

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Havering Sixth Form College**

**August 1996**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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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 98/96

## HAVERING SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

### GREATER LONDON REGION

Inspected September 1995-May 1996

#### Summary

Havering Sixth Form College offers a wide range of GCE A level and GCSE courses and a limited, but increasing, number of vocational courses to full-time students aged 16 to 19 from the London borough of Havering and adjacent districts. Students also have access to an extensive enrichment programme. The college co-operates in the planning of its curriculum and the recruitment of students with local schools and Havering College of Further and Higher Education. Teaching is generally of a high standard and many students do well in external examinations. Arrangements for the recruitment, guidance and support of students are thorough and generally effective. Students' attendance is monitored closely. Arrangements for governance are effective. There is good management of departments and courses. Communications across the college are clear and effective. The quality assurance system is still developing but involves well-documented procedures covering all aspects of the college's activities. There is an effective staff-development programme. Accommodation and equipment are of a high standard. To consolidate its achievements the college should: develop more precise objectives for some departments; set quantitative targets at departmental level; ensure that the teaching in some subjects is more challenging to students; review the formal tutorial meetings and further develop the provision of learning support; encourage teachers to gain assessor and verifier awards; increase the technical support for some curriculum areas; and take steps to overcome the lack of commitment of some students to enrichment activities.

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Mathematics and computing	2	English and communication studies	2
Sciences, including physical education	2	Languages, psychology, sociology, religious studies	2
Business subjects	2	History, law, politics, classical civilisation, geography, geology, general studies	2
Art and design, including performing arts	2		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Havering Sixth Form College was inspected between March and May 1996. The college's induction and enrolment procedures were inspected in September 1995. Eighteen inspectors spent a total of 67 days in the college. Inspectors visited 142 classes, and scrutinised students' work and college documentation. Meetings were held with governors, college managers, teachers, students, parents, employers, and representatives of the careers service, local schools, and the London East Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Havering Sixth Form College was established in 1991 in a reorganisation of secondary education in the London Borough of Havering. The college's initial intake came entirely from 14 partner schools for 11 to 16 year olds in the borough. Since 1993 students have also been drawn from the four voluntary-aided schools in the borough, and, increasingly, from schools in districts closer to central London which are easily reached by public transport. One of the partner schools has retained its own sixth form.

3 The college concentrates on providing full-time courses for 16 to 19 year old students, including General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses together with General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at three levels. The major provider of vocational, adult and basic education in the borough is Havering College of Further and Higher Education with which the college has a co-operative working relationship. Under a partnership with schools in Havering and with Havering College of Further and Higher Education, pupils from Havering are guaranteed a place at one of the two colleges. There is also an extensive, but declining, provision for adults by the London Borough of Havering Adult College, especially for basic education. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

4 Until 1991, the proportion of young people in Havering continuing their education after the age of 16 was below 50 per cent. Since then, the proportion has risen rapidly so that in 1994-95, 73 per cent of school leavers from Havering chose full-time further education. A contributory factor has been the recession, particularly in the City of London. Many people travel daily to central London for employment. Most local employment is provided by small businesses, but there are two large financial services employers in the borough. The overall level of unemployment in Havering fell by 15.9 per cent to 6.6 per cent between July 1994 and July 1995, but is still above the average for London.

5 There are 107 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 24 full-time equivalent support staff. The college is managed by the principal, a vice-principal responsible for personnel, staff development, day-to-day

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administration and student matters, a vice-principal responsible for strategic planning, resources and quality assurance, and four principal tutors who share responsibility for premises, curriculum development and timetabling, the tutorial system and school liaison. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

6 The college's mission is to enable 16 to 19 year old students to work to their best advantage and maximise their intellectual, moral, physical and career development according to their individual needs. The college aims to be a major force in enabling Havering students to achieve the national targets for education and training by supporting students to realise their full potential.

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

7 The college offers an extensive range of subjects at GCE A level. Several of the 39 subjects available, including history and biology, offer a choice of syllabus. Students are able to choose almost any combination of subjects. Twenty-two GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects are also offered, but these are declining in popularity. At the time of the inspection, 675 students in year 1 and 502 in year 2 were studying two or more GCE A levels or the equivalent, including AS subjects. English is by far the most popular subject, with 479 students pursuing a course in literature, language or language and literature. Mathematics, psychology, sociology and biology all recruit large numbers.

8 The college also provides advanced GNVQ courses in art and design, business, health and social care, and leisure and tourism. One hundred and fifty-six students are currently enrolled on these courses. GCE A level and advanced GNVQ students can study one or two GCSE subjects with their main subjects. Students are expected to take GCSE English if they do not already have a C grade or above in that subject. They are also encouraged to gain a qualification in mathematics if their GCSE grade is below a grade C. Courses in the 'application of number' and City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) numeracy courses are offered in addition to GCSE mathematics. Leisure and tourism students can also take a GCE A level with their GNVQ programme, and the majority do so. From next year such students will be strongly advised to take a foreign language for its vocational relevance. Students on other advanced GNVQ courses augment their programmes with additional GNVQ units rather than with a GCE A level subject.

9 About 300 students are enrolled on one-year courses. Usually such students intend to progress to more advanced study and most take a combination of up to six GCSE subjects from the extensive range of 28 subjects offered. There are opportunities to begin a new subject, such as accounting, or design with silversmithing, as well as the chance to repeat subjects studied at school. Intermediate GNVQ is an increasingly popular choice, and 81 students are taking courses in leisure and tourism, health and social care or business. A one-year course in administration,

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at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2, provides skills for employment or for progression to NVQ level 3 at the college. There is no intermediate course in art and design, nor will one be offered in science, as it is considered that GCSE provides a suitable preparation for advanced study in these areas. Only nine students progressed from the GCSE course to advanced GNVQ in 1995, most students preferring a GCE A level course. The provision of additional units on the foundation GNVQ in business enables students to progress to intermediate courses in leisure and tourism and health and social care as well as business.

10 The college is responsive to demand and has added to its curriculum in the light of advice received from its partner schools and from market intelligence provided by the local TEC. For example, law, Italian, media studies and art and design (graphics) are recent additions to the range of GCE A levels, and the college will offer advanced GNVQs in retail and distribution and information technology, and GCE A level environmental science, from September 1996. Individual departments are careful to select courses which best meet the needs of their students, such as the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry's foreign languages at work courses which emphasise vocational and practical applications.

11 The college provides many opportunities for students to develop interests and skills outside their main studies. Building upon the existing range of non-examined complementary studies courses, and with the aim of increasing the motivation of students, the college has developed a package of about 100 activities which leads to the Further Education Award. These are certificated by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. As well as core skills development and action planning sessions, students may choose 10 week modules in subjects ranging from one of 29 sports, to 'Japanese for beginners' and the intriguingly named 'Who was Jack the Ripper?' and 'Playing the stockmarket' courses. Credits can also be gained from project-based activities, such as helping to run KAOS, the students' magazine, or teaching English in Turkey or Poland in the summer holidays, under a UNESCO sponsored scheme. The scheme, now in its second year, is closely monitored and evaluated, and has been modified in the light of experience. Some students show a lack of commitment to enrichment activities; this is reflected in low attendance at some sessions.

12 The college benefits from its proximity to the nationally known Europa Centre, which provides school and college students with simulated visits to different European countries, and is a source of language teachers and assistants for the college and of work experience for students. The Havering music centre uses college premises for tuition and concerts and, in exchange, college students are able to participate in events. A dynamic and well-managed programme of community service and charity fund raising has established widespread connections with institutions such as schools and hospitals, and with individuals who are helped by students as part of their Further Education Award sessions. In 1995-96, 120 students



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have taken part in activities ranging from work in infant schools to providing help for individual mothers with children with cerebral palsy.

13 The college recognises that it needs to strengthen its links with employers and has appointed two members of staff to co-ordinate activities. All NVQ and GNVQ students undertake work experience. There are currently no employer liaison groups to support the development of vocational courses. Steps are being taken to build links with higher education, notably in establishing a compact with three other sixth form colleges and 11 universities. This guarantees an interview to those students who put one of the universities as their first or second choice. The compact is providing valuable direct links with named staff in the universities. The college has established a few overseas links. For example, in May 1996 a group of 38 GNVQ leisure and tourism and 14 GCE A level Spanish students will take part in a study visit to Ibiza. Relations with the local TEC are good; development funds totalling £44,000 over the last two years have provided both computing hardware and staff development. This funding has enabled some staff teaching on GNVQ courses to spend time in a relevant workplace. College managers express appreciation of the assistance provided by the local TEC in formulating bids for funding.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

14 The arrangements for the governance of the college are effective. The powers delegated from the corporation to managers are appropriate. Governors and managers understand each other's roles, and governors have confidence in managers' expertise. Managers regularly present detailed reports to the corporation on financial and other resource issues, as well as on developments related to the curriculum. The expertise which governors have in areas such as accounts, law, personnel and education mean that the reports are scrutinised in a detailed, knowledgeable manner. Governors have shown a particular interest in the achievements of students and in matters related to the quality of the provision.

15 Governors manage their procedures well. The attendance rate for governors' meetings is high. Governors receive good support from the clerk to the corporation who has been appointed specifically to the post and who has extensive experience of educational issues. As well as ensuring efficient planning and preparation for corporation meetings, the clerk is a valuable source of independent advice to governors. Governors have introduced a code of conduct and a register of interests is being prepared. They have established targets to improve their effectiveness. One of their targets is to improve their knowledge of the college's provision by visiting departments to talk to staff and students, and by observing lessons. So far, over half of the governors have taken part in this activity. The annual development conference for governors has also enabled governors to gain a clearer understanding of the work of the college.

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16 There are 14 governors, including five women. The corporation includes the principal, a nominee of the local TEC, seven business members, two members drawn from the staff of the college, two parents of students at the college, and one co-opted member who is the head teacher of a partner school. The nomination committee of the corporation has identified a need to recruit governors who live or work locally. In addition to the nomination committee, the committees of the corporation cover audit, finance and employment, premises, senior staff remuneration and student admissions. There is also a chairman's committee which is occasionally convened to consider issues which are outside the terms of reference of the other committees. Committee meetings are scheduled carefully in relation to the main corporation meetings. The reports and recommendations of the committees are presented to the corporation clearly and concisely. In general, debates which have taken place in committees are not repeated at corporation meetings.

17 The college's strategic plan has been developed in consultation with its staff. Governors were fully briefed as the plan was developed. The annual conference for governors has provided governors with valuable opportunities to contribute to the strategic planning process. As well as playing a significant role in formulating the plan, departments have subsequently produced their own operational objectives. Objectives have also been prepared for aspects of the college's pastoral support system and other aspects of cross-college provision. In some cases, departmental objectives lack precision and there is no indication as to who in a department is responsible for taking actions and monitoring outcomes.

18 Most of the management and organisational structures of the college are clearly understood by staff. There are terms of reference for all the college's committees. Although there is a satisfactory understanding amongst staff of line management roles and responsibilities, job descriptions for senior managers have not yet been finalised. The senior management team of seven comprises the principal, two vice-principals and four principal tutors. The team meets weekly to develop policies and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan. Heads of department are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is developed in line with the strategic plan; they meet three or four times each year with members of the senior management team to discuss issues arising out of the plan's implementation. Similarly, senior tutorial advisers and representative tutors meet to review the development of the tutorial system. Overall, the day-to-day management of departments and courses is effective.

19 Communications within the college are effective. The principal conducts a daily briefing session for staff, and a news bulletin is published three times each week. The various management committees also provide opportunities for views to be exchanged. Communications between senior managers and heads of department have been further improved recently by designating the vice-principals and principal tutors as curriculum area

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advisers, each responsible for liaising with a small group of departmental heads.

20 There has been significant progress in developing a management information system to support the work of the college. The electronic system to monitor students' attendance produces comprehensive, accurate data for teachers and tutors. There is a broad range of information available on students, their programmes of study, retention and examination results. There is now a need to define more clearly the needs which particular groups of managers have for information so that reports can be tailored to their requirements. Senior managers, heads of department and other middle managers have direct access to the computerised management information system. However, some managers would benefit from training so that they can use the system more effectively.

21 The use of performance indicators to monitor developments and promote efficiency is increasing. The six performance indicators for colleges set out in Council Circular 94/31, *Measuring Achievement* have been estimated and reviewed by the governors. Enrolment targets are calculated for curriculum areas but the extent to which departments set quantitative targets for retention and students' achievements has been limited. Steps are being taken currently to address this issue.

22 The college has 14 cost centres. Following thorough consultations, budgets are determined and funds delegated to cost centres. There is then a further limited delegation of funds to departments to cover books, stationery, materials and small items of equipment. The informative financial reports which managers receive regularly enable them to scrutinise expenditure closely. The college does not have a specification of the costs of individual courses.

23 Summaries of the college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The average level of funding for 1995-96 is £19.18 per unit compared with £19.74 in 1994-95. The median figure for sixth form colleges is £19.37.

24 The college's equal opportunities policy aims to create a learning and working environment which encourages students and staff to maximise their potential. The policy is promoted through the equal opportunities committee and through activities organised by the equal opportunities officer.

25 A priority is the raising of issues relating to equality of opportunity among students and staff. No students have responded to an invitation to join the committee. With help from committee members, heads of department oversee the drawing up of statements of intent, reviews of strategic objectives, and the auditing of curriculum and teaching materials. Equal opportunities issues are a component of both the tutorial programme and the Further Education Award. However, there has been only limited success in influencing some entrenched attitudes among students. The

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principal has delegated to the principal tutor for resources overall responsibility for implementing the college's health and safety policy. Initiatives designed to achieve the policy's objectives are devised and organised by the safety officer working in conjunction with the safety committee.

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

26 The college is making great progress in achieving the major objective of its mission 'to be a supportive community'. The vice-principal (college community) is responsible for students' recruitment, guidance and support, assisted by two principal tutors, one for liaison and admissions and one for tutorial arrangements. In addition, there are seven senior tutorial advisers who each lead a team of personal tutors and act as advisers to them. They and representatives of the tutors form a tutorial advisory board which meets regularly to review procedures and plan necessary staff development. Most teachers act as personal tutors; their role is clearly defined. There are well-documented policies and procedures on admissions, guidance, induction, the role of the tutor group, records of achievement and action planning, and liaison with schools.

27 There are thorough and effective arrangements to ensure that applicants to the college are given full information and guidance to enable them to choose the most appropriate course and to ease the transition from school to college. All students in partner schools receive a well-presented prospectus which gives clear information about the college and its courses. Senior college staff and liaison tutors give presentations to pupils in their schools. The college holds a number of preview evenings during which pupils and their parents can attend small group activities which introduce them to a variety of college courses. A team of liaison tutors interviews applicants from partner schools in February at their schools. Ninety per cent of students from partner schools who apply to the college actually enrol on courses. Applicants from elsewhere who apply by the February half term are guaranteed an interview, but selection depends upon availability of places on the required course. Initial induction in June consists of an evening when students and their parents meet personal tutors and a morning when students meet subject teachers and look round the college. Applicants from other schools are interviewed in college and also invited to the initial induction. A further detailed interview in September establishes that the choice of course is realistic and confirms the offer after GCSE grades are known. Changes can be made at this stage, or after the course has started, if agreed with the tutor. Most students and their parents are well informed about the college and the demands of their chosen course.

28 Students receive a welcoming and detailed introduction to the college in September. This includes a practical induction into the use of the library and information technology centre. Course induction sessions observed in September were generally lively and involved the students in relevant and

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realistic activities. All students are given a handbook which contains essential information and a diary with a weekly planner to aid time management. Parents also receive a guide which describes the role of the personal tutor and gives important dates and useful contacts.

29 There are 85 tutor groups, consisting of students from different courses and years. Compulsory tutorials take place every day for 15 minutes and achieve their limited aim of giving information and ensuring regular contact. However, in the tutorials observed tutors did not all use the time effectively and some students were not fully involved in activities. Students wishing to see their tutors confidentially can make appointments for a meeting at a mutually convenient time. There are good relationships between students and their tutors. The college aims to develop positive moral and social attitudes through theme weeks and extended tutorials which take place twice a term. The topics covered include equal opportunities, drugs and HIV, higher education application, as well as study skills and managing money. Materials have been prepared to help tutors who receive training in how to deliver extended tutorials. The extended sessions are not entirely successful in achieving their aim because students do not always recognise their value or relevance to the rest of their programme.

30 The recording and reporting of students' progress is systematic. There are reviews twice a term when every subject teacher completes a report on attendance, commitment and attainment, and discusses these reports with the student concerned. Parents' evenings are held twice in the first year of a two-year course and on one-year courses, and once in the second year. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for ensuring that subject reports are completed, for taking reports home and for maintaining their records of achievement. The frequent reviews disrupt teaching time, and end-of-year evaluations revealed that significant numbers of students thought that the reviews were not very useful to them. The college recognises this and is introducing further training for tutors.

31 Attendance is closely monitored through electronic registration; unauthorised absence is speedily followed up by office staff. Subject teachers are required to report continuing absence to tutors who telephone students and, if necessary, parents. There are clear procedures for seeing students who may be experiencing difficulties with their course. Early leavers are interviewed to identify their reasons for leaving.

32 Three members of the chaplaincy and a counsellor provide students with confidential guidance. There is opportunity for a collective act of worship and a small but active Christian union. The college council provides a forum for students to express their views. It has representatives from each tutor group as well as college staff. It is effective in bringing about improvements, but not all students are aware of what it does. The college allocates £5,000 to a fund which aims to ensure that students are not prevented by financial difficulties from taking part in all college activities, including field trips and visits.

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33 The college welcomes and supports students with physical disabilities. Close contact is established and maintained in the year before they join the college to make sure that their needs are identified and met. In the college, they are supported with sensitivity and discretion.

34 Students who decide they need learning support, or who are identified by their schools or tutors as needing learning support, are referred to the learning support co-ordinator. At the time of the inspection, 39 students were seeing a learning support tutor individually or in groups of two or three, for help with written work or mathematics or with problems caused by dyslexia. However, the learning support co-ordinator has only recently been appointed, students' attendance is spasmodic and many students are not aware of the support they could have. There are few materials to enable students to practise the skills they need to develop. The effectiveness of learning support provision has not yet been monitored.

35 A senior tutor liaises with the careers service to provide a good level of guidance. An attractive, well-stocked, centrally-placed careers office is staffed by the careers service from 09.00 to 17.00 hours during term time and at the end of the summer vacation. The vast majority of students have an individual careers interview and use the office to get information from prospectuses and/or computer software. The college monitors whether or not students have had a careers interview and encourages all to do so. An extended tutorial is devoted to higher education applications, and tutors help students to complete their personal statements. The careers service organises additional group sessions and visits to events such as university and employment fairs. In 1995, these events enabled students to come into contact with 28 universities and 24 employers, respectively.

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

36 The strengths outweighed the weaknesses in 80 per cent of the teaching sessions inspected. This is higher than the national figure of 64 per cent quoted in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1994-95*. The weaknesses outweighed the strengths in only 3 per cent of the lessons. The average attendance in the classes inspected was 88 per cent. The following table summarises the grades awarded in these classes.

##### **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		34	53	15	3	0	105
GCSE		4	9	5	0	0	18
GNVQ		0	10	1	1	0	12
Other		1	2	4	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>142</b>

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37 Relationships between teachers and students were good. Programmes of study were coherent and generally of a high quality. The best schemes of work were comprehensive, made reference to expected learning outcomes, teaching methods, teaching aids to be used and opportunities to assess students' progress. The aims, objectives and content of courses were generally communicated to students in course handbooks at the beginning of the course. Students experienced a wide range of methods of teaching and learning including lectures, practical work, group work, work experience and case studies.

38 On all courses work was set regularly, with clear deadlines for completion. Teachers returned work to students promptly. Some teachers paid insufficient attention to the correction of spelling and grammatical errors in students' work. Marked work usually contained helpful comments to enable students to improve the standard of their work. In mathematics, grades are recorded on a form, the reverse side of which is used for action planning. In languages, there is a common marking scheme based on the examination boards' marking schemes; records of achievements in mock examinations are compared with the board's marking boundaries on the record sheet so that students can see the level at which they can realistically aim.

39 Teachers of sciences were knowledgeable in their subjects. In practical sessions, students worked effectively on a range of experiments with support from teachers. Group work was rarely used. Links between the theory and practice of science were established in a GCE A level physical education lesson where groups of students studied the physiology of the heart by measuring each others' heart rates. Additional mathematics lessons are offered to students of sciences who are not studying mathematics as a main subject. Some assignment briefs in computing were imaginative and provided students with a clear structure to ensure progress. In contrast, in some computing lessons the tasks placed insufficiently stringent demands upon students.

40 In business classes, experienced teachers with up-to-date professional knowledge and recent relevant experience worked closely together to design appropriate tasks. Classroom activities were varied and students were provided with a range of useful study guides and materials. Work experience is given a high priority on vocational programmes, but currently this opportunity is not extended to GCE A level students of business subjects. Students were encouraged to apply their theoretical knowledge in practical business settings. For example, in a GNVQ advanced business studies lesson on motivation in the workplace, the teacher used the recent experience of the Rover vehicle group to illustrate theory and students were able to link the work to examples from their own experience. In a few classes, there was excessive teacher exposition and too much copying from the board by students which resulted in a lack of attention from students and insufficient challenge to the more able in mixed-ability groups.

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41 Lessons in performing arts and music were characterised by challenge, creativity and co-operative working. There were opportunities for individual, group and whole class work. Where tasks were not differentiated for differing ability levels, some students' abilities were not developed adequately. In drama, students were encouraged to use their imagination and create their own dramatic works. Students working on the play *Our Country's Good*, set in 1790, used letters from the period as stimulus material. By skilful use of questioning teachers checked regularly that learning had taken place. Teachers expected high standards of practical work from students in both music and drama.

42 Art and design classes were well planned and managed effectively. Assignment briefs were thoroughly prepared and realistic, and frequently stretched students' skills. In most classes teachers were careful to ensure that all students participated and that quiet students were given appropriate support. In a few classes, a small number of students was allowed to dominate. There are few direct links with industry. This limits the access to the real world of work which could improve students' awareness of professional practice and their knowledge of the applications of new technologies in the workplace. For example, one group of students was involved in a project to design consumer products for a national company, but had no direct contact with the company.

43 In sociology, psychology and religious education, students experience a clear and well-organised sequence of learning. Teachers use a variety of classroom activities. The treatment of contentious issues is balanced. Lessons are generally well planned and well managed, but in some lessons teachers did things for students which they could be expected to do for themselves, such as recalling previous work, assessing the significance of previous work, putting together essay plans, and summarising conclusions at the end of classes. In the better classes, teachers conveyed their interest in the subject, showed high but realistic expectations of students, set challenging but attainable tasks, made effective use of teaching aids, and systematically checked how much the students had understood.

44 A variety of teaching methods was used in history, government and politics, law and classical studies. Group work was used effectively in several classes. For example, two classes were observed where students worked in three groups to explore whether Stalin was responsible for the death of Kirov. Each group presented its theory, justified its arguments with documentary source materials, and were questioned by the other two groups. In geography and geology, students worked on assignments related to real-life situations. For instance, students used examples of local and regional planned developments as a focus for study. They compared the conclusions they reached with the actual decisions and actions which had taken place. In some classes, students were not given the opportunity to participate actively or develop their own ideas independently.



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45 Modern language teaching challenged students effectively. Many classes were taught entirely in the language being studied and in those classes students' oral skills were of a high standard. In a few classes, teachers often lapsed into English and students in those classes were less confident in speaking the language they were learning. Teachers did not always check students' understanding of tasks set. Students made good use of the Europa Centre to simulate visits to European countries. A GCE A level French group was observed in the centre asking questions of five native French speakers on a range of topics, and taking notes of their discussions.

46 The teaching of English and communication studies was lively and varied in most classes. Although course planning and documentation in English is good, individual lessons often lacked specific objectives. In a minority of lessons the tasks were insufficiently demanding for the more able students. Students received clear and informative handbooks which included information about the course, assessment criteria and log sheets to record their progress. Students are encouraged to submit their work for publication. Imaginative assignments are used to support the work on set texts. For example, students were asked to write a scene based on *Death of a Salesman*, but projecting themselves into the future. In small groups, each scene was discussed, and one selected from each group to be acted for the whole class. When the play itself was read, students acted parts well using props and movement to bring the play alive as a performance.

#### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

47 In the majority of classes students were well motivated and positive about their work. They spoke enthusiastically about their courses and the college. Students are generally achieving appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding and satisfactory standards of skill in their practical work. The college participates in the Further Education Award which provides opportunities for students to broaden their range of experiences. In 1994-95, 40 students completed six activities to achieve the full award and a further 266 completed at least three activities.

48 Retention rates are high on most courses. Between November 1995 and April 1996, the college recorded an overall retention rate of over 90 per cent. On GCE A level courses, in business studies, biology, chemistry, English language and literature, geography, geology, history and mathematics retention rates were over 90 per cent. There were also high retention rates on GCSE courses in accounting, biology, business studies, design, English, and media studies. However, on a few GCE A level courses, notably in economics, graphical communication, law and psychology, and on GCSE courses in art and design, law and mathematics retention remains an issue.

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49 The standard of achievement in coursework is generally good but there is some variation across the college. Work in art and design demonstrates high standards in research and exploration. Standards in written work produced by students on English courses are high, particularly in creative writing. Written work on media courses is also of a high standard. However, some of the written work produced by students in religious education is unsatisfactory and some of the written work in theatre studies is not up to the standard of the practical work. Some students of modern languages have underdeveloped listening and speaking skills.

50 The standard of some work in computing was low. Use of computers across the curriculum varies. In business studies, students learn to use up-to-date versions of industrial standard software. However, students studying law and some other humanities subjects make little use of information technology. The college is determined to increase students' grasp of this core skill. A recent staff-development programme has concentrated on this area and, from September 1996, information technology will become a compulsory element in the curriculum of all students.

51 In 1995, students aged 16 to 18 who entered for one or more GCE AS/A level examinations scored, on average, 4.6 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2). This places the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the performance tables published by the Department for Education and Employment.

52 In 1995, there were 1,395 entries for GCE AS/A level examinations in 34 subjects. The average pass rate (grades A to E) was 85 per cent for GCE A level and 71 per cent for AS subjects. This represents a small improvement on the college's performance in 1994. Both years were comparable with the national average in 1995 of 84 per cent for sixth form colleges. In 1995, there was a 100 per cent pass rate in further mathematics, Spanish, music, and theatre studies. Students in another 11 subjects including biology, English literature, chemistry, physical education and business studies achieved pass rates of over 90 per cent. In 1995, one student gained excellent marks in GCE A level physical education and achieved one of the top five results in the country. In 1994 and 1995 pass rates at grades A to C in GCE A levels were 47 per cent, just below the national average in 1995 of 50 per cent for sixth form colleges.

53 In 1995, there were 844 entries in 31 subjects at GCSE. The average pass rate was 54 per cent, above the national figure of 48 per cent for sixth form colleges. In 1995, students achieved pass rates above national averages in several subjects, including business studies, English language, English literature, mathematics, media, physical education and sociology. In 1995, GCSE examination results in art and design, photography, physics, psychology, statistics and science were significantly lower than those achieved in 1994.

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54 Approximately 14 per cent of the college's students are following vocational courses. Pass rates on these courses vary. Eighty-two per cent of students entered for the intermediate GNVQ in health and social care, 78 per cent of those taking the NVQ level 2 in administration, and 73 per cent of those completing the intermediate GNVQ in business studies were successful. Of the 21 students who sat for RSA Examinations Board shorthand awards, 86 per cent passed. In 1995, 27 students completed their final year of study on the vocational courses which are included in the Department for Education and Employment's 1995 performance tables and all were successful. This placed the college in the top 10 per cent of colleges in the sector on this performance measure.

55 Students on the GCE AS/A level performing arts courses achieve high standards in public performance in drama and music and many students from other courses are involved in a variety of activities, including the college choir, music recording, and writing. In 1996 four of the six recipients of prizes at the Havering Young Musician of the Year competition were students of the college, and a fifth was a former student.

56 In 1994 the college won 'the double' of the under-19s' football London Cup (The Ebdon Trophy) and the under-19s' cricket London Cup (The Cricketer Cup). College teams were runners-up for the under-19s' cricket cup, and winners of the under-17s' Essex cricket cup in 1995. The football team won the Ebdon Cup in May 1996. In swimming, the college had finalists in the boys national medley relay and freestyle relay. Other students have represented the county at athletics and swimming. The college has national school champions in swimming and rowing and regional champions in badminton, cross-country running and table-tennis.

57 In 1995, 229 students went into higher education, 173 on to further education courses, 156 into employment and the destinations of 71 other students were unknown. Each year between 15 and 20 students decide to defer entry to higher education for a year in order to gain some work experience relevant to their proposed studies.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

58 The college's quality assurance policy reflects its commitment to ensure that learning activities are of the highest possible standard and are systematically reviewed. General oversight of the quality assurance system is the responsibility of the vice-principal for quality, strategy and resources. A well-documented, coherent, annual cycle of procedures is followed which sets standards for teaching and learning, support services and administrative areas. There are performance indicators for the efficiency of the corporation board which cover such aspects as attendance at meetings and governors' visits to curriculum departments. A clear quality assurance manual has been published which sets out the requirements of the cycle and allocates responsibility for monitoring progress towards achieving improvements. The procedures include course review, annual

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departmental and cross-college self-assessment reports, surveys of students' and parents' views, teachers' evaluations and analysis of achievement data. Reports are considered by the senior management team and plans for action, with targets and timescales, are agreed to promote improvements. Particular attention is paid to comparing the GCE A level performance of students with their GCSE scores on entry using the Advanced Level Information System adopted since the first GCE A level results in 1993. Students' achievements are discussed by the performance review committee of the corporation and presented to the full board. Those subjects in which results do not show added value are considered most closely.

59 The quality assurance system generally works well. Improvements have taken place which can be directly attributed to the quality process. Adjustments have been made to the system for enrolment and induction of students after careful evaluation of staff review and students' surveys. Reports on cross-college administrative support show progress towards achieving quantitative performance targets for providing services. In academic departments, reviews have often resulted in improvements in practice. For example, in modern languages students' results in course tests are now monitored more regularly so that help can be given early to students, if it is needed. A rigorous method of approving new courses, including thorough consideration of educational and resources implications by the heads of department, the senior management team and the principal, has almost always ensured that new courses are introduced successfully.

60 The annual course and departmental reports for 1994-95 were prepared according to a prescribed layout and were more comprehensive than those of previous years. A self-critical evaluation of performance is required which provides supporting evidence, for example from course reviews and students' questionnaires, for any comments made or targets set. The reports include examination results, class size, retention data and detailed information about the courses. Most reports are balanced, indicate areas for improvement and set achievable targets. The report for business studies is commendably self-critical, reflects the freely-expressed views of staff and students, and includes clear departmental objectives. However, a minority of reports describe performance rather than evaluating it. Performance targets are often expressed in terms of outcomes but more quantitative targets for improvement are needed in some areas. The reports are carefully monitored and discussed with heads of departments by the vice-principal for quality, strategy and resources. Issues for cross-college action are noted and the reports are subsequently considered by the senior management team and discussed in corporation meetings.

61 Students' views are sought through standard college questionnaires after induction, at the end of the first year for two-year courses, and on leaving. Parents have also been asked to respond to surveys. Students'

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views about their individual subjects are also regularly canvassed through questionnaires and discussions with teachers. The process is thorough, and students' views are analysed and evaluated. As a result, there have been changes to GCE A level examining boards or syllabus options, improvements to the library accommodation and some rescheduling of written work. There is a need to improve the methods of informing students of improvements resulting from surveys: students currently learn the outcomes of course reviews more readily than those from cross-college questionnaires.

62 The students' charter, introduced in 1994, is informative and reflects the national charter for further education. Students are familiar with the charter and are aware of their entitlements. Staff and students have been consulted over a review of the charter which is being undertaken in 1995-96. The proposed changes are designed to simplify the content, where appropriate, and express it in the most practical, commonsense terms. The intention is to link the college's charter commitment to students more closely to its obligations as set out in the individual learning agreement.

63 The college has a policy and programme for staff development which is responsive to curriculum needs. Staff development is generally successful in supporting operational objectives. There is a supportive and flexible programme of induction for newly-qualified teachers which provides professional and general advice. This is appreciated by new staff, and has been adjusted following review. In 1995-96, funds spent on staff development amounted to 0.63 per cent of the college staffing budget. Further progress needs to be made towards providing assessor and verifier qualifications for teachers of vocational courses. There is training to meet individual appraisal targets, and to support requests for continuing personal development. Some training arises as a result of the application of quality assurance procedures. For example, proposals for in-service training in how to guide students stemmed from survey evidence showing the need to improve tutorial reviews. Staff evaluate the training they receive in terms of content, delivery and relevance. A further review three months afterwards gives a longer-term assessment of the value of the training to the college. Reviews of courses attended are being disseminated through the college's new staff-development newsletter. The college has identified needs for more training for teachers in assessment methods and for some general training for middle managers.

64 Shortly prior to incorporation, the college committed itself to the local education authority's staff appraisal scheme which works on a two-year rolling programme for the appraisal of all teaching and other staff. Implementation has been progressive. Training for appraisal began in October 1992. So far, all staff have been appraised except for some members of senior management. Staff have accepted the introduction of the system in a positive way. Classroom and other observation is part of the process.

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65 Departmental and cross-college reports provide much source material for the college's self-assessment report. This is well written, following the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. It provides a useful descriptive overview of the work of the college together with a summary of conclusions and issues. An associated action plan shows proposed improvement targets, responsibilities and timescales. The report is generally objective and areas for improvement are noted in the text. The judgements made in the report are broadly in line with the findings of inspectors, though the report does not specifically record all the weaknesses which inspectors identified.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

66 The staff at Havering Sixth Form College are an able, committed and enthusiastic team. The college employs 107 full-time equivalent teaching staff, of whom over 92 per cent are full time. The deployment of staff is effectively monitored by senior management. Staff are well qualified academically; 96 per cent have first degrees or equivalent qualifications, 21 per cent higher degrees, and 99 per cent have teaching qualifications. Three per cent are of minority ethnic origin. Women make up about half of the teaching staff and there is one woman in the senior management team.

67 Approximately 20 per cent of teachers have had industrial or professional experience in the last five years. All staff teaching business either have degrees or professional qualifications and many have business experience. Science staff bring a rich blend of previous experience both from school teaching and industry, and many are active members of their respective subject associations. Computing staff are well qualified with extensive teaching but limited commercial experience. Staff teaching languages are well qualified. In addition to the expertise of the staff teaching physical education, students benefit from the contributions made by other members of staff who have sports qualifications, including a windsurfing instructor. Two staff teaching English are published writers, one a poet, the other a novelist. Some staff have achieved assessor and verifier qualifications. Five have assessor awards, nine have assessor and internal verifier awards, and one has the assessor and internal verifier awards as well as the accreditation of prior learning award. However, computing staff, and a number of business staff, still require training.

68 In addition to teaching staff, there are a further seven full-time equivalent staff who support direct learning, and 17 other staff including the principal and vice-principals. The level of technical support varies. Science staff are well supported by an enthusiastic technical team, but other subjects need more support. In art and design, technical support for three-dimensional work is inadequate. Technical support is needed for music technology, theatre sound and lighting, and the recording of satellite

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programmes for language students. These functions are currently being carried out by teachers.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

69 The equipment available for teaching is of a high standard and classrooms are generally well equipped. The rooms used for art and design are well equipped for the current range of work and existing student numbers. The new workshop for three-dimensional work is well planned and is an important and valuable resource. There are good facilities for dance, drama and music which include a new music technology studio and a well-equipped theatre. Students studying physical education have access to appropriate on-site equipment for the programmes that require indoor facilities, but there are no playing fields, athletic areas, tennis courts, or swimming pool for the outdoor elements of the GCE A level and GCSE provision on site. Sciences are well equipped. Students often have enough equipment to work individually on practical investigations. The college has a receiver for satellite television, but this is underused.

70 The college's information technology centre and library are well resourced. It includes 146 individual study spaces and an area which can accommodate a group of 25 students in the library; a ratio of one study space to every 9.5 full-time students. The library is well stocked with books, periodicals, newspapers, compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database terminals, video and audio cassettes. The library budget of £20,000 for 1995-96 is an increase of 40 per cent over the previous year. About 75 per cent of the budget is delegated to the teaching departments who order new books through the librarian. The provision of books and other materials across the curriculum is generally good. There is a broad range of books and journals to support project work in science courses, and there are multiple copies of many books in law and history. The business studies collection is of moderate size and good quality; there is a good selection of reference books, literature, and fun reading texts for language students and, in art and design, students benefit from resources which are well used and meet their needs. In addition to the bookstock held in the library, the departments hold stocks of standard texts and a growing bank of flexible learning materials which are loaned to students at no cost.

71 The college has a wide range of computer hardware and software. There are 279 computers available for students' use which gives a ratio of computers to full-time students of 1:5.9. Seventy-nine of these machines are available for students to use at times of their choosing; 66 of these are in the information technology centre. The budget for the purchase of computer equipment has been trebled in 1995-96 over the previous year.

### **Accommodation**

72 The college occupies a single site of just under seven acres in a residential area. It is well served by public transport and has adequate

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parking. There are seven main buildings on the site with a total floor area of 10,900 square metres. The oldest, the original school building, was erected in 1934. The college was designed in 1991 to accommodate 800 students. The existing building was extensively refurbished at the time the college was founded and new accommodation was added. This includes a theatre, sports hall, science laboratories and library, as well as additional classrooms. Together they form a clean, attractive and stimulating learning environment. Sporting facilities on the site are limited; there are no playing fields and so those of the local authority and a local school are used.

73 The quality of teaching accommodation is generally high. Rooms are bright and well decorated, most have a designated use and, in those where the use has been designated for some time, good use is made of display. The new accommodation provided for art and design is of high quality and includes good facilities for photography, though in open plan areas there is some noise interaction. The accommodation for dance, drama and music is of a high standard, though access to the theatre is difficult when it has to be used for other events, such as examinations. There is a range of specialist modern accommodation for science classes which functions well. The computing department is housed in a brand new building which includes a private study area for students. Access for wheelchair users is available throughout the college, with the exception of two rooms.

74 The college's space utilisation survey shows that rooms are heavily used. The fixed timetable, with common times for breaks puts additional pressures on room use and also means that the corridors and canteen are excessively crowded at lunch and break times. Students may take food to a number of social areas around the college. These provide seating for 450 people and double as additional study spaces.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

75 Havering Sixth Form College is making good progress towards fulfilling its mission. Major strengths of the college include:

- a generally high standard of teaching
- some good examination pass rates
- a wide and varied range of GCE A level and GCSE courses
- extensive choice of enrichment activities
- effective governance arrangements
- good management of departments and courses
- good communications within the college
- thorough recruitment, guidance and support arrangements
- careful monitoring of students' attendance and speedy follow-up of absence



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- well-documented and effective quality assurance procedures, covering all aspects of the college
  - a responsive staff-development programme, including supportive induction for new staff
  - accommodation and equipment of a high standard.
- 76 The college should address the following issues:
- teaching in some subjects which is insufficiently challenging for the most able students
  - the lack of precision in some departmental objectives
  - the lack of quantitative target setting at departmental level
  - the need to review the arrangements for formal tutorial meetings
  - the need for further development of the provision of learning support
  - the low commitment by students to enrichment activities
  - the limited technical support in some areas
  - the low progress on staff achievement of assessor and verifier awards.

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## FIGURES

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|---|--|
| 1 | Percentage enrolments by age (1995-96)                             |
| 2 | Percentage enrolments by level of study (1995-96)                  |
| 3 | Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1995-96)     |
| 4 | Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96) |
| 5 | Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1996)                      |
| 6 | Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)                 |
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**Note:** the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

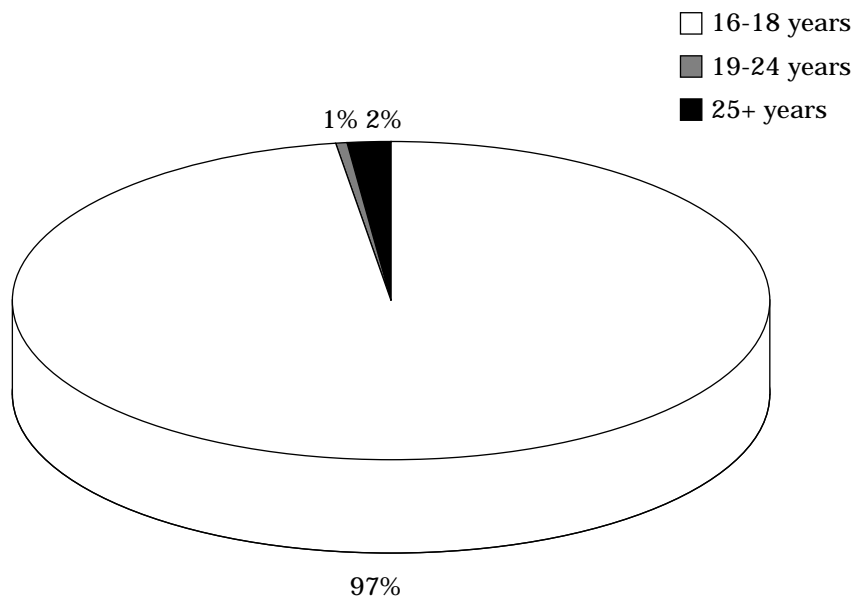
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**Figure 1**

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**Havering Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by age (1995-96)**

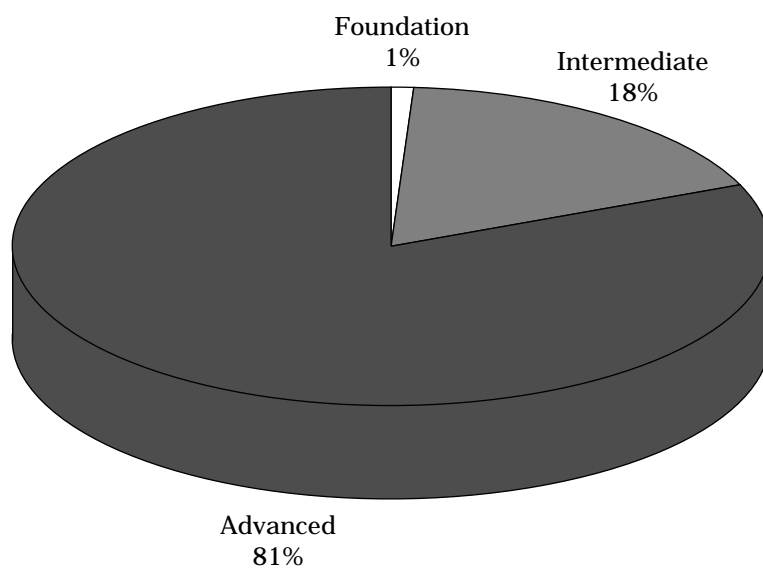


Enrolments: 1,670

**Figure 2**

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**Havering Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1995-96)**



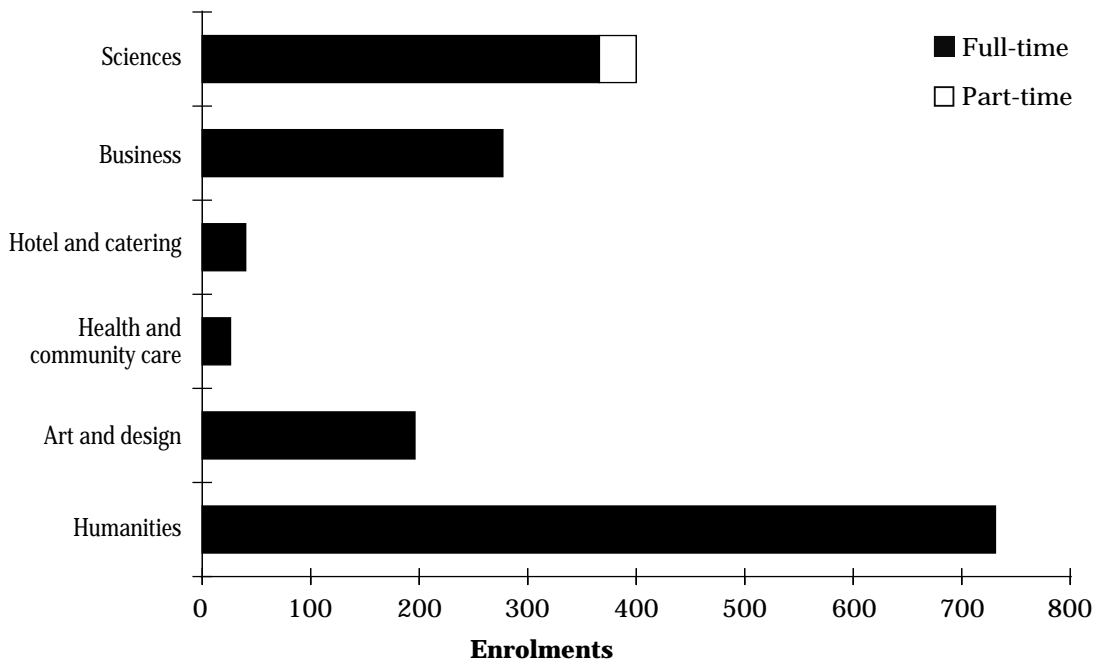
Enrolments: 1,670

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**Figure 3**

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**Havering Sixth Form College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1995-96)**

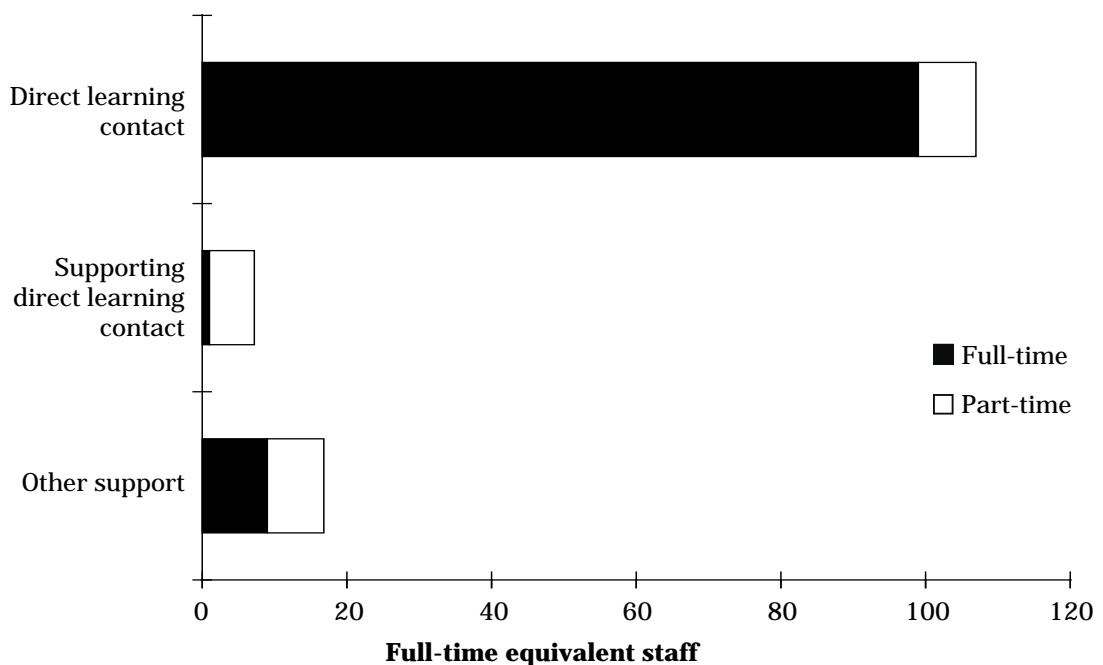


Enrolments: 1,670

**Figure 4**

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**Havering Sixth Form College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)**



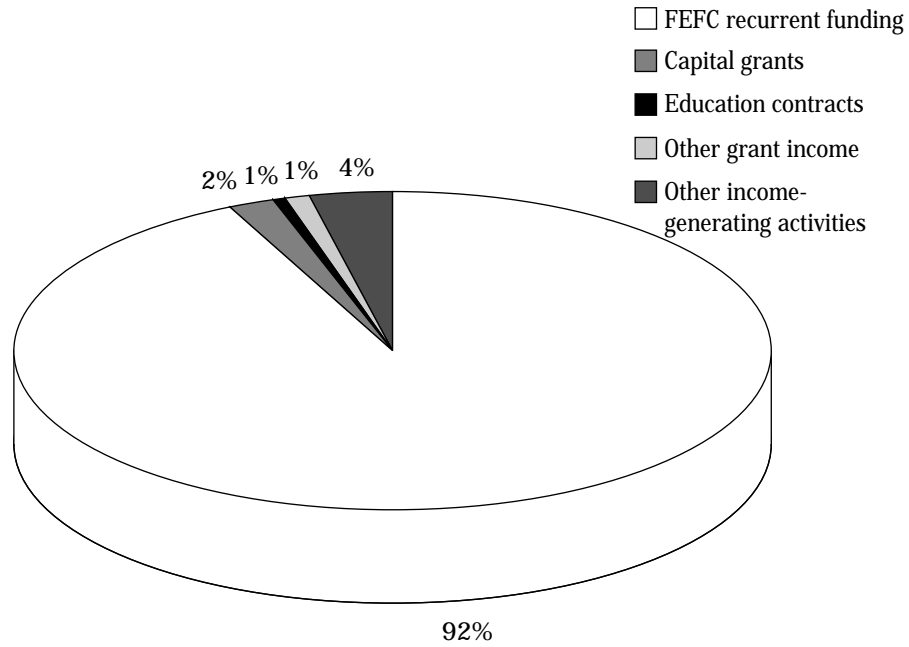
Full-time equivalent staff: 131

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**Figure 5**

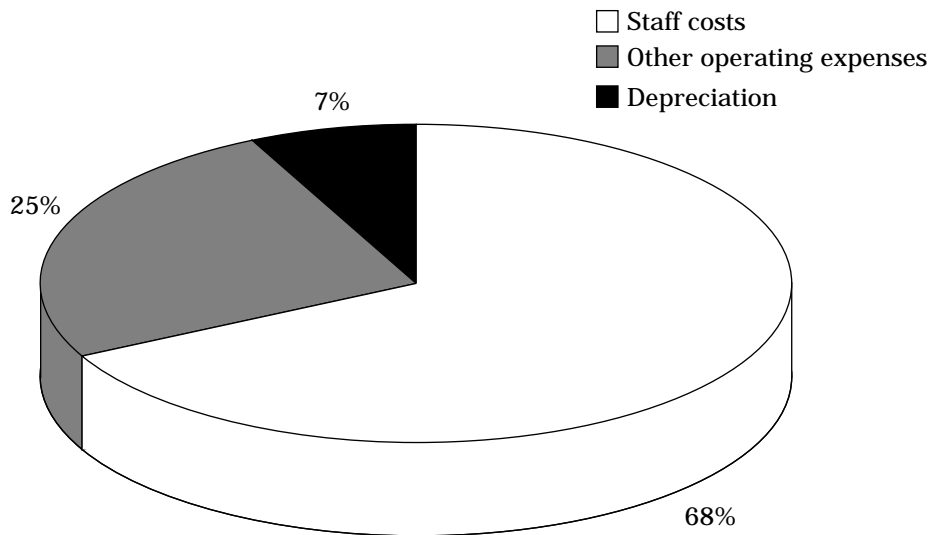
**Havering Sixth Form College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Estimated income: £4,753,000

**Figure 6**

**Havering Sixth Form College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Estimated expenditure: £4,990,000

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