

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Hartlepool Sixth Form College

April 1994

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has a statutory duty to ensure that there are satisfactory arrangements to assess the quality of provision in the further education sector. It discharges the duty in part through its inspectorate, which inspects and reports on each college in the sector every four years. The Council's inspectorate also assesses and reports on a national basis on specific curriculum areas and advises the Council's quality assessment committee.

College inspections involve both full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have specialist knowledge and experience in the areas they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member from outside the world of education and a nominated member of staff from the college being inspected.

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.*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 23/94

HARTLEPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

NORTHERN REGION

Inspected November 1993 - January 1994

Summary

Hartlepool Sixth Form College, Cleveland is a major provider of GCE A level courses for 16-19 year olds. It is in the process of expanding its provision to provide for adults and students from a wider ability range. Students benefit from good teaching and from the effective support and guidance provided by subject teachers and counsellors. Their examination results are satisfactory when measured by the value added to their qualifications on entering college. The retention rates for the institution as a whole are high, but the proportion of students changing or dropping subjects is substantial. A quality assurance system is growing out of separate quality procedures related to GCE A level and vocational work, but information systems and performance indicators are, as yet, inadequate. The governors see their role largely as supporting senior management. The management structure is simple and the lines of communication are good, but middle managers have little say in college-wide management. The college should formulate clear strategies for achieving the efficiency gains which it requires. Other areas for improvement are the variable quality of equipment, limited library provision and inadequate catering facilities.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	3	English	3
Mathematics	3	Foreign languages	2
Information technology	2	Other humanities	1
Business, management & administration	3	Art, design, creative & performing arts	3

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INTRODUCTION

1 Hartlepool Sixth Form College was inspected during the period November 1993 - January 1994. From 24 to 28 January a team of five inspectors looked at aspects of cross-college provision. They also drew on specialist subject inspections carried out over the preceding five months. The subjects inspected were mathematics, science, information technology, business and management studies, art, and humanities. In all 11 inspectors spent a total of 55 inspector days in the college. They visited 82 classes, examined samples of students' work, and held discussions with governors, college managers, teaching staff, students, local employers, a representative of local schools, community representatives and parents.

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 Hartlepool Sixth Form College occurred early in the cycle, the opportunity for such response was not available.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 Hartlepool Sixth Form College, Cleveland was established in 1983. It operates on a split site on the western outskirts of Hartlepool. The main building, which accounts for approximately two-thirds of the accommodation, is a large, late nineteenth century house set in extensive grounds. The building was converted to accommodate West Hartlepool Grammar School for Boys in 1936. The college has use of adjacent buildings including extensive indoor and outdoor sports facilities and a youth centre. The other site is located approximately half a mile away in turn of the century buildings formerly belonging to a secondary school.

4 The population of Hartlepool is approximately 90,000. It is expected to fall by 2 per cent over the next 12 years while the proportion of 16-19 year olds increases. Hartlepool is an area of declining heavy industry. The town has an unemployment rate of 13.5 per cent. In common with the rest of Cleveland, it has a higher proportion of unskilled unemployed people than any other area of the country.

5 The college recruits from five local 11-16 schools. There are two other providers of post-16 education and training in the town: Hartlepool College of Further Education and a 11-18 Roman Catholic comprehensive school. Two independent single-sex day schools in Cleveland also draw some students from the area, and two special schools provide for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

6 The college exceeded its recruitment target for the academic year 1993-94. At the time of the inspection there were 616 students enrolled, of whom 529 were full-time. Most of the 87 part-time students attended in

the evenings. There were 46 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 14 support staff (figure 1). The teaching staff are organised in subject departments which vary in size from those containing only one member of staff to the largest with six. The college offers courses in mathematics, science, craft design and technology, computing, business, art, and the humanities.

7 The college, in its strategic plan, aims to provide high calibre academic and vocational education for a growing proportion of the population in its catchment area. It seeks to maintain its ethos and tradition while responding sensitively to the needs of local employers and the wider community.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

8 Hartlepool Sixth Form College is the largest provider of GCE A level education in the area. The college has concentrated on providing a wide range of General Certificate of Education advanced level (GSE A level) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses to meet the needs of 16-19 year olds. It offers 27 A level subjects, 24 GCSE subjects, and a limited number of GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects. It also provides vocational courses and courses for part-time students. The college is gradually extending its provision for students from a wider ability range and for adults. It does not offer any courses for industry but is exploring the possibilities with the local training and enterprise council (TEC). Numbers of students in each of the curriculum areas are shown in figure 2, and the percentages of students for each programme of study in figure 3.

9 Analysis of students' achievements at partner schools at sixteen has identified the need to provide courses for students with modest achievements at GCSE. In response, the college is planning to increase the range of its provision in order to attract new types of students. These plans are not yet co-ordinated across the college and staffing and resource implications have not been fully addressed.

10 The college has close relationships with local schools. There are regular meetings between the principal and heads of local secondary schools. Heads of college departments also have contact with schools. Some departments have used these contacts to identify specific curriculum needs and have set up several bridging courses. There is no co-ordination of these contacts and they are not used systematically to develop curricular links.

11 A member of the college staff co-ordinates the adult education programme of evening and day-time courses provided by the local education authority (LEA). Some college students use this facility to improve GCSE grades or to take subjects not available during the day. Links with the local TEC are developing. Meetings with them are used to discuss national and local education and training targets.

12 The provision for part-time students and adults is variable in quality. The curricular and teaching issues associated with providing new learning opportunities have not been fully addressed and this leads, in the first instance, to some adult students not completing their courses. Except in art and information technology, little has been done to adapt teaching and learning methods to the needs of adult learners. Vocational courses and those for adults remain at the periphery of the operations and not all staff are interested in developing this area of work. Most courses for adults are accredited and often lead to qualifications at GCE A level or GCSE. A notable innovation is the popular Royal Society of Arts (RSA) computer literacy course that runs for two evenings each week.

13 A wide-ranging general studies programme is available which is designed to complement GCE/GCSE work. It is compulsory for all first year full-time students and becomes optional in the second year. Religious education is provided through four formal collective acts of worship each year and the opportunity to worship every week. In addition a member of staff is responsible for identifying and meeting other needs in the field of religious education.

14 The college is committed to providing opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A good network of links with partner schools, the local education authority, careers and other support services ensures that students are guided to an appropriate college or school. Some students with learning difficulties and a smaller number with disabilities are enrolled at the college. They have access to the whole curriculum and achieve good results. Their progress is monitored by tutors and there is a member of staff who co-ordinates the required learning support. The nature of the buildings makes wheelchair access very difficult. Consequently, the needs of some students cannot be met fully.

15 Greater emphasis is being placed on marketing, and efforts are being made to involve more staff in this work. Promotional materials are well presented but much of the information is of a general nature. No strategy has been developed to attract potential students to new courses. The prospectus provides positive images to female applicants and to those from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are few positive images or statements to encourage potential students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

16 Market research is under-developed. The college uses the labour market analysis produced by the TEC to identify local needs but it fails to supplement this with information gathered from its contacts with their external agencies.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

17 At the time of the inspection there were 17 governors, including the principal, college staff and a parent. The governing body is broadly representative of business and industry and the local community. The background and experience of governors include construction,

engineering, management and financial services. Governors discharge their duties effectively. There is regular attendance at meetings of the governing body and its subcommittees and governors are involved informally in a range of college activities. Governors see one of their important functions as providing a sounding board for senior management ideas. The governors have not yet developed indicators for measuring their own or the college's performance.

18 The college has moved successfully through a number of reorganisations. The principal and other senior managers work closely as a team to run the college. Staff are kept well informed through regular briefing meetings and lines of communication are good. Currently, few opportunities exist for staff at middle management or below to contribute to discussions on whole college issues. At head of department level there is limited involvement in decision making, and the number of small departments tends to increase the isolation and to lower the morale of some staff. The college has begun to address the problem by establishing some cross-college teams, but more remains to be done. The lack of involvement has had an impact upon the attempts to revise departmental plans and to introduce cross-college initiatives such as records of achievement and new courses. The college has not been successful in developing clear policies for the institution based on objectives which staff can share and support.

19 A number of the governors, managers and staff recently participated in a residential weekend to develop the college mission and strategic plan. The experience was a valuable one for those concerned and resulted in a document which identified points of action. The mission statement and strategic plan were subsequently issued to all staff and used by departmental heads to develop their own plans. However, the college mission is not translated into operational objectives and the strategic plan is insufficiently detailed to provide a clear indication of how the college will develop. The plans produced by the departments were inconsistent in the issues they addressed and the criteria employed for measuring success and failure. The departmental focus for learning makes it difficult to deal effectively with the development of cross-departmental initiatives such as the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ).

20 The management information gathered is limited and concentrates on current financial matters. Financial reports are prepared for governors but have to be checked manually because of inadequacies in the software system used. The system has additional packages for other types of information, some of which are not currently used by the college. A separate enrolment package has been developed which is incompatible with the main system. The college should consider the total information it requires to manage its operations, and develop a strategy to gather and manage this information appropriately.

21 The college has a clear policy statement on equal opportunities and health and safety with identified managers in charge of their

implementation. Procedures for new appointments and for giving new incentive allowances take account of the gender imbalance within areas of the institution. Women remain under-represented in senior positions. More work is also required to ensure that equal opportunity issues are addressed within the curriculum and by the management of the college. There are annual health and safety inspections by the Cleveland County Safety team and their reports are acted upon. However, there is no co-ordinated college-wide response to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations.

22 Enrolment targets are set by the college. College management reviews the success in attracting students to new courses and the profile of enrolments from each of the partner schools. Some staff measure retention rates within their own classes but the ratio of successful completions to enrolments is not calculated systematically across the institution. The college has yet to develop a set of performance indicators to measure the achievement of its objectives or a systematic approach to setting college targets.

23 The college income is approximately £2.9 million. Summaries of the estimated income and expenditure for the college are shown in figures 4 and 5. The college has one of the highest units of funding per full time student, £3,073 compared with a sector average of £2,647. Staff, managers and some governors are aware of the implications of the high level of unit funding. No strategy has been developed for making the efficiency gains that the college will have to face. Unit costs are not calculated at departmental, course or subject level and are therefore not used to inform management decisions.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

24 Many students receive good individual support and guidance during the processes of recruitment and admissions. Cross-college arrangement and structures are not sufficiently developed to ensure a consistent service.

25 Impartial guidance for prospective students is provided by the schools and the careers service. The college contributes willingly and flexibly to the varied programme that they organise. Prospective students have the opportunity to visit the college on two open evenings in November. An interesting initiative is a repeat open evening in March, to encourage late applicants. Initial counselling is thorough. All students are re-interviewed in late August or early September, but the quality of the counselling is less satisfactory because of time pressures and the small number of staff involved. In offering advice, college staff are not as aware as they should be of pre-16 curriculum issues.

26 Partner schools are not asked to provide a formal reference for their pupils, and this affects the college's ability to give high-quality early guidance. GCSE results are the main criteria used for placing students on courses. The college does not use diagnostic testing to assess individual students' literacy and numeracy needs.

27 The induction week is well planned and well organised. A combination of meetings, tutorial sessions and printed information on the college and on study skills helps students to become familiar with the college systems. There is as yet no comprehensive student handbook. Introduction to individual subjects is variable in quality and content. Staff in some subject areas spend a week introducing students to study skills whereas others offer little specific help.

28 The individual support which students receive from subject teachers is generally good. Students are encouraged to ask for help and feel confident that it will be given. Some departments are developing resource workshops. These are well used by students but the provision is not uniform and, where there are workshops, they are perceived as an extension of classroom learning rather than a means of encouraging students to work independently.

29 Tutors meet their groups for registration every day, but they have little opportunity to get to know groups and individuals in a constructive way or to contribute to the development of essential learning skills. Their contribution to the reporting system is also limited. The college acknowledges the importance of the tutor's role but it is constrained by the limited time allocated to tutorial work.

30 Counsellors are responsible for supporting students' academic progress and helping them with personal difficulties. All students receive regular programmed interviews with their counsellor. Reviews of progress are linked to career planning. Students speak positively about the guidance they receive. Some counsellors advise only their own tutor group, which conflicts with the college's concept of a counsellor offering independent and additional support for students. There is a large number of counsellors in comparison to the number of tutors and all are male. It is a disadvantage to the female students that there are no female role models within the counselling service.

31 The programme of careers guidance is well planned and comprehensive. Staff from the careers service visit regularly and arrange interviews with students on request. Information about training, employment and higher education is regularly updated and well organised. The careers programme is appropriate but would be strengthened by contributions from subject departments. The careers room is isolated and uninviting. Work experience is built into vocational courses and is encouraged for GCE A level students through the general studies programme.

32 Attendance at registration and in subject classes is good. Students are aware that attendance is monitored and that absences will be followed up. Where absence is a continuing concern, tutors or counsellors contact parents and carers to help resolve the problem. Brief progress reports written by subject teachers with supporting comments from tutors and counsellors are issued to parents. There are consultation evenings which students, as well as parents, are invited to attend. Parents are encouraged

to approach tutors or counsellors if they have any worries and are appreciative of the concern shown by the staff.

33 The college's introduction of records of achievement has not been successful. These records, which are intended to develop students' self awareness and responsibility for their own learning, are valued by neither staff nor students. The current scheme is not integrated with learning, reporting, or the provision of references for students.

34 The college lacks a consistent approach to the development of basic skills in information technology, numeracy and literacy. Where there is good practice it is not shared. Some departments set out to develop a range of personal and basic skills in their provision while other departments offer little.

35 The student council successfully organises social activities for the student body. It is well supported by staff but their help sometimes overshadows the students' contributions. There is little evidence of the council being used to consult student opinion on college issues.

TEACHING AND PROMOTION OF LEARNING

36 Most of the classes observed during the inspection were GCE A level classes. This reflected the college's main area of activity but it was also because some of the inspection visits coincided with GCSE examinations. The strengths of the work clearly outweighed the weaknesses in the majority of classes. The following table summarises the inspection grades given to the teaching sessions

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
A/AS level		10	25	17	4	0	56
GCSE		0	2	3	2	0	7
GNVQ		0	3	1	0	0	4
Other		1	4	8	2	0	15
Totals		11	34	29	8	0	82

37 In most sessions students' interest was engaged and sustained with teaching designed to meet their needs. The work was challenging, well directed and often lively. It was a positive feature of some sessions that teachers frequently checked students' understanding. The quality of students' notes was generally high and there was evidence that these were well used and updated.

38 Relationships between students and staff were good and students appeared to enjoy their classes. Staff used much of their preparation and marking time to help individual students. Some group sizes were small. This enabled students to receive frequent individual attention but it did not always provide the best environment for learning. Students were generally

aware of their progress. Some departments charted progress by using individual subject diaries. Assignments were well prepared and presented and work was marked and speedily returned. Verbal feedback to students was often of high quality. However, some assessed work lacked written commentary and occasionally no marks were provided.

39 In the better sessions, teachers made use of a variety of methods and students were encouraged to participate actively. In some sessions there was too heavy a reliance on the teacher's input, or teachers concentrated on a narrow interpretation of the syllabus and preparation for the examination. In some sociology, politics and geography lessons, students made good use of information technology and audio-visual equipment. Other subject areas have been slow to adopt such techniques.

40 Most departments have clear, well-documented course objectives which are shared with and understood by students. In a number of subjects, the curriculum choice is extended by using more than one syllabus. Teaching schemes were not always available but those in use were well presented with good coverage of the syllabus. Generally classes were well managed, and staff and students were well prepared. On occasions, the lack of detailed lesson plans meant that students were unaware of schemes of work and assignment dates.

41 There are strong informal links between staff, but teachers involved in teaching the same groups do not always consult effectively. There is no forum for teachers in minority subject areas to discuss common curriculum issues.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

42 Students spoke positively about their college. They were well motivated and committed. Most of them successfully complete their programme of study.

43 In 1993, the college achieved a pass rate of 75.5 per cent. This compares with the national average of 81 per cent for GCE A and AS examinations (Quality Standards, HMSO) for the same period. The college also uses the Cleveland Research and Intelligence analysis to monitor its students' achievements. This enables the college to compare GCE A level results with performance in the GCSE examinations. The Cleveland Research and Intelligence analysis shows that students' performances are generally in line with predictions based on their results at GCSE. Some of the GCE A level results in 1993 were particularly good. For example, in history, geography and religious studies between 38 per cent and 47 per cent of students achieved grade A or B, and a geography student obtained one of the top five marks in the whole country.

44 A significant minority of students follow a one-year repeat GCSE course and achieve an average improvement of one grade. More than 35 per cent of GCSE students progress to GCE A level. Most departments are aware of the GCE A level performance of their students. However, few

incorporate targets based on examination achievement in their annual plans.

45 Students' responses in class and in written work displayed appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. However, few French or German students used the foreign language in class other than when it was required of them. In these classes the levels of oral achievement did not match those in listening, reading and writing.

46 Safe working practices were observed by students and staff in most practical situations. The rare exceptions included an example of one class of students not wearing eye protection while carrying out potentially hazardous experiments.

47 The college has initiated a policy for attracting students over 19 years of age. The computer literacy course runs on two evenings a week at full capacity. Adults have also successfully joined the GNVQ in art and design.

48 Average retention rates for the college are excellent at approximately 97 per cent. The proportion of students dropping subjects is variable and reaches 20 per cent in many subjects. The reason for this high rate of change has not been identified. The collation of statistics across the departments and a review of recruitment, guidance and induction procedures may help to identify solutions.

49 The college aims to raise the aspirations of students and provide a major route to higher education. Approximately 64 per cent of its GCE A level students progress to universities and specialist colleges throughout the country (figure 6). Over the last 10 years the college has maintained a steady number of students going to Oxford or Cambridge universities. There were five in 1993.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

50 The systems used to assure quality vary across the different areas of the college's work. College procedures for the GCE A level programme were put into practice for the first time in the academic year 1993-94. A different system is in place for the developing vocational work. The systems have some good features and are starting to affect the curriculum and its delivery. College managers have begun to develop a unitary policy for quality assurance and are adopting a more coherent approach to staff development.

51 The college's system for monitoring and reviewing the quality of its GCE A level provision uses the grade predictions provided by the Cleveland Research and Intelligence analysis. The analysis is used at each reporting stage to monitor student progress against predicted grade and to identify any corrective action needed. The system is well understood by staff, and has already led to curriculum changes. For example, the college has in its plans the introduction of a mathematics bridging course for students studying science subjects. Departments measure their success in the GCSE programme by the improvement in grades achieved by their students.

52 The management and quality assurance procedures for the small vocational provision follow the requirements of the awarding body. They include regular minuted meetings of the team of teachers delivering the course. Teachers acknowledge the benefits of the cross-curricular discussions that take place. Reports by the external verifier on the management and structure of the courses are generally favourable. Criticisms are being addressed.

53 A college-wide questionnaire has been introduced to gather students' views on their courses. Some departments also operate internal systems that monitor students' experiences in a particular subject. In the history department students have regular individual interviews with their teacher during which they agree responses to a questionnaire and agree action plans.

54 Teachers generally have a good understanding of the content and implications of the Charter for Further Education. The charter is readily available to students from the college reception desk. The college's existing student agreement outlines their rights and responsibilities. It has been used as the basis for a draft college charter.

55 The management of staff development activities for academic staff has been devolved to a working party led by a head of department. Recently, they have devised plans to ensure that staff development assists the management of change within the college. Apart from college-wide training days, activities to date have been largely in response to requests from individuals. They have been primarily related to teachers' specialist subjects though some teachers involved in vocational courses are working towards assessor or verifier awards. Teachers who attend external events are not required to report upon them or to disseminate any gains to other staff. Support staff have undertaken a variety of development activities to support their changing roles since incorporation.

56 A structured system of induction for new staff exists but it has not been applied uniformly. Teachers joining the larger, well-established departments have experienced good support from their colleagues. The support for those joining smaller or new departments is less satisfactory.

RESOURCES

Staffing

57 The college has a capable and dedicated staff. Teachers, managers and support staff identify strongly with the college. Academic staff are well qualified and show a high level of expertise in their subjects. Many voluntarily devote considerable amounts of time to supporting the college, its activities and traditions. Most have long experience in the college and the schools from which it developed. It gives stability, but the college has to ensure that there is continuing professional development for staff. Some teachers lack knowledge of current practice in education or do not have the relevant vocational experience. A high proportion of staff carries

responsibility allowances. The age profile of the staff is high. There have been some new appointments in the last two years but this followed several years with little change. The work of foreign language assistants is not effectively co-ordinated.

58 Technician support is adequate. It is partly met through the use of students, employed part-time. The caretakers have responded positively to changes in job function that now include responsibility for minor repairs and security. The increased level of security that this provides has led to a dramatic reduction in vandalism.

Accommodation

59 The main site offers a pleasant environment. Imposing buildings are situated in extensive grounds next to a public park and wooded areas. There is a substantial annexe within half a mile of the main site known as the Elwick Road annexe. The approaches to both sites lack adequate signposting for identifying the main entrances. Split-site working makes timetabling and staff communications difficult. Some teaching spaces at the main site are cramped. A number of lessons take place in demountable units. There is considerable under-utilisation of space at the Elwick Road annexe, particularly in the music block, enterprise unit, and ground floor workshops. There is no general library facility on this site.

60 The college commissioned its own full condition survey, completed in March 1993. As a result of the survey there were recommendations for repairs and renewals over five years. Space surveys have also been undertaken. The college is beginning to establish its own computerised database of areas, their condition and utilisation. The properties are generally in satisfactory condition, although some of the interior decor needs upgrading. Access for students with restricted mobility is limited, particularly at the Elwick Road annexe. Toilet facilities for students who use wheelchairs are now available on both sites.

61 Accommodation is varied and generally satisfactory. Areas that have been recently refurbished are generally more adaptable for teaching and learning. A small proportion of the accommodation is unsuitable for the work which takes place in them. Where there are fixed laboratory benches some students have difficulty in viewing the blackboard. In some rooms the noisy heaters make communication difficult. The potential of the large hall is restricted by an absence of off-stage facilities.

62 Facilities for social activities are limited, but provision for sports facilities are excellent, with adjacent playing fields and tennis courts and the college has the use of a sports hall, a swimming pool and a youth centre shared with Cleveland County Council, with whom the college is in dispute over ownership. Additionally, some use is made of outdoor centres further afield. Dining facilities are poor. Opening hours for the refectory are restricted and there is a general lack of vending services. There is no dining facility at the Elwick Road annexe.

Equipment

63 Equipment levels are satisfactory overall, but the provision varies widely both in quality and quantity. There are excellent resource rooms in several subject areas which have an accumulation of appropriate software and visual materials. In other areas, there is limited availability of visual and other learning aids. Specialist equipment is often old but serviceable. Some electronic science equipment has been recently updated. Policy on the provision of equipment for information technology is unclear. The use of information technology is at an early stage in some subjects. There is much outdated and incompatible hardware and a variety of software which is often specific to the subject and to the hardware. There is no central CD-ROM facility to assist students' choice in seeking information and to broaden the range of teaching approaches.

64 The library, situated on the main site has 40 study places. It does not act effectively as a college-wide resource. The absence of library resources at the Elwick Road annexe is a disadvantage to some students. The library has a limited and dated book stock in some subject areas and few periodicals. The library has no information technology resource except for a database used primarily for careers advice. Library staff do not have a record of the books and other learning resources located in departments. There are some good specialist book provisions within the departments but use is generally restricted to students of those subjects.

65 There is no college policy for maintenance or replacement of equipment, and no systematic consideration of future needs. There is considerable variation in the quality of the maintenance contracts negotiated by individual departments. The need for co-ordination is particularly evident in the computing field where the lack of policy has not allowed the college to maximise its purchasing power or to gain benefits from the compatibility of the equipment.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

66 Hartlepool Sixth Form College is making progress towards achieving its mission. The particular strengths of the college are:

- the positive atmosphere for learning and the good relations between students and staff
- good teaching
- a capable and dedicated staff
- high student retention rates
- satisfactory examination results in terms of value-added analysis
- good support and guidance for students at subject level.

67 The college has to address the following areas if it is to grow whilst improving its present standards of teaching and student achievement:

- clear strategies and plans to achieve the efficiency gains which the college requires
- the development of effective information systems and performance indicators
- the involvement of middle managers in cross college management
- the development of a college-wide quality assurance system
- consistency in the quality of departmental planning
- the development of records of achievement.

FIGURES

1 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)

2 Numbers of students in each of the curriculum areas (1993-94)

3 Students by programme of study (1993-94)

4 Estimated income (1993-94)

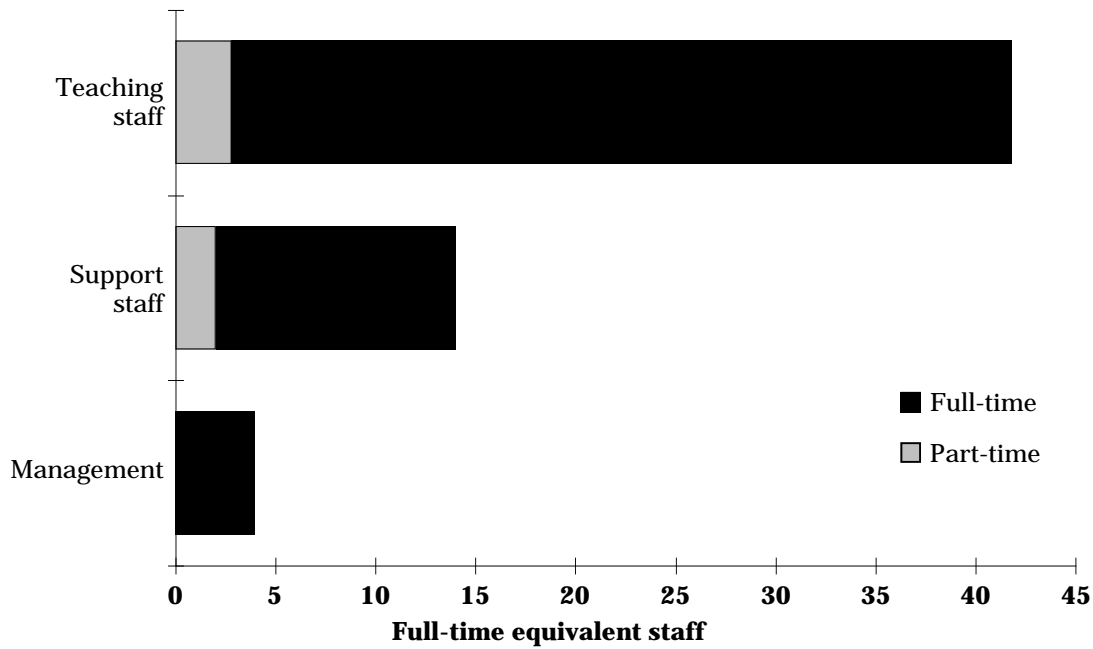
5 Estimated expenditure (1993-94)

6 Destinations of GCE A level students (1993)

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

Figure 1

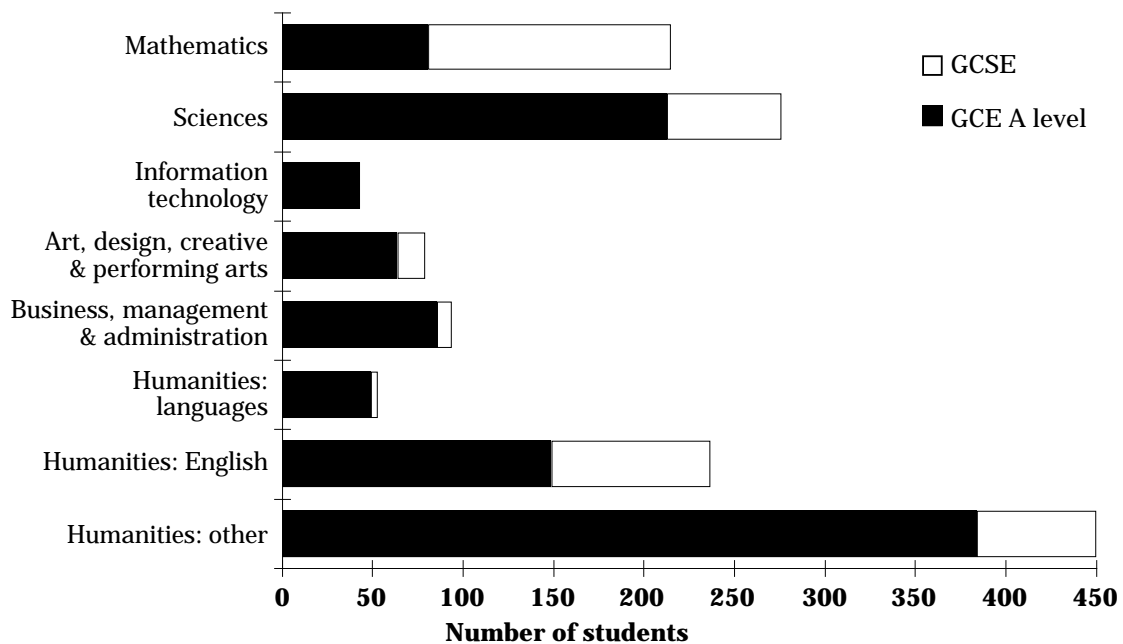
Hartlepool Sixth Form College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent staff: 60

Figure 2

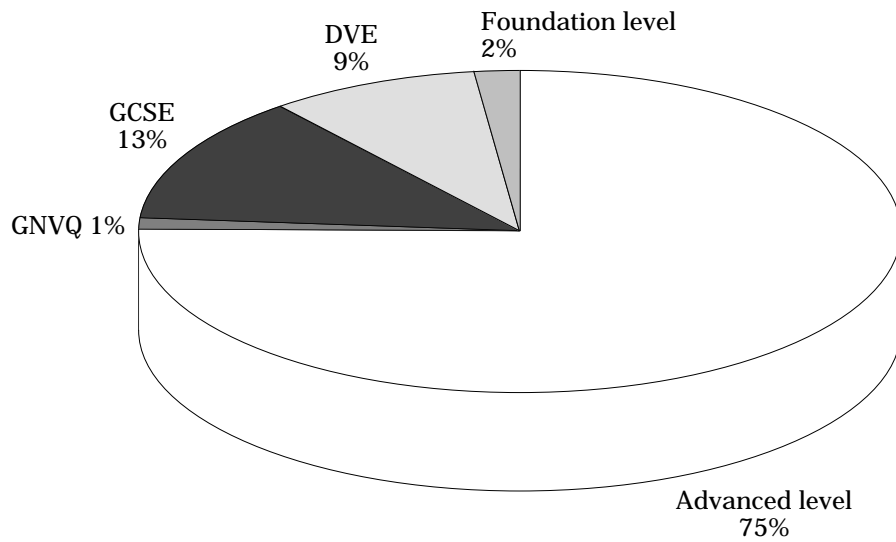
Hartlepool Sixth Form College: numbers of students in each of the curriculum areas (1993-94)



Note: most students are following courses in two or more of the curriculum areas

Figure 3

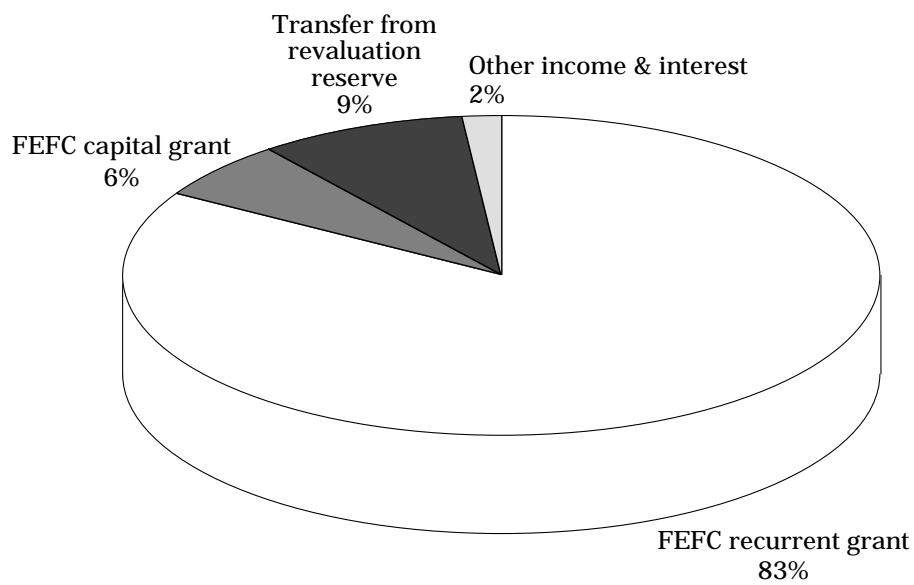
Hartlepool Sixth Form College: students by programme of study (1993-94)



Enrolments: 616

Figure 4

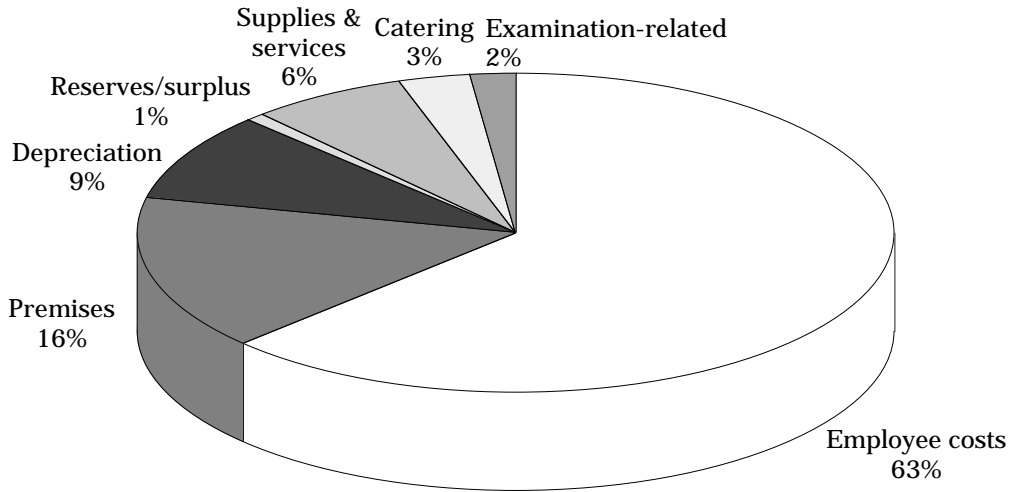
Hartlepool Sixth Form College: estimated income (1993-94)



Estimated income: £2,894,637

Figure 5

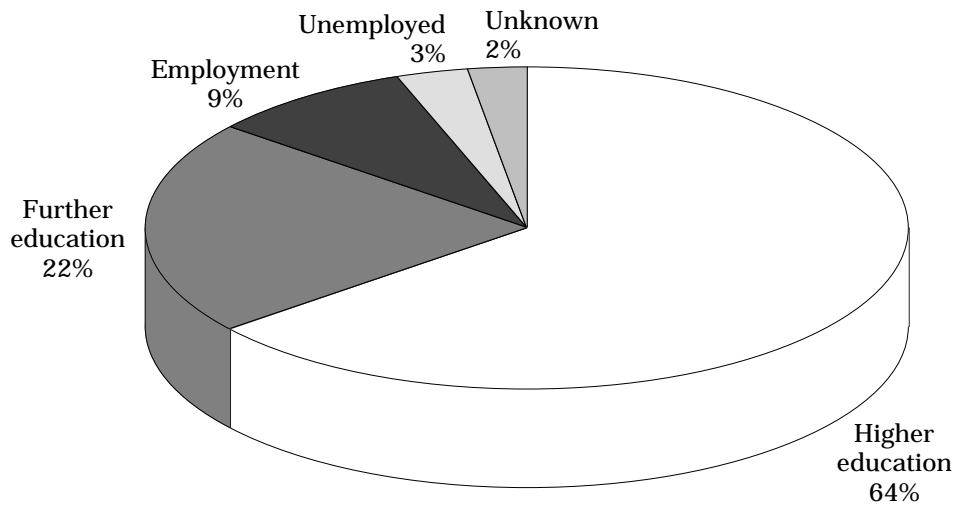
Hartlepool Sixth Form College: estimated expenditure (1993-94)



Estimated expenditure: £2,894,637

Figure 6

Hartlepool Sixth Form College: destinations of GCE A level students (1993)



GCE A level students leaving the college: 207

Figure 5

College of North East London: estimated expenditure (12 months to July 1994)

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