In order to make further progress the college should:

• translate statements of policy into effective strategies for implementation

- improve the quality of information about students' destinations

- strengthen tutorial provision and encourage students to maintain their personal records of achievement

- improve the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and increase the numbers achieving nationally recognised qualifications

- develop further its quality assurance procedures

- improve opportunities for students to use up-to-date computers

- improve the quality of its accommodation so that more areas provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment.

FIGURES

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

Figure 1

Carlisle College: FEFC-funded enrolments by age (1993-94)

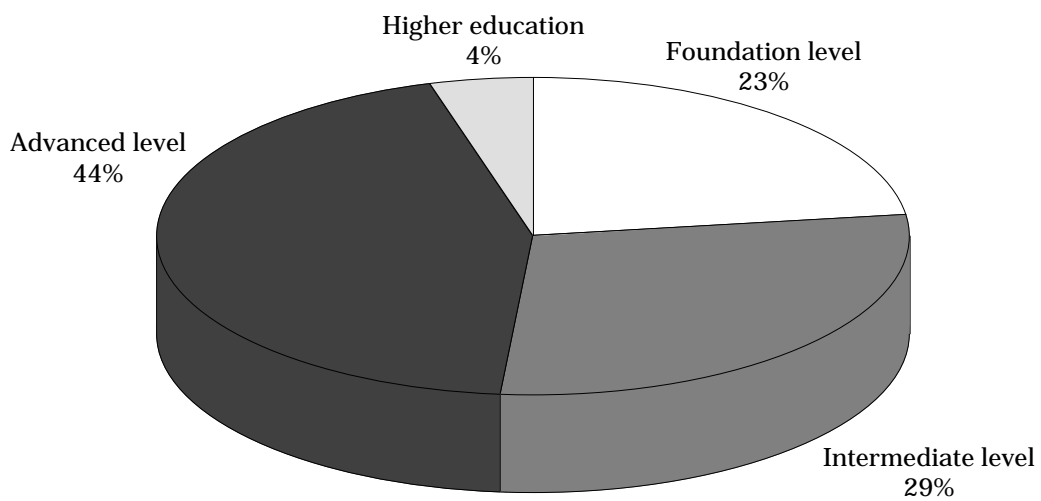☐ Age: 16-18 years

▨ Age: 19-25 years

■ Age: 25+ years

44%

34%

22%
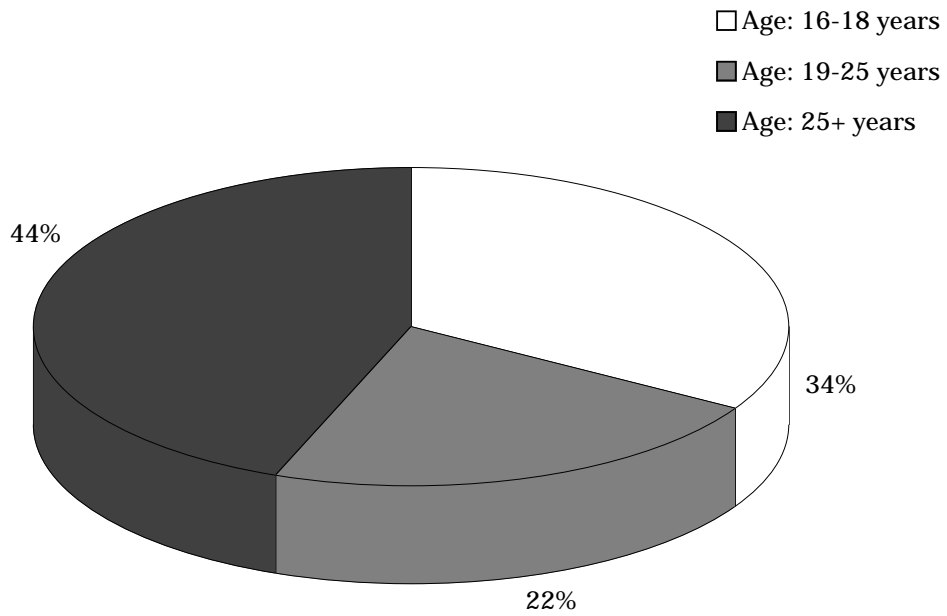
Enrolments: 6,044

Figure 2

Carlisle College: FEFC-funded full-time equivalent enrolments by level of study (1993-94)

Higher education
4%

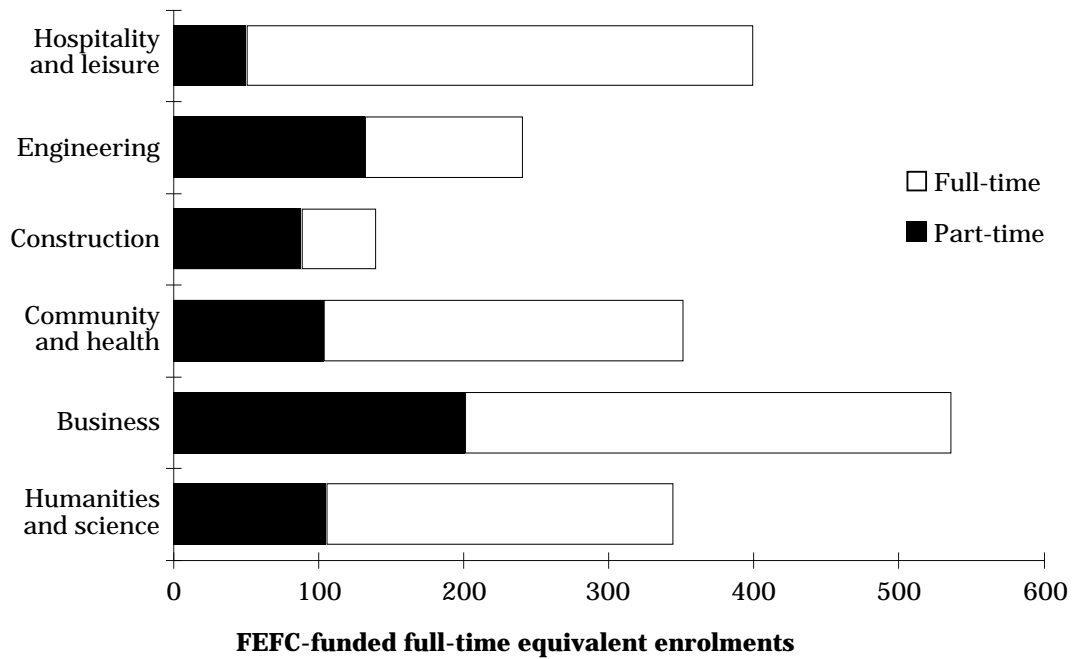Foundation level
23%

Advanced level
44%

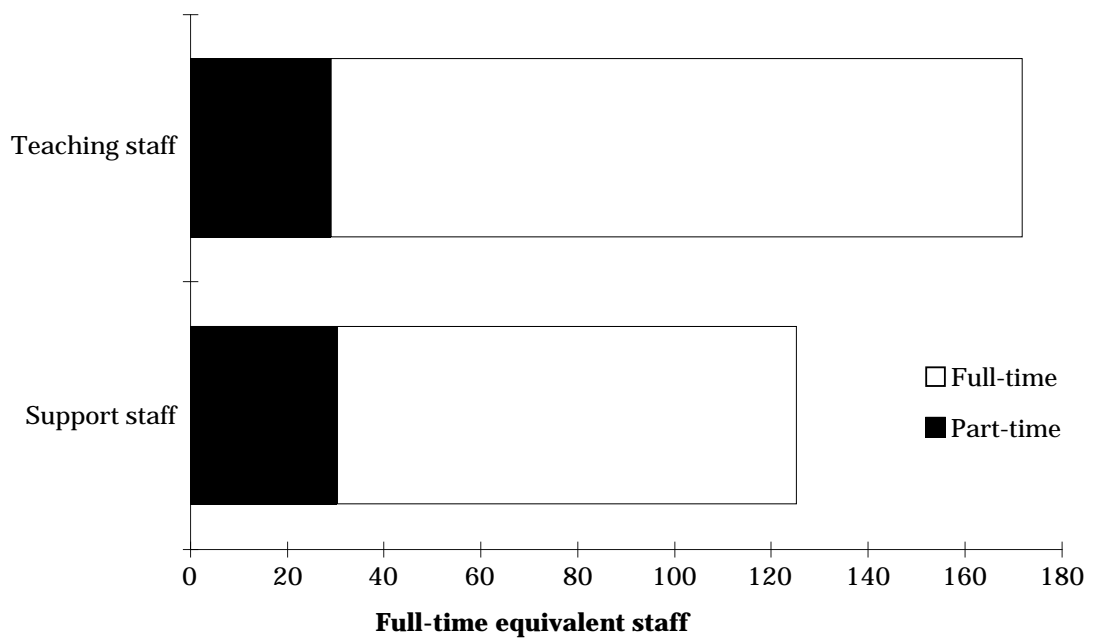Intermediate level
29%

FEFC-funded full-time equivalent enrolments: 2,014

Figure 3

Carlisle College: FEFC-funded full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)

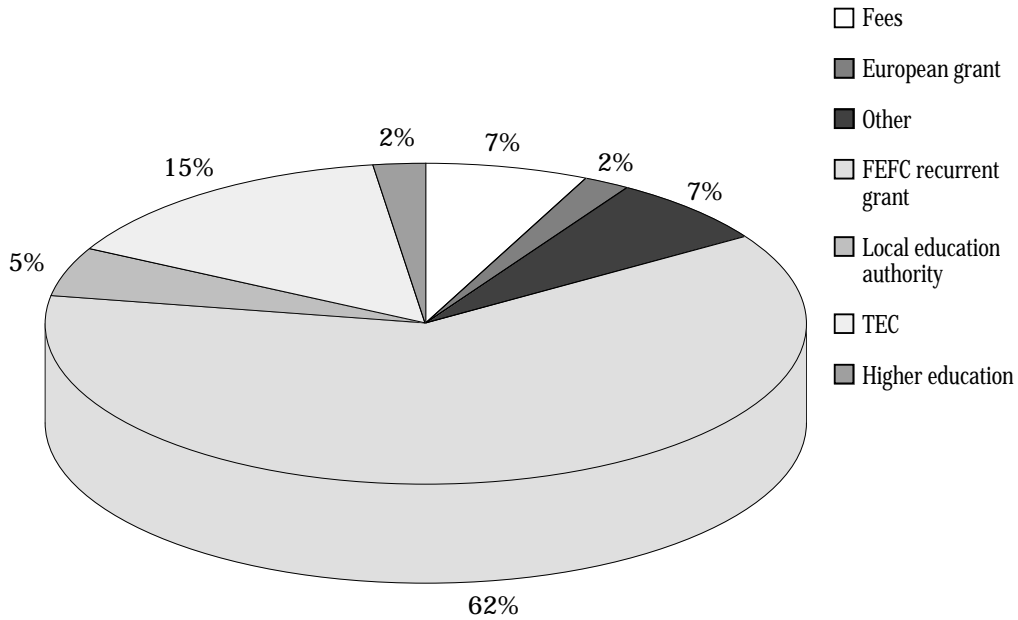FEFC-funded full-time equivalent enrolments: 2,014

Figure 4

Carlisle College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)

Full-time equivalent staff: 297

Figure 5

Carlisle College: estimated income (1993-94)

Legend:
- ☐ Fees
- ◩ European grant
- ■ Other
- ☐ FEFC recurrent grant
- ◩ Local education authority
- ☐ TEC
- ◩ Higher education

Pie chart values: 2%, 7%, 2%, 7%, 15%, 5%, 62%

Estimated income: £10,914,000

Figure 6

Carlisle College: estimated expenditure (1993-94)

Pie chart values:
- Other pay 28%
- Non-pay 27%
- Teachers' pay 45%

Non-pay	%
Premises	5.0
Administration and central	6.6
Teaching support	7.0
Costs - income generating activities	0.5
Catering and residence	0.6
Training and development	6.4
Franchising	0.6
Interest payable	0.6
Total	27.3

Estimated expenditure: £10,952,000