

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

**Hereward
College of
Further
Education**

September 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

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

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.*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 128/95

HEREWARD COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

WEST MIDLANDS REGION

Inspected December 1994-June 1995

Summary

Hereward College of Further Education is a national provider of residential further education for students with physical and/or sensory disabilities. Many students have additional learning difficulties. The college also provides further education for students with disabilities who wish to attend on a daily basis and for students who do not have disabilities. Staff are committed to their work with the students. There is a thorough assessment of students' support needs on entry to the college. A wide range of support services and equipment is available for students. Of particular note is the work that is undertaken to ensure that equipment is 'customised' to meet individual students' needs. Some of the teaching, particularly within art and design and media studies, is of good quality. There are major weaknesses in the governance and management of the college. Work has just begun to address some of these weaknesses. Insufficient information and guidance is given to students to enable them to make informed decisions about the programmes they wish to study. A particular weakness is the lack of an extended curriculum which ensures that personal and social education, life skills and personal care are integral elements of students' programmes of study. There are inconsistencies in the quality of the care support provided for students. Some teaching staff do not fully understand the complex learning difficulties of some of the students, and as a consequence, they use inappropriate teaching strategies. A small number of students are demotivated by their failure to make progress towards the achievement of academic or vocational qualifications. The scope of the college's quality assurance system is limited and the procedures within it are not always followed. There is a lack of staff with expertise in areas such as clinical and cognitive psychology, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, counselling and social work. Much of the college's accommodation is in a poor state of repair.

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		5
Students' recruitment, guidance and support		4
Quality assurance		4
Resources:	staffing	3
	equipment/learning resources	1
	accommodation	4

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Business studies	3	Residential education programme	4
Art, design and media studies	2	Learning support	2

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INTRODUCTION

1 Hereward College of Further Education in Coventry was inspected in June 1995. Prior to this, in December 1994, a team of three full-time inspectors had spent three days at the college inspecting the arrangements the college makes to support students in their studies. Subsequently, one full-time inspector and one part-time registered inspector devoted a total of four days to specialist subject inspections of business studies and art and design. One member of the team who had participated in the initial stage of the inspection process in December, returned to the college for two days in June to update information about the college's support arrangements and the residential programme. In the week beginning 19 June 1995, five full-time inspectors and three part-time registered inspectors spent 36 days examining aspects of cross-college provision. During the period of the inspection, inspectors visited 41 classes, inspected a broad range of students' work, examined documentation relating to the college and its courses and held meetings with students, governors, parents, local employers, a representative of Coventry and Warwickshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), community representatives and teaching, care, nursing and support staff.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Hereward College of Further Education was established in 1971 to provide residential education for students with physical and sensory disabilities. With the advent of the Further and Higher Education Act, 1992, the college was incorporated into the further education sector. The college is distinct from many further education sector colleges because of the specialist support services it provides for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are recruited nationally and are funded on an individual basis to reflect the cost of their support. Such students are also supported by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in establishments outside the sector if their needs cannot be met within their local further education colleges.

3 Hereward College of Further Education shares a campus with the neighbouring further education institution, Tile Hill College. Facilities in both colleges are available to students and some students undertake courses at both colleges.

4 In addition to the residential provision for students with disabilities, Hereward College of Further Education also provides further education and training opportunities for students with disabilities who attend on a daily basis and, since 1993, for students who do not have disabilities. At the time of the inspection there were 248 students. Of these, 103 were full-time residential students, 15 were students with disabilities who attend on a daily basis and 130 were students who do not have disabilities. Over half the students with disabilities are under 19 years of age, and over 95 per cent are aged 25 or under. The majority of students who do not have

disabilities are aged 25 or over. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. The college employs 224 members of staff, 46 of whom are academic staff and 178 of whom are support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

5 Students at Hereward College of Further Education are able to choose from a range of programmes of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses. In addition, there are vocational programmes in art and design, media, photography, business studies, and information technology. The college's first certificate programme has been developed specifically for students who have learning difficulties and/or sensory impairments in addition to their physical disabilities.

6 In its mission statement, the college aims to be the 'preferred national residential or day college which provides a curriculum that presents academic, vocational, social and personal development opportunities for individuals to progress towards their full potential regardless of profound physical and/or sensory disability'. It aims to do this by providing 'a nationally certificated learning experience of high quality within a technological framework in which equality of opportunity is paramount'. The college also aims 'to provide a unique environment through the integration of disabled peers both locally and nationally'.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 The range of courses offered by the college has been developed over a number of years, mainly in response to students' demands for particular programmes. The aim of many of the programmes is to prepare students to enter higher education, or to help them to acquire the technological and business skills they require for employment.

8 The college provides courses and course modules which enable students to develop a programme of study comprising subjects of their choice. GCSE and GCE A level courses are available in mathematics, English, human biology, French and several art and design subjects. There are National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in business administration, and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in business. Wordprocessing and computer literacy modules are also available. The art and design provision includes City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) courses in photography, television production, expressive arts and graphics. The Hereward College of Further Education first certificate is a pre-foundation level programme which has been developed for students who have learning difficulties in addition to their physical and/or sensory disabilities. The college offers a small number of evening courses, mainly in photography and graphics. There are access to higher education programmes in media, design and communications, television and video

production and environmental science. There is also a foundation course in art and design. A recent partnership arrangement with Coventry University has formalised existing links. The partnership promotes consultation on disability issues and student progression. Contact with other higher education institutions is more informal but includes organised visits for students. There are few vocational programmes at foundation level. This is a particular weakness, given the need for provision at this level.

9 In most cases, class sizes are small. This, together with the individual nature of students' programmes allows some flexibility for students whose studies are disrupted for medical reasons.

10 The range of courses available to students is increased through an arrangement with Tile Hill College. Students at Hereward College of Further Education who wish to study courses which are not available within the college, can undertake their studies at Tile Hill. Few are currently taking advantage of this opportunity. Occasionally, students are placed at other further education colleges in Coventry, for instance one student is currently enrolled on the GNVQ leisure and tourism programme at Henley College.

11 At present there is no college-wide programme of activities designed to teach students skills such as cookery and budgeting which they will need if they are to live independently after leaving college. The college lacks a personal and social education programme which would enable students to explore issues relating to disability and adulthood, to develop the skills of self-advocacy, to understand their rights and to research their options for employment. These are essential areas of study within programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A pilot programme to teach such skills was started in March 1995. Twelve students are currently involved in the programme. From September 1995, a similar programme, leading to formal accreditation, will be available for all students with disabilities who are new to the college.

12 Cultural and leisure pursuits are insufficiently varied and infrequent. Students have the option of participating in some college-based leisure activities such as physical fitness sessions. The West Midlands' Disabled Sports Centre is used for swimming and there are links with a local driving school. Visits are organised by staff and students to places of cultural and recreational interest, and some students have participated in exchange visits to Grenoble and Bordeaux. With the exception of computer games, there are no formal clubs and societies for students. The recently-established students' association is currently undertaking work to extend the range of recreational and social activities available to students.

13 The college is the co-ordinating centre for the National Federation of Access Centres which has a membership of approximately 20 centres across the country. Access centres are involved in the assessment of students' technological support needs and the loan of equipment to enable

them to study their chosen courses. The National Federation of Access Centres' members meet regularly and provide a forum for the exchange of good practice between centres. College staff have also been involved in collaborative research and development work, particularly on technology-related issues. Examples of these include a European Commission project on technology for disabled and elderly persons, and work with the Foundation for Conductive Education on support for students with neurological disorders. Students at the college are able to benefit from the equipment and the assessment services provided within the access centre. There are specific links with the Open University and with local authorities for the assessment of students who are embarking on higher education programmes. Hereward College of Further Education acts as a referral point for national enquiries, many of which are passed through to local access centres.

14 A marketing manager was appointed in October 1994. A marketing plan has been produced and this is moving the college to address strategic and operational issues, including an analysis of the potential specialist markets and specialist competitor colleges. The college recruits small numbers of students from a wide catchment area within the United Kingdom and this involves liaison with a large number of schools and local authorities nationally. The college has become more systematic in using specialised directories and press coverage to target wider audiences, though the marketing of courses for students without disabilities remains unfocussed and is largely confined to newspaper advertising during the late summer. Some promotional material aimed at recruiting students with disabilities is available, and the college's full prospectus is in the process of being revised. However, documentary information on courses is limited and no information is available in other forms, for example on cassette tape or in Braille.

15 Income generated from conference work is increasing. Several local and regional organisations, some of which have disability interests, use the college for day conferences and residential events.

16 Until recently, there was little formal contact between the college and Coventry and Warwickshire TEC. At present, the college does not participate in youth credits or training for work schemes. A recent research project on employment opportunities for people with disabilities produced by the TEC did not involve the college. However, senior staff from the college now attend liaison groups, and the local education business partnership and the TEC are to provide some funding for a centralised student services facility within the college.

17 Liaison with employers is largely through the work placement programme. The college work experience policy indicates a commitment to providing interested students with access to a work placement with a local organisation. In practice, only students who are studying programmes in NVQ business administration, GNVQ business or the

diploma of vocational education are found placements as a matter of routine. Few other students are involved in work placements. Work experience placements are provided by a wide range of service, manufacturing and industrial organisations. Occasionally, students are found placements within the college. Procedures for vetting work experience placements and for monitoring students whilst they are on placement are thorough. Few placements lead directly to employment opportunities. In art and design and performing arts, there are good links with local organisations for production work.

18 At the time of the inspection, the college had just published an equal opportunities policy. Arrangements for monitoring the policy had yet to be decided.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

19 The corporation board has 14 members including the principal. There is one vacancy on the board. Eight governors are from the business community, including a representative of Coventry and Warwickshire TEC. Two of the governors are independent, non-business members. The board also includes a student and two members of staff. There are three subcommittees of the board: finance and general purposes, remuneration and audit. Although there is a vacancy on the board, little action has been taken to identify the skills and/or experience required to ensure that the vacancy is filled appropriately.

20 The process of incorporation has not been well managed. Prior to 1995 there were no training events to enable governors to develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors have not put in place systems to evaluate their own or the college's effectiveness. The corporation's remuneration and audit committees meet irregularly. Of the four meetings of the full board of governors held over the past year, the last was not quorate. The corporation has allowed the college to fall into serious financial deficit. The deficit has increased over several years, but its true extent was not discovered until the end of 1994. This was a major failing of governance and management. An ambitious financial recovery plan has been formulated. The success of this plan is dependent on the recruitment of residential students to the college.

21 Students at the college are funded in two ways. Full-time residential students with disabilities are funded on an individual basis to reflect the cost of their particular support needs. Currently the fees range from £30,772 to £46,084. Students with disabilities who attend on a daily basis are funded at 20 per cent of the residential rate. Students who do not have disabilities are now funded through standard FEFC procedures. In 1994-95 the college will receive £35,000 of recurrent funding for 5,300 units of activity at an average level of funding of £6.50. The median for the sector is £19.01. The college's funding is at its current level because it is receiving only the demand-led element of funding for 1994-95. This is the

consequence of a failure to submit a return to the FEFC for 1993-94. The college's fixed costs have traditionally been funded through the fees paid for students with disabilities. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

22 There are several companies connected with the college. Links between the college and these companies are complex. Some staff who are paid by the college work full time within one of the companies. There appears to be little benefit to students from the activities of the companies.

23 During the first phase of the inspection, inspectors found that the principal had been released by the governors from his duties within the college to manage projects in the companies connected with the college. He had devolved the day-to-day management of the college to the director of operations and to the director of studies and support. No formal arrangements had been made to appoint an acting principal. The principal retained his overall authority but worked almost entirely outside the college. The directors continued to perform the roles for which they had been appointed initially and had neither the proper authority nor the time to manage the college effectively.

24 In funding residential students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the FEFC expects an institution to provide an extended curriculum which includes a programme of personal and social education. The college's failure to offer such a curriculum means that it performed inadequately in an important area of its responsibilities.

25 At the time of the initial inspection of the college, inspectors found that students were at risk because of inadequate policies and practices and the failure of managers to supervise staff. During this phase of the inspection, a small number of students with disabilities were absent from classes without explanation. One student failed to return to the college after an overnight stay with friends. No attempt had been made to locate the student.

26 The college is organised into nine sections, each comprising one or more departments. Each section is managed and administered by a head of section who is responsible for course provision. Course tutors manage students' work and personal tutors co-ordinate students' records of achievement. In addition, heads of section have cross-college responsibilities, and can also be course tutors, personal tutors, and subject teachers in their own or in other sections. This structure results in a fragmented approach to the management of the curriculum and students' programmes. The college lacks policies and guidelines to ensure that all sections maintain the same standards in their work with students. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and support for students varies.

27 Management information is inadequately developed and staff have not recognised the proper function of a management information system.

The present system is used mainly for record keeping and for electronic communication. There is little analysis of data to inform planning. Information on retention rates is available for the current year only. Information on destinations is limited.

28 Since January 1995, the principal has been absent from the college owing to ill-health. Hereward College of Further Education is now managed by an acting principal and an acting assistant principal. They were appointed on short-term fixed contracts to cover the sick leave of the principal. Both the acting principal and the assistant principal have appropriate experience and expertise which are relevant to the work of the college. They have begun work to address management problems purposefully and to good effect.

29 In the past three months, the senior management team has met weekly to initiate a range of policy statements and standard procedures. The team has also established a number of working parties and planning groups to improve the college's provision. These initiatives have not yet had a significant impact on the work of the college, particularly in relation to teaching and learning and students' achievements. The operational managers' group meets monthly and there are fortnightly meetings between operational and senior managers. Staff feel that the new structure will ensure that they are well represented and informed.

30 Strategic planning is at an early stage of development. A new strategic plan has been drafted and is currently going through a rapid consultation process. The previous plan was inadequate. It did not provide a useful framework within which planning could take place.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

31 Residential students with disabilities are recruited nationally. The information provided for students about the college and the range of programmes offered is not sufficiently comprehensive. Open days provide opportunities for prospective students and careers officers to gather further information about the college, but not all students are able to attend.

32 Students with disabilities who apply to study at Hereward College of Further Education are invited to the college for a two-day admissions interview. A thorough and well-documented assessment is carried out of their learning support and care needs. The educational and careers guidance offered to many students at this stage is inadequate. Consequently, some students are unable to make informed choices about their proposed programmes of study. In some cases, students choose courses, or combinations of courses, which are not appropriate for their intended goals. For example, some students who are aiming to study for a degree in business studies are taking only a limited number of GNVQ units in business studies. Lack of guidance also means that students are unable to explore possible career options and to plan their studies in relation to intended careers. Students are accepted at the college primarily on the

basis of whether the college can meet their support needs. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the importance of ensuring that the college can also provide a programme of study which will meet their educational needs. Work is currently being undertaken to improve the guidance that is offered to students. Arrangements for accrediting students' prior learning are not well developed.

33 Students are notified promptly of the outcome of their admissions interviews, but acknowledgement of students' applications is slow. In a few cases applications were not acknowledged for several months despite a commitment in the college charter to acknowledge applications within 10 days. Admissions procedures for students who do not have disabilities are carried out by telephone or by short interviews at the college. Students on the environmental studies access course who were interviewed in this way, found the process helpful, and commented on the useful advice they had received about careers and higher education issues.

34 Although co-ordination of the separate elements of specialist support is inadequate, the college provides a wide range of services for students with disabilities including speech therapy and physiotherapy. It also provides note takers and volunteer readers to support students. A particular strength of the college is the quality of the equipment which is customised to meet students' individual needs. For example, clamps have been developed to fix cameras to wheelchairs so that students who have restricted hand movements can take photographs independently. Without this equipment many students would be unable to undertake their studies.

35 There is a detailed induction programme for students. Students find aspects of the programme useful, but some feel it is not designed to meet the different needs of individuals and others found the programme intimidating. The college's review of its induction programme in 1994 indicated that some students received insufficient support from their personal tutors.

36 A number of staff including personal tutors, course tutors and personal care officers is involved in providing students with personal and academic support. In addition, students with acquired head injuries have individual keyworkers. The various roles of these staff are not well understood and are currently under review. Academic and personal tutorials vary in frequency, style and effectiveness. There is no programme of support for staff involved in the delivery of tutorials. A number of staff, including the college chaplain, provide informal listening and counselling support for students. Students have access to the services of the counsellor at the adjacent Tile Hill College. Hereward College of Further Education does not employ a qualified counsellor. The importance of counselling and the contribution it makes to the curriculum is not recognised. This is a significant weakness.

37 Students regularly review their academic progress and personal development with personal and course tutors. All full-time students, but

not part-time day students, have a record of achievement folder but the practice of recording students' achievements is underdeveloped. There are plans to introduce the national records of achievement next year. Case reviews, involving staff, students and sometimes their parents or carers, are set up if students are experiencing difficulties which affect their learning or their welfare. These reviews are well documented and effective.

38 The quality of care for students varies. During the initial stage of the inspection there were concerns about the safety and well-being of the students. Since then, new policies and procedures including a students' charter have been introduced to protect the interests of students. Students' attendance at classes is now monitored and reasons for absence are sought. A students' association has been established and this is enabling students to express their opinions and concerns.

39 Careers advice and guidance are not well integrated with other aspects of students' programmes of study. A programme of talks and workshops about applying for higher education has been offered as an option for students, but low attendance has limited its effectiveness. Careers advice is available to students on an individual basis, although some students commented on difficulties in making appointments with careers staff. Useful information and advice are given to students leaving Hereward College of Further Education about ways of securing support and obtaining the communication aids they require. Written statements of their support needs are provided for those students who request them.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

40 Of the 41 teaching sessions observed, 41 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses, 54 per cent had a balance of strengths and weaknesses and 5 per cent had weaknesses which clearly outweighed the strengths. The following table summarises the grades given for the teaching sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCSE		0	0	3	0	0	3
GNVQ		3	2	3	0	0	8
NVQ		0	0	3	0	0	3
Access to higher education		2	2	0	0	0	4
Other vocational		1	2	2	1	0	6
Other*		2	3	11	1	0	17
Total		8	9	22	2	0	41

* **Note:** other includes young enterprise schemes, Hereward first certificate, learning support, tutorials, residential education programmes and sessions within the access centre.

41 On entry to the college, students are able to develop a programme of study which is made up of subjects of their choice. Insufficient guidance is given to enable them to make an informed choice and as a consequence, many programmes lack coherence. Often, students opt to retake GCSE subjects for which they achieved a low grade at school. Although this may be appropriate for some students, for others the rationale for this option is not always clear. For some students, retaking GCSEs focuses attention on their weaknesses and prevents or delays them from undertaking a programme of study which would enable them to build on their strengths.

42 Many students have learning difficulties in addition to their physical and/or sensory disabilities. Some students, particularly those with head injuries, have complex learning difficulties and require very specialised teaching. The staff involved in teaching these students do not have the expertise required to understand the implications of cognitive impairment on students' ability to learn. Although they are committed to their work, the strategies they use are not always suitable.

43 Academic and vocational courses are well planned and programmes of study have clearly-defined aims and objectives. Most lessons are well prepared. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and enthusiastic about their work with students. Positive working relationships have been established between teachers and students, and these enhance students' learning. Class sizes vary considerably. In one lesson there was only one student, whilst in another practical session there were 12 students, the majority of whom had severe physical disabilities and required a lot of help from the teacher. Some classes are too small to enable students to generate the discussions and activities which are essential elements of the programmes. In some classes, discussions were dominated by the students who did not have disabilities. Insufficient thought was given by some lecturers to the need to include in discussions those students who had no speech and therefore needed to use communication aids to contribute to discussions. There is insufficient joint planning of teaching and learning support to ensure that students' individual needs are met. During the initial phase of the inspection the teaching strategies used by some teachers prevented study support workers from playing an active role in supporting students.

44 Schemes of work for business studies were of high quality and reflected the demands of the syllabus. The new proforma for lesson plans included a section for self-reflection by teachers; it was not yet being used by all staff. The most positive teaching and learning was observed in those sessions where staff used these lesson plans to structure their teaching. The teaching was often lively and well directed, but in some lessons teaching methods were unsuitable or the work lacked variety and students lost interest. Most of the tasks for students were set at an appropriate level. However, in some classes, teachers failed to check sufficiently on students' understanding. Students' work was marked regularly and most

teachers gave helpful written comments which enabled students to understand how they could improve their work. Careful records were kept of the work that students had completed.

45 Programmes of work in art and design, media studies and photography had clearly-defined aims and objectives. Teachers were supportive of students and set them tasks which were interesting and challenging. Staff had a sound knowledge of their subject area and some had professional and/or industrial experience. Within some sessions, study support assistants had not been briefed sufficiently about the nature of the work to be undertaken and this hindered their ability to support students. All the courses include field studies which are relevant to the subject studied. For students on the foundation course in art and design there were visits to museums and galleries and opportunities to draw at locations other than the college. Within the foundation course, the study of art in its cultural and historical context is not sufficiently broad. The practice of delivering art history as a discrete programme in the evenings detracts from the effectiveness of the overall course. The syllabus of the photography course is carefully structured to ensure that all students can complete the course successfully. The teaching on the creative studies option of the access to media course was stimulating and students responded well to this. Students who are taking the vocational television and video production course, none of whom has a disability, have the opportunity to use equipment which is of industrial standard to undertake 'live project assignments'. The disabilities arts programme which operates through a link with Coventry Centre for the Arts, is used to broaden the experiences of the students. The work of students on all these programmes is assessed regularly. Teachers provide helpful feedback to students and help them set targets for future work. Tutors work with students to develop individual action plans for learning. Students are encouraged to take an active part in reviewing their progress and in developing their records of achievement.

46 Individual programmes are developed for students' nursing care. Where appropriate, students are taught skills such as self-catheterisation, tissue checks for pressure sores and self-medication. These programmes are detailed, clearly recorded and well monitored. They help students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to monitor their health and well being.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

47 The small number of students at Hereward College of Further Education means that some caution needs to be exercised when considering trends in students' achievements. Students with disabilities have individual programmes of study. Their achievements have to be assessed individually and on the basis of whether they are learning and achieving to their own maximum potential. The disabilities of many of the students affect the pace at which they can learn and achieve and an increasing number have complex

learning difficulties in addition to their physical and sensory disabilities. Nevertheless, a number of students at the college are underachieving and, in some cases, it is because they are on inappropriate programmes of study. For example, a few students have retaken GCSE courses for a second or the third time and have achieved lower grades than they did originally. These students have often lost interest in the course and have also lost their general motivation for learning.

48 Students with disabilities taking GCSEs generally achieve marginally lower grades than the national average for general further education colleges, although a lower than average percentage fail their GCSEs. Although a few students with disabilities fail their GCE A level examinations, some achieve high grades. The students at Hereward College of Further Education who do not have disabilities have slightly lower GCSE pass rates at grades A-C than the average for general further education colleges. They also have a higher failure rate. These students achieve well at GCE A level. They achieve a higher percentage of grades A and B, including a high proportion of grade A and starred grade A than the average for general further education colleges. However, a marginally higher proportion of these students fail their GCE A levels.

49 Because the college does not analyse examination results for students with disabilities it is unaware of the differences between the achievements of students with disabilities and those who do not have disabilities. The college should identify the reasons for students' successes and failures so as to ensure that students with disabilities are achieving their full potential.

50 In business studies classes, students participate in discussions and are gaining in confidence. The standard of written work is generally good. Students are benefiting from work experience. Last year, however, only two out of ten students successfully completed the young enterprise scheme.

51 Some students with disabilities only achieve partial accreditation, not full qualifications, and the units of accreditation taken do not always provide them with the qualifications they need to go on to more advanced studies or into employment. Some students with disabilities do not achieve at a sufficiently high level. In 1993-94 no students with disabilities achieved distinctions or merits in computing or wordprocessing examinations. Most students with disabilities who are entered for qualifications pass although, on a few business courses, almost a third of the students failed their examinations. In 1993-94, a small number of business studies students at Hereward College of Further Education achieved higher education places.

52 In 1993-94, almost all the students without disabilities who entered for business studies qualifications passed, and 37 per cent of them achieved distinctions in computing and wordprocessing. However, only 30 per cent of these students who enrolled for programmes were entered for examination. Some of them who left the college in 1994 gained employment as clerical and administrative assistants.

53 In art and design classes, students rapidly gain confidence. Individual action plans are particularly effective in helping them to attain their goals. The standard of written work is high and students are developing appropriate levels of skill, knowledge and understanding. Students' contributions to the television production 'Scallagrig' received a mention in this year's British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards.

54 Students achieve well in art and design assessments. Most students entered for awards are successful. For example, in 1994, all the students on the foundation course who were entered for examination passed, and five of them achieved a higher merit grade. However, only a quarter of students with disabilities, and just over half the students without disabilities, were entered for examination during the last two years. Most arts students enter employment or go on to higher education where they complete their studies. In 1994, four students proceeded to arts-related higher education degree programmes.

55 A small number of students who are involved in the pilot programme within the residential setting are developing competence in a range of daily living skills such as cooking and budgeting. A few are developing their organisational, communication and negotiating skills through their involvement in the recently-established students' association.

56 A relatively high percentage of students go on to higher education on leaving Hereward College of Further Education. Of the 19 students with disabilities who left in 1994, nine progressed to higher education, three went on to work or to vocational training, two left to follow other further education courses and five were unemployed. Of the 32 non-disabled students who left in 1994, 13 went on to higher education, eight students went into work or vocational training, one student left to pursue a further education course and 10 were unemployed.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

57 In its mission statement, the college indicates its commitment to provide learning experiences which are of high quality for students with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a students' charter which is given to all students as part of their induction pack but few of the commitments specified in the charter have targets against which performance can be measured. The charter is available on the college's information technology network, but it is not available in large print, in Braille or on audio cassette. This is a particular weakness in a college for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A revised charter is being prepared in consultation with the students' association.

58 The college has a quality assurance and control system, based on British Standard (BS) 5750. The system combines a comprehensive set of procedures with a programme of internal audits covering most areas of college activity. The system is explained in a quality and management manual which is available for all staff and students.

59 The quality system is well established, but it has had a limited impact on some areas of college activity and does not enable the quality of all aspects of work within the college to be monitored. For example, the system does not include the monitoring and evaluation of the college's equal opportunities policy, neither does it enable the college to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning support given to individual students. The failure of the system to identify the significant weaknesses identified by inspectors is of particular concern. In its strategic plan for quality the college recognises the need to widen the scope of the present quality assurance framework. It has also made a commitment to work towards the achievement of Investor in People status.

60 Quality assurance has a high profile within the college's management structure and its operational procedures. The quality assurance manager is a member of the operational managers' group, the academic board, the curriculum review and development committee, and the staff-development group. Each term, the senior management group and the quality assurance manager hold a formal meeting to review the quality assurance process. At this meeting, the programme of internal audits is considered. In addition, an audit report is presented to the operational managers' group each month.

61 The process of setting, monitoring and reviewing standards across the college is not well co-ordinated. The quality assurance system does not include the collection and systematic use of performance indicators. Consequently, limited information is available to enable senior managers and governors to monitor performance against strategic planning targets. A performance indicator working group has been established. It is intended that performance indicators which satisfy both FEFC and college-specific requirements will be introduced in August 1995.

62 The course review process is well structured, and meets the requirements of the examining, validating and awarding bodies. Course team meetings are held monthly, and review meetings are held at the end of each year. The quality of the reporting and analysis of statistics varies between course teams. Some reports are too descriptive and contain insufficient analysis of data to provide a basis for effective planning.

63 The college uses a variety of methods to enable students to review the quality of their learning programmes and other aspects of the college's provision. These include questionnaires, consultation with the students' association, informal group discussions at course level, and individual discussions with course and personal tutors. A survey of first-year residential students was carried out in January 1995, and a curriculum review survey was undertaken in May 1995. In a number of cases, students' comments have resulted in changes. For example, a GCSE course in French was rescheduled following complaints from students that evening classes were too tiring.

64 The college has a professional-development policy and there is a staff-development group which is responsible for identifying training needs and evaluating training activity. New members of staff receive a formal programme of induction. The induction programme for new care staff is thorough, but activities for teachers and other support staff are ill planned and lack co-ordination.

65 A range of training and development activities is undertaken by teaching and support staff. The emphasis has been on short courses and workshops at a basic level of awareness raising. There has been insufficient training at an advanced level. This is a particular weakness for staff involved in teaching students who have complex learning difficulties in addition to their physical and sensory impairments. Every member of staff has an entitlement to an annual professional development review meeting, but not all staff have experienced this and some have met delays in receiving the training identified as necessary at their review meeting. The college spends 2 per cent of its staffing budget on staff-development activities.

66 The college produced a self-assessment report which provided information against the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. Many of the strengths were identified on the basis of insufficient information. The weaknesses identified within the report were those presented to the college by inspectors following the initial phase of the inspection. The report is currently being used as an action plan to support development work in the college.

RESOURCES

Staffing

67 Teachers of academic and vocational programmes are well qualified in their subject specialisms. Many part-time teachers are from relevant commercial and vocational backgrounds and their experience enhances students' learning. Very few teachers have a qualification relating specifically to the teaching of students who have complex learning difficulties. Of particular concern is the lack of specialist staff with expertise in areas such as clinical and cognitive psychology, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, counselling and social work.

68 The careers kurator, nursing staff, physiotherapists and speech therapist are well qualified. There is also a qualified librarian. The majority of the care staff do not have qualifications which are specifically related to their work.

69 There is adequate administrative support but at peak periods, such as induction and examinations, insufficient support is available from technicians to meet the needs of students. The deployment of care staff is not always well managed. During the initial phase of the inspection it was found that, at times, insufficient help was available to enable students to be ready for lectures.

Equipment/learning resources

70 Classrooms are well equipped with teaching aids such as whiteboards, flip charts and video equipment. Of particular note, is the equipment in the television and video studio which is of the standard used in industry. Within the art and design department, simple but inventive aids have been developed to enable students who have learning difficulties in addition to their physical and/or sensory impairments to take part in practical sessions.

71 Many of the students with severe physical and/or sensory impairments require specialist technical equipment to enable them to undertake their studies. Staff within the national access centre assess students' needs and provide appropriate equipment, often making customised adaptations to existing equipment. In some cases the equipment provides students with the only effective means they have of communicating and of working towards a learning goal.

72 A joint project between the college and a manufacturing company has resulted in the adaption of photographic enlargers to enable them to be operated by joysticks and by remote control. Students with little mobility are able to use the equipment independently. The product is now sold commercially throughout the world.

73 The college is well equipped for information technology. Computers are up to date. There are good quality printers and the software is of the standard used in industry. The equipment is well maintained by an enthusiastic team of in-house technicians. There is a policy to update and/or replace all technical equipment on a continuous basis. The college is contracted to provide technical support for approximately 40 students with disabilities who are undertaking studies through the Open University. The access centre has a resource bank of equipment which is loaned to other centres within the National Federation of Access Centres. This is also used to support students within the college.

74 The college's learning resources centre, which includes the library, provides a comfortable learning environment for students. It is open every evening and at the weekend. The wide range of facilities within the centre includes multi-media computers, compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases, periodicals and journals. The book and periodical stock is limited but students are able to borrow resources from the library at Tile Hill College.

Accommodation

75 Hereward College of Further Education was purpose built for students with physical and/or sensory disabilities. It comprises a main teaching block and three linked blocks of residential accommodation housing up to 107 students.

76 In 1993, the college commissioned a survey of its buildings to provide a baseline for the development of a programme of renovation and preventative maintenance. Even though the survey clearly indicated the work that needed to be done, none was undertaken until March 1995. A survey of space allocation was carried out in 1994, but there has been no survey of space utilisation.

77 Much of the accommodation no longer meets the needs of students, many of whom have very severe disabilities and require a lot of specialist equipment. Many rooms are in need of refurbishment. Social and leisure facilities are inadequate and there are few facilities within the residential accommodation to enable students to learn practical homeskills. A particular weakness is the lack of automatic doors to many of the rooms. Within the grounds of the college, there are insufficient signs to warn drivers of the presence of students using wheelchairs.

78 Overall, the size and layout of teaching rooms are adequate. Some difficulties occur, particularly in photography and art and design, where rooms are small and access to the rooms is difficult for students using wheelchairs.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

79 The strengths of the college are:

- the recently-introduced changes to the management of the college
- the thorough assessment of students' support needs
- the range of learning support services available for students
- the quality of some of the teaching within art and design and media studies
- the range and quality of the equipment which are 'customised' to meet students' individual needs
- the commitment and enthusiasm of many of the staff.

80 The college should address the following:

- the governors' lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- confusion over the relationship between the college and associated companies
- the lack of well-established policies and guidelines to facilitate the development of a co-ordinated approach to the work of the college
- the fragmented approach to the management of the curriculum and students' programmes
- the limited opportunities for students to pursue recreational and social activities
- the lack of understanding about the role of management information systems

-
- insufficient information and guidance to enable students to make informed decisions about the programmes they wish to study
 - inconsistencies in the quality of the care support given to students
 - the lack of an extended curriculum which incorporates students' academic/vocational courses within a programme of personal and social education, life skills and personal care
 - lack of understanding of complex learning difficulties and the consequent use of inappropriate teaching strategies
 - the limited scope of the quality assurance system and the failure of staff to follow procedures within the system
 - inadequate analysis of students' achievements on externally-validated programmes
 - the poor quality of much of the college's accommodation
 - the lack of facilities within the residential accommodation to enable students to learn homeskills
 - the lack of specialist staff with expertise in areas such as clinical and cognitive psychology, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, counselling and social work.

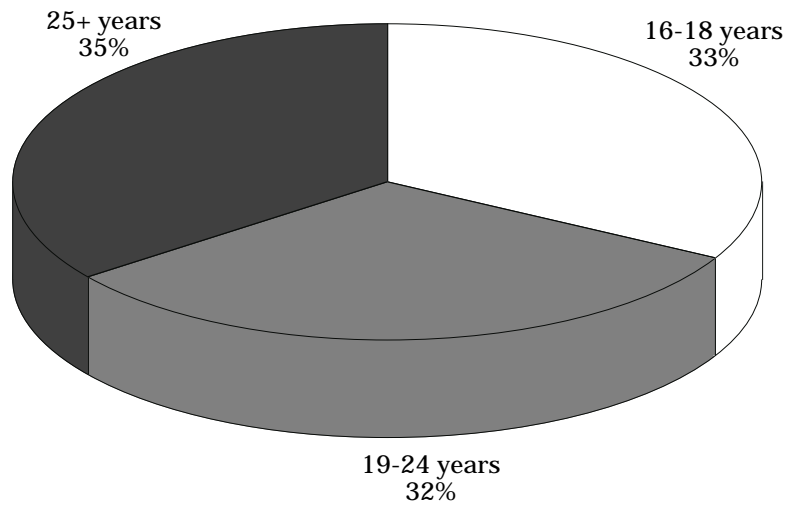
FIGURES

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| 1 | Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95) |
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| 3 | Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95) |
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| 5 | Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995) |
| 6 | Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995) |
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Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

Figure 1

Hereward College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

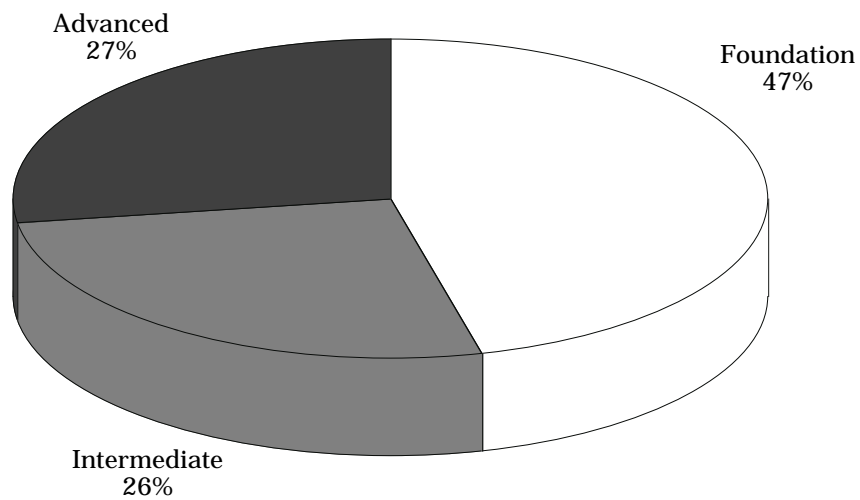


Enrolments: 248

Note: this chart excludes one enrolment under 16.

Figure 2

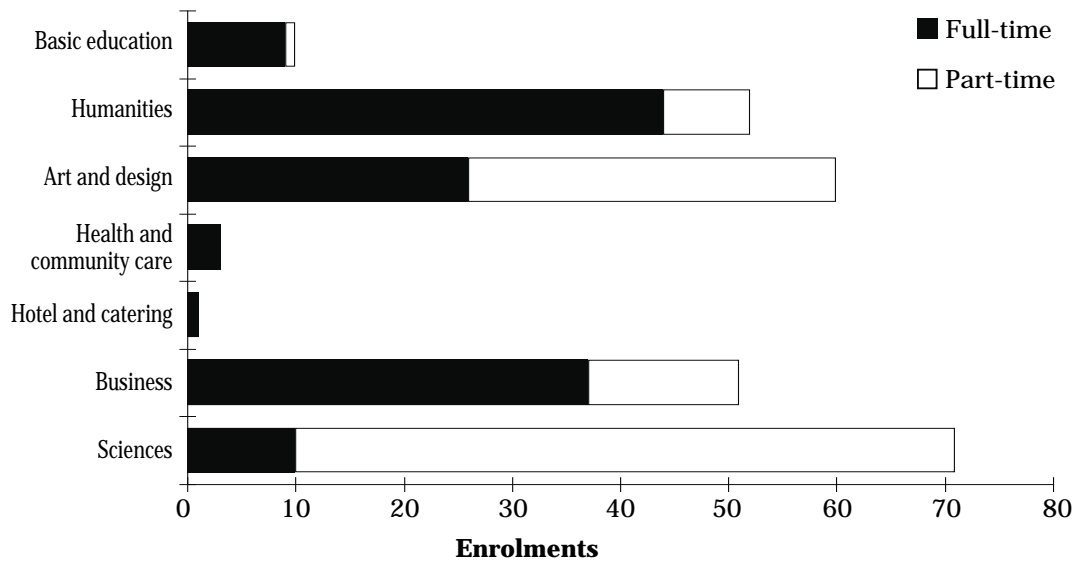
Hereward College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 248

Figure 3

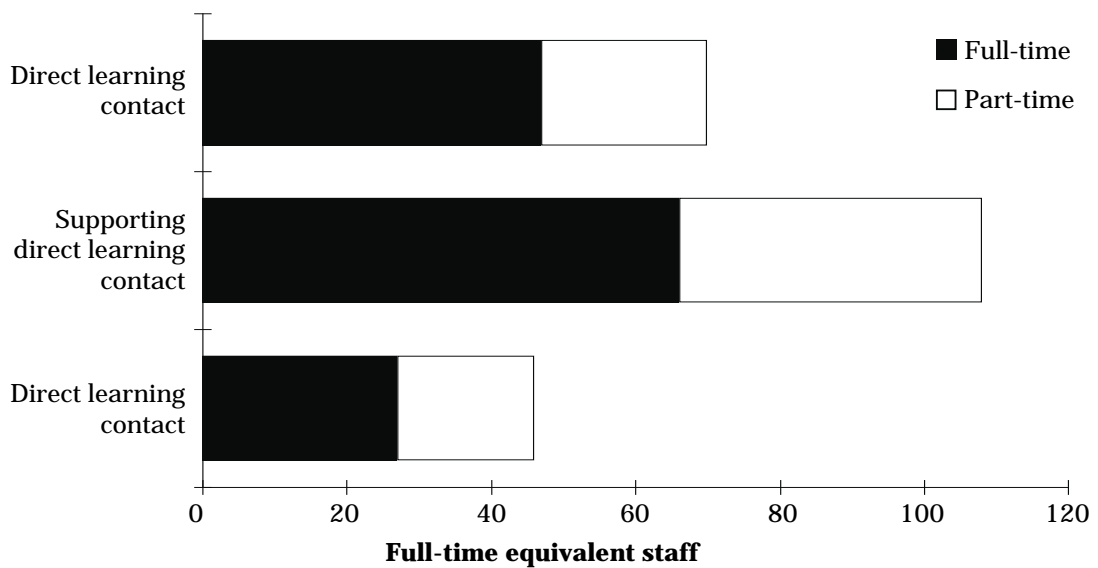
Hereward College of Further Education: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)



Enrolments: 248

Figure 4

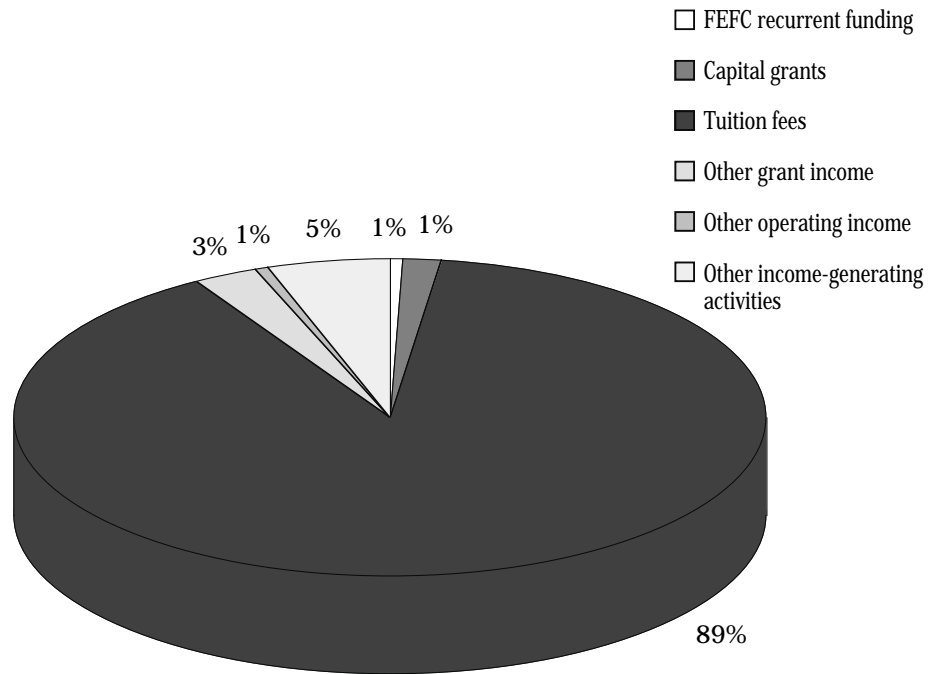
Hereward College of Further Education: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 224

Figure 5

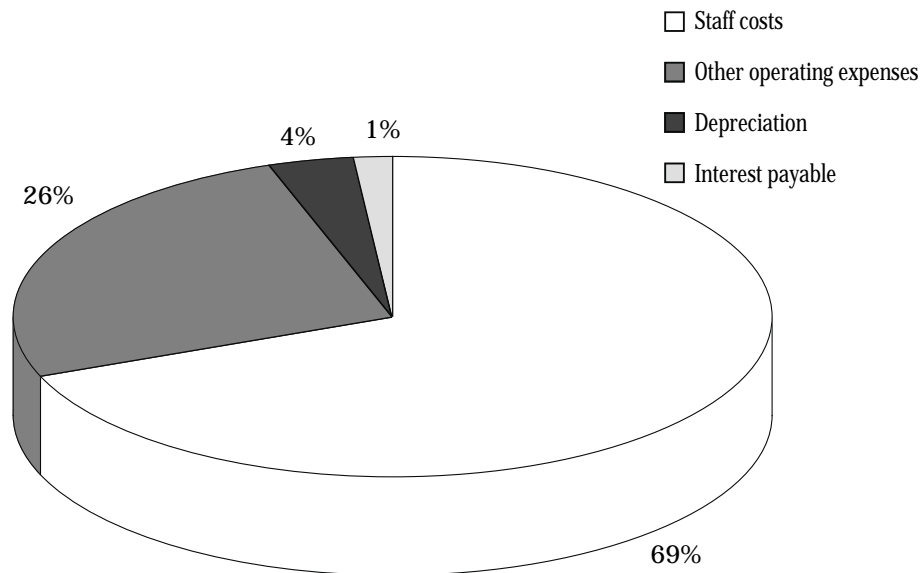
Hereward College of Further Education: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated income: £4,302,000

Figure 6

Hereward College of Further Education: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated expenditure: £4,204,000

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