

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Hugh Baird College

August 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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 109/95

HUGH BAIRD COLLEGE
NORTH WEST REGION
Inspected March-May 1995

Summary

Hugh Baird College offers a broad range of programmes and flexible modes of attendance which provide good opportunities for students' progression. Extensive and productive links have been established with schools, higher education institutions and local community groups. There is a varied programme of activities which enables students to enrich their studies. Governors take an active and effective role in the strategic development of the college. Senior managers combine strong leadership with a consultative approach over the development of policies and procedures. Staff are well informed and supportive of college aims. A wide range of student support services is available. Students benefit from effective careers guidance and preparation for entry to higher education. Generally, the standard of teaching is good, though in a significant minority of programmes the teaching lacks the variety necessary to sustain students' interest and involvement. Students achieve good examination results in most GCE A level and GCSE subjects. A large proportion of students on advanced courses progress to higher education. Many vocational students are not developing relevant information technology skills because of inadequate access to appropriate facilities. The college should address the low retention rates which exist on many courses; widen the focus of its market research; strengthen its management information systems and ensure that its quality assurance procedures are fully implemented.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science, mathematics and computing	3	Care, hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Construction	4	Art and design	3
Engineering	3	Humanities	2
Business	2	English and modern foreign languages	2
Catering, leisure and tourism	2	Adult education and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2

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INTRODUCTION

1 Hugh Baird College in Bootle was inspected in three stages. Enrolment and induction procedures were inspected in September 1994. Inspections of curriculum areas took place between 27 March and 6 April 1995 and aspects of cross-college provision between 15 and 19 May 1995. Twenty-six inspectors participated in the inspection using a total of 93 days. They visited 231 classes, examined students' work and studied documentation relating to the college and its courses. They also observed a meeting of the board of the corporation and held discussions with governors, senior and middle managers, teachers, support staff, students, parents, employers and the education manager of the Merseyside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Hugh Baird College in Bootle was established as a tertiary college in 1991 following the reorganisation of post-16 education in the south of the borough of Sefton, Merseyside. The college operates on five sites. The main building, a seven storey tower block, is on the largest of the sites in Balliol Road, Bootle. Other sites in Bootle include the Pembroke Centre, where construction, building crafts and some engineering courses are taught and two adult centres, Oriel and Balliol. Care, catering and floristry courses are taught at the Church Road site in Litherland, which is three miles from the main building. In addition, there are a number of outreach centres in which adult courses are provided. The largest is the Netherton Activity Centre, which is approximately three miles from Balliol Road. In spring 1995 the college embarked on a major rebuilding programme starting with the construction of new workshops. It is envisaged that by August 1997 all the college's accommodation will be located on a single campus in Bootle.

3 The college is the designated provider of sixth form provision for four local 11-16 high schools. However, it draws its students from a wider area, including all parts of Sefton, the northern, central and southern areas of Liverpool and parts of south Lancashire. A sixth form college, a tertiary college and three further education colleges are within easy travelling distance of the main site. In addition, all Sefton's local authority secondary schools in Crosby, Formby and Maghull have their own sixth form or are part of a sixth form consortium. There are several independent schools in the Crosby and Liverpool areas, many of which have a strong tradition of successful sixth form education. Competition also comes from a number of independent training organisations which offer National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

4 Enrolments have increased steadily over the last three years despite a fall in the number of students on part-time release from employment. In 1993-94, the college fell 3 per cent short of its growth target. At the time of the inspection, there were 6,428 students on roll. Enrolments by age

and by level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3.

5 Merseyside has recently been granted European Objective 1 status because of the region's persistently high levels of poverty and social deprivation. The European Community is investing a proportion of its structural funds to support the regeneration of the region through environmental, economic, education and training programmes. Unemployment within the Merseyside TEC area is over 15 per cent, significantly higher than the 9 per cent average for the north-west. City Challenge funding has been provided to support a range of environmental, social and educational projects in the Bootle maritime area. However, other parts of the college's catchment area, such as Crosby, Maghull, Formby and Southport, do not suffer from the same levels of social deprivation. The town's major employers are in the public sector. Jobs are also provided by small-scale service industries and light industries.

6 Educational achievement in Bootle has consistently fallen below the national average. In 1994, only 25 per cent of the town's school leavers achieved five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) passes at grade C or above, compared with the national average of 43 per cent. About 51 per cent continue in full-time education beyond 16 compared with the north-west average of 59 per cent. By comparison, the educational achievements of pupils in local authority and independent schools in other parts of the borough are significantly higher than the national average.

7 The number of permanent full-time staff was increased at tertiary reorganisation and since then there has been continuous, if modest, growth. At the time of the inspection there were 218 full-time equivalent teachers and 106 full-time equivalent administrative and support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 4. The college has eight senior managers and 54 middle managers. The curriculum is delivered through three faculties: business, personal and creative studies; general and adult studies; and technological studies. The student and customer services department provides a centralised support service, which includes admissions and guidance.

8 The college has a clear sense of its mission which is to provide a high standard of education, training, counselling and pastoral care. The governors are committed to meeting the needs of the community, local employers and industry. The college's priorities, which inform the mission statement, 10 strategic aims and the college charter, are to widen and increase participation, and to develop learning opportunities at its main campus and in outreach centres.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

9 In accordance with its strategic plan, the college is responding positively to the needs of the local community by providing education and training opportunities for a wide range of clients including school pupils,

school leavers, the unemployed, those in employment and adults returning to education. Most programmes offer flexible modes of attendance and good opportunities for student progression though there are gaps in provision which limit students' progression in the areas of construction, engineering and business management.

10 Twenty-six subjects are offered at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level), there are four GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects and 21 GCSE subjects. There is a positive commitment to extending the range of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs). Numbers on these programmes have increased from 179 in 1993-94 to 315 this year. Ten GNVQs are offered, seven at intermediate and three at advanced level. There are plans to extend this provision in 1995-96 by providing several more programmes at foundation level, four at intermediate level and five at advanced level. Adult provision includes basic education, pre-access and access to higher education programmes, courses for women returning to paid work, and updating programmes in catering, community care and engineering.

11 Many full-time programmes provide students with the opportunity to study for qualifications which are additional to the main qualifications for which they are aiming. For example, hairdressing, care and medical secretarial students take a first aid certificate as part of their programme. Most programmes also include activities through which students can enrich their studies; for example, visits to industry, theatres, museums and higher education institutions. Fieldwork and visiting speakers are integral aspects of several courses. Work experience placements form an important part of many of the vocational programmes. All first year GCE A level students have two weeks of work experience which is closely linked to their intended career path. Groups of first year GCE A level students take part in an enrichment programme organised by Liverpool University. Many students participate in the programme of additional sporting activities which complement their courses. A wide range of sports are on offer including volleyball, hockey, basketball, netball, football, running and badminton. Other leisure activities such as aerobics are provided in the well-equipped sports hall. The college enters teams in sporting competitions. This year, the volleyball team won the north-west regional championships and finished third in the national finals.

12 Recently, the college has produced a European policy statement which commits it to introduce European studies into the curriculum of all students and to develop international links. The college has appointed a European co-ordinator, supported by a cross-college European awareness group, to implement the policy.

13 The college's relationship with the Merseyside TEC, including the exchange of information, has improved greatly over the last two years. There are now productive links at both strategic and operational levels. The college is providing youth training. It has successfully bid for TEC funding for a number of development projects.

14 While there are productive links with local business in some curriculum areas, particularly through work experience activities, employers are not sufficiently involved in the planning, development and monitoring of vocational provision. The college is seeking to extend its full-cost provision, but at this stage has undertaken insufficient research into, and analysis of, local market needs.

15 Marketing is managed across the college by the marketing and publicity co-ordinator who works closely with the faculties in producing good-quality publicity materials. While much effort goes into promotion, the market research undertaken by the college is narrow, focusing largely on schools. Research into employers' needs is unsystematic and does not use a sufficiently wide range of sources. Proposals for course changes and developments are not sufficiently supported with information to predict their viability.

16 School liaison has been centralised and is organised by a co-ordinator, supported by a cross-college team which includes heads of faculty, heads of division and specialist teaching staff. The team employs a range of effective strategies, which includes: taster days for 14, 15 and 16 year-old pupils; participation in parents, careers and awards evenings; and regular contact with the staff of local schools. The college has 19 partner schools, including all local education authority maintained special schools, and has developed close links with a further 22 schools in neighbouring boroughs. In addition, there are a number of collaborative links with schools. For example, 15 schools currently pay the college to provide GNVQ and NVQ programmes for over 400 pupils aged 16 years and over. In 1993-94, 143 pupils followed modules in a range of vocational areas. Eighty-seven per cent of these were successful in achieving at least one unit, the majority achieved three units and a few achieved five. The college designs and runs equal opportunities activities for 14 year old pupils in 33 schools. The aim is to broaden their career aspirations by dispelling the notion that some courses are more suitable for males and others for females.

17 Many programme areas have established effective links with higher education institutions. Recently, the college has become an associate college of the University of Central Lancashire and it is currently seeking validation for a range of higher national certificate programmes in computing, business information technology, building studies and for the Certificate in Education, all to start in 1995-96. There are productive links with other higher education institutions, including Bolton Institute, and the Manchester Metropolitan University. There are over 100 enrolments on the pre-access and access programmes, which are accredited by the Merseyside Open College Federation and the Northern Examination and Assessment Board, respectively.

18 The college is rapidly expanding its provision for adults in outreach centres. People from groups which have not normally entered further education are attracted to college courses by a number of initiatives. For

example: collaboration between college staff and a community liaison worker has resulted in 120 enrolments since April 1994; an 'opportunity shop' has been opened in the main shopping centre; and creche and childcare facilities have been established. In addition, the college is involved with 13 primary schools in an innovative scheme called Family and Schools Together. Using specially equipped rooms in the schools, college staff provide a variety of courses for parents to follow while their children are studying. It is intended that these courses will enable parents to progress to college-based programmes. Currently, more than 100 parents are enrolled through this scheme.

19 The college is committed to provide a range of learning opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The study support policy provides an appropriate framework for the development of this provision across the college. The number of students on mainstream courses with additional support has grown from 15 in 1993-94 to 124 in the current year. They benefit from a high level of support, which includes help from specialist staff and specialist equipment. The current range of options at foundation level for students with learning difficulties is limited. To address current gaps in provision for adults with severe learning difficulties, the college is planning a new programme with a target number of 50 students to begin in 1995-96. A recently-formed external network group, involving social services, health services and voluntary agencies, is exploring further ways in which the college can meet the education and training needs of adults with learning difficulties.

20 The equal opportunities committee, a subcommittee of the academic board, has developed a policy for students. There is an action plan which includes targets for implementation but procedures for monitoring progress are at an early stage of development. The college has had some success in attracting students from minority ethnic communities. These form 1.5 per cent of the college population, well above the proportion of minority ethnic groups in the local population, which is 0.5 per cent. An equal opportunities policy for staff is in draft form.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

21 Members of the board of the corporation play an active and effective role in the strategic development of the college. There are 15 governors including the principal. They reflect a range of business and community interests. The seven independent members have expertise in banking, accountancy, business management, taxation and marketing. There is a representative of the local TEC, two staff members and four co-opted members including a representative from higher education and the local member of parliament. Meetings of the board take place about four times a year and are well attended. There are four subcommittees: employment policy, finance and general purposes; remuneration; audit; and disciplinary appeals. Documents are provided in good time and are easy to read. Longer documents include a summary provided by the clerk.

22 Governors have a clear understanding of their own responsibilities and are well informed about the performance of the college through regular reports, monthly financial statements, college bulletins and attendance at college events. Some governors have had formal training for their role. Relevant training is built into the annual planning conferences, which are residential, and the full board meetings which always contain a formal input on a relevant aspect of further education. Governors have been involved in the development of the college's strategic plan and mission statement. They use their meetings and annual conference to monitor, review and develop strategic aims.

23 There was a radical restructuring of college management when the college became a tertiary institution. Further changes were made, particularly in the arrangements for learning support, when the present principal took up post in 1994. The senior management team comprises the principal, the vice-principal (curriculum), the vice-principal (resources), the three heads of faculty, the financial controller and the head of student and customer services. The team meets weekly, the focus of the agenda rotating between curriculum, resources, policy and informal issues. Senior managers combine strong leadership with a consultative approach to the development of policies and procedures. Consultation takes place through a network of committees and working groups on which staff from all levels serve. In addition, the principal and two vice-principals attend divisional meetings, so that each of them attends at least one meeting of all the divisions. While the senior management team has made rapid progress in establishing well-considered management systems based on extensive consultation, some of these systems have not had time to make a comprehensive impact on practice at divisional and course level. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the implementation of policies and procedures.

24 The vice-principal (curriculum), the three heads of faculty and the head of the student and customer services department are responsible for the implementation of policy and for the quality and delivery of the curriculum. Each head of faculty has a specific role in deploying resources, including teaching and support staff, to the divisions in their faculties. The 14 heads of division manage teaching and support staff, resources and the curriculum. They have responsibility for student discipline, including grievance procedures, and for the appraisal of teaching staff within their division. They maintain good levels of communication with their staff, both informally and through attendance at meetings of the course teams. The 54 divisional heads, assistant divisional heads, cross-college co-ordinators and other middle managers mean that a significant number of college staff are directly involved in decision making. In addition to their management responsibilities, most middle managers have a substantial teaching commitment. The college has recognised the need for support to enable them to carry out their range of responsibilities effectively. A start has been made with the provision of administrative

support. As yet, little has been done to meet their needs for up-to-date and easily-accessible management information.

25 Faculty and divisional lines of accountability are clear and well understood. Job descriptions are in place for all full-time staff, including cross-college co-ordinators, personal tutors and course tutors, though some of those for course tutors need updating. They reflect new staff contracts where appropriate. Job descriptions for part-time staff are being developed in line with new contracts.

26 Communication systems are generally effective. A timetabled weekly meeting enables staff to meet in faculty, division and course teams. Part-time teachers are invited to these meetings and many attend. Attendance at course team meetings is a requirement of the new contracts for part-time staff. Minutes of all meetings are distributed to team members and senior managers and are available on request to other staff and to students. A monthly staff bulletin is supplemented by special bulletins on a range of issues, such as the Investors in People award towards which the college is working. Though communications within divisions are generally good, those between divisions are less effective. Formal links between the divisions are few and this limits opportunities for the dissemination of ideas and the sharing of good practice.

27 Staff, generally, are aware of the college's strategic aims and mission. There is an established annual planning cycle during which subject and programme teams draw up action plans. These are refined at divisional level and contribute to the strategic plan. Divisional plans reflect the strategic plan in their structure and clearly identify targets in line with stated policies. Effective efforts are being made to involve middle managers and programme and subject leaders in strategic development. Many are involved in working parties to consider the changes resulting from the implementation of strategic objectives.

28 The college has in place comprehensive policies covering most aspects of cross-college provision. Named senior managers have responsibility for implementing these. In most cases there is an appropriate cross-college committee or working group. Faculty heads have responsibility for ensuring the implementation of all policies within their faculty. They ensure that relevant staff serve on cross-college panels and working groups. Co-ordinators have been appointed to manage arrangements for implementing cross-college policies such as marketing, and cross-college curriculum initiatives such as GNVQ development. Monitoring procedures have not yet reached the stage where sufficient evidence is available to evaluate these arrangements.

29 The academic board was reconstituted in September 1994. It meets at least once a term and, in its capacity of advising the principal on curriculum matters, is the main cross-college forum for reviewing curriculum issues. Staff from all faculties and at all levels serve on the board. There are no student members.

30 The average level of funding per unit for the financial year 1994-95 is £16.69 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £18.17 and for the sector as a whole it is £19.01. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The system for allocating resources is clear and widely understood. It is based largely on historical criteria and projected student numbers. Budget holders receive monthly reports which indicate expenditure against allocation. The financial controller monitors variance of expenditure and alerts relevant staff. The monthly report to governors summarises the position across the college. Allocation is generally perceived to be fair. There is no open procedure for resource allocation in construction and no upgrading or replacement policy. A resource allocation system based on the Further Education Funding Council funding model is to be adopted next year. Training has been provided for staff to enable them to understand the system and its implications, including the impact of retention rates on budgets.

31 The computerised management information system is the responsibility of the financial controller assisted by a database manager and assistant. It is held on a number of databases and some of these are working well. Budget holders have confidence in the quality of the financial reports. A computerised system for recording attendance is being piloted in some subject areas and staff are using it effectively to monitor attendance and to identify students who need support and counselling. In other respects, managers make little use of the system to inform their planning and decision making because of the poor quality of information and difficulty in accessing it. Academic staff do not have direct access to the main computer system. They generally view it as of little help or relevance to their information needs. The college has recognised that its management information systems are underdeveloped and has formulated an action plan designed to rectify current inadequacies.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

32 A well-developed central recruitment and admissions system is co-ordinated by the students and customer services department. It provides information to prospective students, organises links with schools, and operates the advice and guidance centres, which are conveniently located near the main entrances on the four largest sites.

33 The central admissions procedure for full-time students comprises at least two pre-enrolment interviews. The first, which offers candidates impartial guidance and an assessment of their needs, is with a member of the central admissions team. The second is with a subject specialist. Pre-enrolment guidance for part-time students improved this year as a result of two well-publicised advice days shortly before the enrolment period. Enrolment procedures are clear and efficient. However, while staff are well briefed on procedures and have checklists to help them, they lack training in interviewing techniques.

34 The college induction programme is well planned and thorough. It enables students to familiarise themselves with the college, their programme of study and the tutorial support available to guide their learning. They are introduced to the college charter, to the equal opportunities policy and to their rights and responsibilities. Students on the access programme are given a longer course induction, which includes study skills, and they find this helpful. Students are well informed about the procedures for transfer between courses.

35 Most programmes have specific entry requirements. Students who do not achieve these are offered the opportunity to study for a qualification at an appropriate level.

36 Arrangements for accrediting students' prior learning are at an early stage of development, though a few programmes such as business administration are offering a service. At the time of the inspection, only four college staff were qualified as assessors for accrediting prior learning. Most full-time students entering college possess a record of achievement. The value set upon them by students, and the use made of them in the faculties, vary significantly. The college is moving to a position where all full-time students will have a record of achievement.

37 The college has a tutorial policy which states an entitlement for all full-time students. This includes access to a personal tutor and a weekly timetabled tutorial session. Personal tutors have written job descriptions and follow a structured programme which includes careers education and guidance, preparation for entry to higher education where appropriate, regular reviews of progress and action planning which involves students in setting their own learning objectives. There are three specific days during the year when tutors formally meet with students to review their progress, learning targets and record of attendance. Students value the support, both formal and informal, which their personal tutors give them. Most part-time students do not have access to a structured tutorial system but they obtain good levels of support from their subject tutors.

38 In September 1994, the college appointed a team of specialists to provide guidance and support to students on their planning for careers. The team provides extensive opportunities for careers education and guidance to all full-time students through a calendar of careers events including individual careers interviews, a job search workshop, lessons on the preparation of a curriculum vitae and completing applications for both employment and higher education. In addition, the advice and guidance centres on three of the four major college sites offer a drop-in advice service open to any student.

39 Other services available to students include the college counselling service, staffed by a full-time, trained counsellor. Students can also be referred to an extensive local network of support agencies among which are the local social services and welfare benefits offices. A small inter-denominational chaplaincy service is available on one day a week. Adult students with small children can use the creche and the Salvation Army

provides after-school care for students' children who are of school age. Access funds are available, allocated against strict criteria, to help students with the costs of registered child minder care or with transport to college.

40 The college has a comprehensive study support policy. The responsibility for its implementation lies with the study support co-ordinator who reports to the head of student and customer services. Learning support services are available both for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for students who need help to develop basic or other skills to the level required on their course. As a pilot exercise this year, all students enrolled on GCSE and equivalent programmes, and some students on advanced courses, were tested for numeracy and literacy during their induction programme. A questionnaire was also used to allow students to identify their own needs for learning support. Basic skills support is available in two numeracy, communications and language workshops. The workshops can each accommodate only 18 students. Students are timetabled to attend on a weekly basis in order to optimise the use of the resource and cope with the demand. There are plans to establish a resource-based learning centre to extend this provision and increase its flexibility. Attendance and progress in the workshops are monitored and the work is closely linked to the subject which the student is studying.

41 Students with visual or hearing impairment have access to specialist equipment and support workers. Care assistants provide additional support for students with learning difficulties and those with restricted mobility. The college regularly enrolls dyslexic students and there are numerous examples of such students progressing to higher education and graduating successfully. One profoundly deaf student, who won the British Telecom Young Deaf Achiever Award is now at university studying architecture.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

42 The strengths outweighed the weaknesses in 62 per cent of the sessions inspected. Ten per cent had more weaknesses than strengths. The inspection grades awarded are shown in the following table.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		4	16	12	2	0	34
GCSE		1	7	7	3	0	18
GNVQ		3	9	11	4	0	27
NVQ		12	28	8	2	0	50
Access		8	6	1	0	0	15
Basic education		7	2	2	0	1	12
Other vocational		12	28	25	8	2	75
Total		47	96	66	19	3	231

43 A particular strength of the teaching and learning is the good working relationship between students and staff. Students are generally attentive and respond well to the expectations of their teachers. Most lessons are conducted in a productive atmosphere. Work experience is a feature of much of the provision. All full-time two year GCE A level and many full-time vocational students benefit from well-organised and relevant work placements. Students assess their own work experience and obtain feedback on their performance through reports from work placement supervisors and the visiting teacher.

44 Most programmes are moving towards a standard format for schemes of work which will effectively support course and lesson planning. In a few cases, for example in mathematics, existing schemes of work are no more than lists of topics.

45 In most programme areas, standards of teaching and learning are high, though a significant minority of lessons lack the variety and stimulation necessary to sustain students' interest. There is an over-emphasis on students taking notes and teachers give insufficient attention to checking the learning of individual students. Some classes are disrupted by high levels of absence and by students arriving late. Action taken in response to poor punctuality and attendance is inconsistent. In the 231 sessions inspected, the average level of attendance was 70 per cent. Average levels of attendance on catering, leisure and tourism, science and care courses were over 80 per cent. In contrast, the average level of attendance on construction courses was 55 per cent.

46 Science and computing students benefit from clearly-specified assignments, set at an appropriate standard which are marked fairly and consistently. Teachers maintain detailed records of students; students are regularly informed of their progress and are helped to set targets for further learning. In most sessions, teaching is of a high standard and in some computing lessons it is outstanding. Students work hard at practical activities and most contribute well to class discussions. In a few lessons, the work is not given an appropriate context in terms of what students have already done and what teachers are planning to do. In other lessons, the narrow range of learning activities limits students' willingness and ability to participate as expected. In good lessons the students work hard. For example, students in a computing class were allowed to work at their own pace on spreadsheets. Because activities were well structured and because they had access to good-quality equipment and software, they applied themselves with enthusiasm and made rapid progress. In a few cases, learning is adversely affected by computing equipment which is out of date.

47 There is insufficient emphasis on algebra, geometry and trigonometry in the first six months of the GCSE mathematics course. Students receive little preparation for the coursework elements in GCSE, and have difficulty in completing and submitting coursework within the time allowed. This is

a particular problem for adult students who have not done coursework at school. There are inconsistencies in the amount of work GCSE students do outside classes. For example, although the college has a policy on homework which indicates the amount to be given each term some groups complete homework and some do not. For some groups of GCSE students, there are no detailed records of progress. In contrast, GCE A level work is better organised. Students' assignments are marked thoroughly; there are detailed, supportive comments from teachers and solutions to questions are often provided on scripts. Records of progress for GCE A level and some GCSE groups are helpful and up to date. Carefully-prepared worksheets provide students with important information and with examples of problems which enable them to practise techniques. However, in too many cases, teachers take inadequate account of the needs of individuals and students have too little opportunity to contribute or to ask questions. There is little use of information technology to support learning.

48 The standard of teaching and the promotion of learning on construction courses varies widely. Some lessons are well planned and well managed. Students engage in a variety of activities and use an appropriate range of resources. Teachers check students' understanding of the concepts being learned and monitor the progress they are making. Whilst there is high-quality practical work in some NVQ programmes, most practical work is timetabled separately from theory and this tends to limit students' ability to link practical skills with relevant technical knowledge. In general, the lack of flexibility in teaching and learning together with low student numbers, due in part to high absence rates and poor punctuality, restrict the opportunities for students to work in small groups or teams and to develop effective ways of managing their learning. In some classes, the range of learning activities is narrow and tasks do not match students' abilities. Students are not encouraged to try out new ideas and little use is made of review techniques to consolidate previous learning. The heavy emphasis on the copying of notes results in students being unable or unwilling to ask questions. No check is made on whether they understand the concepts outlined. In one lesson, a teacher allowed the group to assemble gradually over a 50-minute period without comment. An overhead projector slide of text was displayed and students began to copy this in a way which clearly indicated that they were used to this approach. As students were writing, the teacher moved in and out of the classroom and on each return displayed more and more text for students to copy. Over a 50-minute period, there was no effective dialogue between the teacher and the class.

49 Engineering teachers maintain detailed records of students' progress and attendance. Students keep log books of the practical assignment work they have done showing details of the task, the tools required, the materials used, the problems encountered and the solutions adopted. Assignments are well planned and the marking is clear and detailed. Teachers use a range of activities, including questions to students, individual tasks and

groupwork, to maintain students' attention and interest. Audio-visual aids and good-quality handouts help to reinforce learning. In weaker lessons, students spend too much of their time copying notes from the board or from the overhead projector. Practical work is generally well planned and well organised. In a workshop session for a group of motor vehicle engineering students who were working at different levels, there were two members of staff and a technician available to support them individually and in small groups. The students worked conscientiously using detailed instruction and guidance notes; they asked for help when they needed it and were supportive of each other.

50 Most business studies teachers have a good command of their subject and have worked hard to develop appropriate curricula. There is evidence of significant improvement in the GNVQ intermediate course, now in its second year of operation: team teaching has been introduced; well-designed course materials and assignments have been developed; and useful additional resources have been provided in the base room. School link students are effectively taught alongside college students on this course. Most business studies teachers employ an appropriate variety of methods of working and make good use of teaching aids. Simulated work experience within the new business administration unit is well planned. It comprises a variety of tasks, including office supervision, customer service and communications. Students can carry out real work for college clients. Groupwork and other activities which enable students to develop their speaking skills feature frequently in lessons, but the outcomes are not always sufficiently consolidated. Teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently demanding, particularly on advanced courses. Sometimes they are prepared to accept vague responses to questions without probing students' levels of understanding. On some courses, there are poor levels of attendance. However, teachers try to minimise its impact on the continuity of learning by preparing study packs which take absenteeism into account.

51 Students on leisure, tourism and catering courses benefit from an effective range of teaching methods. There is usually a good balance for students between listening to the teacher and other activities. Students work in realistic work environments, where effective use is made of job descriptions and job cards to structure activities. Students are expected to achieve high professional standards. For example, in a food service theory class, students were given a list of French names of dishes, required to translate and explain them, and to say what the place setting would be for each dish. They were then asked to work individually setting the appropriate cutlery for the named dish displayed on a card at their table. The settings were assessed by other students who had to make corrections if necessary. This activity was repeated for a series of dishes. As the lesson progressed it became clear that fewer and fewer errors were being made until in the end everyone was able to set places correctly for each

dish. It was noteworthy that all the students used French terms freely and unselfconsciously. In a few lessons, the teaching lacked purpose and direction and low emphasis was given to the identification, documentation and assessment of core skills.

52 Hairdressing teachers demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of their subject area and of the necessary practical and professional skills. Practical work is of a high standard. Learning is enhanced by good working relationships between staff and students and by the accommodation for practical work which provides a realistic working environment. In contrast, the range of methods used in theory classes is narrow. Some of the work is poorly organised and fails to interest or challenge students. Teachers rarely made use of visual aids. Theory sessions are often held in unsuitable accommodation. In beauty therapy, teachers fail to help students make effective links between theory practice. Little attention is given to providing students with opportunities to acquire core skills, particularly information technology skills.

53 Programmes in health, social and childcare meet the needs of students and have clearly defined aims, objectives and assessment criteria. Students' progress is closely monitored through the review and individual action planning procedures. Core skills are developed and assessed as an integral part of courses, though students have inadequate access to computer facilities to develop their information technology skills. Well-qualified and experienced staff use a variety of teaching methods. These are appropriate to the abilities of the students and to the requirements of the programmes. In a practical session on the nursery nursing course students' linked rhythm, expression and movement to nursery rhymes. They made their own musical instruments and used these to demonstrate tone, speed and the development of relevant vocabulary while enacting the nursery rhyme.

54 In most art and design programmes, records of achievement and individual action plans are used to keep students informed about their progress and help them to set appropriate learning targets. The programme of assignments is coherent and challenging. Written briefs are provided and students are given detailed feedback on their performance. Students on vocational design programmes enjoy a high-quality, well-structured programme. On other programmes, methods of working are sometimes limited and there is an over-reliance on one-to-one teaching. There are good opportunities for the development of skills in the areas of ceramics, sculpture, print, computer graphics and three-dimensional work although these are not always sufficiently exploited. In particular, students need to undertake more three-dimensional work if they are to acquire the requisite range of skills.

55 English and modern foreign language courses are well organised. The aims and objectives of lessons are clear, often shared with students, and usually achieved. Homework and classroom assignments are marked

thoroughly; little is missed or overlooked and students receive helpful, constructive comments in writing. Students interact well with each other and with their teachers, though in a minority of cases, teachers do not allow students enough speaking practice. The teaching of English is generally of a high standard and often imaginative. Students respond well. For example, in one class, they 'translated' a section of Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* into local dialect and related the events, tensions and interactions to characters in *Brookside*, a popular television serial set in the local area. The piece was then acted out in front of the rest of the class in a way which demonstrated vividly how the issues in Shakespeare's play are equally valid today.

56 Humanities students appreciate the support and the critical analysis of their work. Most teachers use a variety of teaching methods including effective use of classroom aids to learning. Some of the written materials produced by staff are of high quality and reflect hard work and good subject knowledge. Standards are generally high. Despite the wide range of ability, however, students are generally expected to move through the same work at the same pace. There is some small groupwork but, too often, the discussion is dominated by the more vocal students.

57 Students on adult basic education course have individual work plans based on the outcomes of initial assessments which are continually monitored. Many students are involved in reviewing and recording their own achievements, though systematic tracking of their progress has yet to be fully established. The quality of work is good. Teachers use styles of teaching and methods of working which are suited to students' backgrounds and levels of achievement. Poor attendance in some classes is not addressed rigorously enough.

58 The standard of teaching is high on the separate courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially where classes are small. There is an appropriate emphasis on practical activities and the development of basic skills. Learning resources are well produced and used effectively. The additional support, provided in a variety of ways, shows that teachers have a sensitive understanding of students' disabilities and the implications of these for learning. Students and staff work together to maintain records of the work undertaken and to discuss and record students' progress. In some larger classes there is insufficient attention to individual learning needs. Consequently, a number of students are not aware of the standards to which they should be working and they are not achieving the levels of learning of which they are capable.

59 Many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities successfully follow mainstream vocational courses in construction, catering, hairdressing, information technology and care, often with the help of learning support workers. For example, adult students in a vocational carpentry class, assisted by a technician and a support worker, were working on a project they had chosen themselves. All were working

independently on aspects of the project, applying the practical skills they had learned. They were encouraged to evaluate each stage and were able to explain the process and sequence of activity.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

60 Most students are well motivated and appear to enjoy their work. Mature students, especially, use their time productively and are supportive of each other. They work effectively in small groups and individually.

61 Students in vocational areas generally develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required by their courses. In the medical secretaries' course, students show good command of medical terminology and its application within letter and report writing. Hairdressing and beauty students are developing a knowledge and understanding of professional practice. Art and design students have well-developed drawing skills and their creative work is of an appropriate standard. Engineering students demonstrate technical precision in working with machinery. Some practical work in carpentry, joinery and brickwork is of high quality and carried out with due regard to health and safety procedures. However, in both construction and engineering, many students lack a clear understanding of some key concepts and fail to gain sufficient experience of the industrial context in which they hope to work.

62 Adult students are perceptive and contribute readily to classroom activities. For example, students attending a pre-access class participated fully in a wide-ranging discussion about factors affecting achievement in education. All were able to draw on their own experiences in analysing theories, absorbing new concepts and handling conflicting arguments. In another session, access to higher education students read a difficult piece of English literature and discussed its meaning using appropriate vocabulary and supporting judgements with evidence from their texts. In both sessions, students were articulate and displayed high levels of knowledge and understanding.

63 Most written work is of an appropriate standard. Many of the assignments in construction, business, engineering, catering, and leisure and tourism are well produced and attractively presented. Whilst access and GCE A level students are able to take information technology courses as part of their programmes of study, and are encouraged to wordprocess assignments, in most areas of the college students' information technology skills are underdeveloped. Weaknesses in the basic skills of English and mathematics are apparent in the work of some engineering and business students, and the algebraic skills of students following GCSE mathematics courses are poor.

64 The retention rates on most programmes are low. The overall retention rate for both the two-year GCE A level course and the one-year GCSE foundation course is 77 per cent. Most vocational courses have retention rates below 70 per cent, and for some engineering and

construction courses they are less than 50 per cent. Lower retention rates are explained partly by students transferring to other college courses that they regard as more suitable and partly by adult students choosing to leave courses after they have completed specific units. Heads of faculty monitor these fluctuations in student numbers but there is no college-wide analysis of data which would give a more accurate picture of the numbers of students failing to complete courses.

65 The performance of college students aged 16-18 entered for two or more GCE A levels has steadily improved over the last four years. In 1994, the average point score per entry for college students aged 16-18 was 3.7 (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education. In 1994, the GCE A level results in 22 subjects for college students aged 16-18 following two-year courses show an average pass rate of 78 per cent, which is above the provisional national average of 72 per cent for colleges in the sector other than sixth form colleges. There were excellent results in chemistry and good results in English language and literature, French, Spanish, physics, computing, geography, physical education, and general studies. The results in pure mathematics and statistics and in economics were poor; pass rates were more than 20 per cent below national averages.

66 Adult students' examination results were generally good. In 1994, adult full-time students who entered for GCE A level subjects achieved pass rates which were close to or above national averages, though the numbers entered were small in most subjects. The pass rate achieved by the 51 part-time English language and literature students was 82 per cent, compared with the provisional national average of 72 per cent, and for the 62 part-time sociology students it was 66 per cent, compared with the national average for social studies of 56 per cent. However, pass rates for part-time students in economic and social history and French were more than 20 per cent below national averages. Adults also achieved well in GCSE examinations. In 1994, all adult students entering physics and Italian achieved grades A-C. Over 80 per cent of the 189 students who entered for English achieved grades A-C, compared with the national average of 70 per cent for adult students in further education colleges other than sixth form colleges. The percentages of full-time and part-time adult students achieving grades A-C in Spanish, chemistry, geography, law and history were also above the corresponding national averages. In mathematics, 42 per cent of the 91 full-time students and 31 per cent of the 77 part-time students achieved grades A-C compared with the national average of 46 per cent. The percentages achieving grades A-C were more than 20 per cent below national averages in computer studies, biology and French.

67 The majority of students aged 16-18 taking GCSE examinations are following the college's one-year foundation course which allows students

to gain GCSE qualifications by studying new subjects and by retaking others to improve their grades. In 1994, foundation course students made 278 GCSE entries across 16 subjects. The overall pass rate at grades A-C was 56 per cent compared with an average of 38 per cent for students aged 16-18 in further education colleges other than sixth form colleges. In 13 subjects, the percentages of full-time students achieving grades A-C exceeded corresponding national averages. For part-time students the percentages achieving grades A-C exceeded national averages in only six subjects. Good results were achieved in physics, information technology and English literature. In English, 56 per cent of the 92 full-time and 22 part-time students entered for the examination gained grades A-C. In mathematics, only 34 per cent of the 77 full-time and 21 part-time students were similarly successful. None of the 11 students entered for media studies were awarded grades A-C.

68 The Department for Education's 1994 performance tables record that 73 per cent of the 153 students aged 16-18 in their final year of study on vocational courses were successful. This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. Subsequently, the college has recalculated its pass rate to exclude courses which should not have been included in the first place. The revised pass rate is 83 per cent compared with a national figure of 81 per cent. All students following the national diploma in nursery nursing and the national certificate in general engineering courses were successful. Thirty-eight out of 40 students were awarded the national diploma in construction and 37 out of 46 students gained the national diploma in business studies. In contrast, less than 75 per cent of students following courses leading to the national certificate in business studies and the national diplomas in electronics and general engineering gained awards. Pass rates for students aged 16-18 in other vocational courses range from good to poor. Students in health and social care, business and management, provision of goods and services, construction and hotel and catering achieved good results. Part-time students in electrical and electronic engineering performed less well; only 32 per cent of foundation level and 30 per cent of advanced level students obtained an award. Of the 19 students completing the GNVQ intermediate business course, only five gained the full award.

69 The results for adult students on vocational courses follow similar patterns but are generally better than those for younger students. In health and social care, all nine full-time advanced students and over 75 per cent of the 51 intermediate students gained awards. National certificates in business were awarded to 61 students out of 75. In business and management, out of 562 students taking foundation, intermediate and advanced courses, over 83 per cent were successful. The pass rates for engineering students were more variable; poor results were obtained on some foundation and advanced level programmes.

70 Some art and design students achieve high standards of work. Of the 35 students taking the foundation course, all gained awards and

progressed to higher education courses. Pass rates on display courses, which are a particular feature of the college's work, are high. Students on these courses have won a national competition for display in three consecutive years.

71 Adult students following the pre-access and access to higher education courses do well. In 1994, 84 out of 87 students who completed the access course gained awards and 75 secured places in higher education. Almost all of the 37 pre-access students remained in the college and began further education courses. Most adult basic education students are working towards nationally recognised qualifications and many have achieved their targets. In practical classes, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities demonstrate high levels of achievement, although some are not gaining units of accreditation when these are within their capabilities.

72 The destinations of 85 per cent of full-time students who completed their studies in 1994 are known. Of the 496 students following advanced courses, 66 per cent proceeded to higher education, 12 per cent continued in further education and 15 per cent went into employment. There were 918 intermediate and foundation students of whom 43 per cent continued in further education and 36 per cent found jobs.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

73 The college demonstrates a strong commitment to the continuous improvement of all aspects of work across the organisation. The quality policy has clear, comprehensive aims and objectives. The strategy for its implementation is set out in the quality manual, which indicates the targets, characteristics, performance indicators and evidence requirements for monitoring the quality of the curriculum, human resources, physical resources, and administrative and technical services. The quality manual has been systematically communicated to all staff throughout the college. All staff have received a summary of its content.

74 Responsibility for implementing the quality policy lies with the vice-principal (curriculum) supported by the college quality panel, whose membership includes the principal and other senior managers. The quality panel oversees the work of four quality assurance groups. Of these, the curriculum group has made good progress in establishing a system for course review and evaluation which builds on existing good practice and on experience of working with external awarding bodies. The system has now been introduced in all courses. The work of the other three quality assurance groups is at a much earlier stage. Generally, the quality systems have yet to make a full impact on operational practice at divisional and course level. Some evidence is being generated but this requires analysis before appropriate action to improve quality can be identified.

75 The use of performance indicators by course teams to inform monitoring and evaluation is hampered by the inaccessibility of relevant and up-to-date computerised information. Course teams gather statistical

information on levels of attendance and retention rates and other aspects of students' performance, but the information is not always analysed, so it does not form an effective platform for action. Student attendance and retention rates adversely affect the quality of provision in many areas and, although this is of concern to the college, there is no corporate strategy to address the issues. Not enough has been done at college level to share solutions to issues of concern. For example, effective practice in some divisions for monitoring attendance and taking action to reduce absenteeism is not shared across the college.

76 The college charter is distributed to all students at induction. It sets out clear standards of service which are also included in the student learning agreement and in student and course handbooks. Some of the standards incorporate performance indicators which assist in monitoring and reviewing the charter. Students are aware of the existence of the charter, but are not always conversant with its content and implications; it is insufficiently followed up in tutorial sessions after the initial induction process. A student learning contract is being developed to reinforce the learning agreement which students sign at enrolment. Although this is not yet in general use across the college, there is effective practice in one faculty, where students are given personal attendance targets as part of their contract. The contract is reinforced by a sound system of tracking both student attendance and achievement, the latter being linked to projected attainment goals based upon qualifications on entry.

77 Students are effectively represented on the majority of course teams. Student representatives feel that their views are actively sought and acted upon. Students' views and concerns are also surveyed by means of questionnaires administered three times a year. This year, the response rate to the first questionnaire was only 30 per cent. For the second questionnaire it rose to 50 per cent.

78 A well-documented system for the professional development of full-time teaching staff is managed by the staff-development co-ordinator who is supported by a cross-college committee. The budget of £66,000, which represents 1 per cent of the staffing budget, is allocated mainly to external training and staff-development activities. In addition, there is a wide range of in-house activities, many of these taking place on college development days. New full-time staff have the benefit of an extensive induction process, supported by an information pack. The process is evaluated. Induction for part-time staff is less developed. The college is making good progress towards achieving the Investors in People award.

79 A staff-appraisal process is in place for all full-time staff and is helping to link staff-development needs to the implementation of the college's strategic objectives. The appraisal is thorough and augmented by observation of teaching. Owing to lack of resources, the appraisal process takes place over two years and is therefore not in step with the annual strategic planning cycle. Part-time staff are not formally involved in the

appraisal process, though a pilot procedure is being implemented in some divisions which have a high proportion of part-time teachers.

80 The college's self-assessment report is concise, well written and follows the format of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. There is detailed evaluation of each cross-college aspect and signposting to sources of evidence. Each section concludes with a summary of action points. The report was drawn up by senior and middle managers, in consultation with governors. Judgements on the college's performance in the self-assessment report are mainly in line with the findings of the inspection although some weaknesses are understated and, in some sections, assumptions are made about the effectiveness of measures which have not yet been fully evaluated.

RESOURCES

Staffing

81 Almost all staff are appropriately qualified for the subjects they teach. There are 171 full-time and 186 part-time teaching staff, equivalent in total to 218 full-time staff. Sixty-seven per cent of the full-time teaching staff and 34 per cent of part-time staff are qualified teachers. Seventy-five per cent of the total teaching staff have a teaching qualification, over half have a degree and 14 per cent have a higher degree. Most staff have recent and relevant industrial experience. There are almost equal numbers of men and women on the teaching staff, though only two out of the eight senior managers are women. The age profile is well distributed.

82 In the main, staff are efficiently deployed, though in some cases, where retention rates on courses are poor, efficiency decreases over the year. Over 85 per cent of teaching staff are on new contracts which managers anticipate will enable staff to be more efficiently deployed, in accordance with their expertise.

83 Learning support and administrative and technical services are carried out by the equivalent of 106 full-time support staff. Staff provide an ample service in most areas, though there is insufficient technical support in information technology. There is adequate staffing for the library: a full-time qualified librarian, assisted by one full-time and three part-time library assistants. While support staff are appropriately deployed in most areas, they could be used to better effect on some courses, for example engineering, to support more flexible approaches to learning.

Equipment/learning resources

84 General equipment and learning resources meet the needs of the curriculum in most areas and the range and quality of textbooks is adequate. The geography department is well resourced with books and written materials, though the learning support materials for mathematics are inadequate. Most of the teaching rooms have screens or white boards

and overhead projectors which are effectively maintained by the central teaching services unit.

85 Specialist equipment is available, where necessary, to support most of the courses offered. The motor vehicle engineering workshop is equipped with a vehicle lift and engine diagnostics equipment. Students on computing courses have access to up-to-date hardware and software but the level of computer technology in both catering and leisure and tourism programmes is poor. The college has 225 computer workstations capable of supporting the latest versions of software, giving a student to workstation ratio of 12:1. Ten of these are on a small computer network based in the library and are linked to a compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) server, providing access to a fairly wide range of software. Although one of the computer rooms is available on open access for part of the day, students' access to information technology facilities, other than through timetabled classes, is very restricted.

86 There is a shortage of modern texts for English students but for most courses the library has an adequate range of books and periodicals. There are currently 20,000 titles available for loan. Last year the library received a funding allocation of £25,041, equivalent to £9.63 per full-time equivalent student, representing an increase of £1.31 on the previous year. The book catalogue is in the process of being computerised and will be available on the developing college computer network. There is a small fiction section for the wider reading needs of students, teletext facilities and a special section devoted to European awareness issues.

87 The college is halfway through a short, two-year capital replacement programme. All computer equipment has a designated replacement date but this is not linked to secure funding. There is an information technology advisory group to co-ordinate purchasing of hardware and software and there are tendering systems for other items of equipment and stationery.

Accommodation

88 College accommodation comprises four buildings in Bootle, all within half a mile of each other, and a smaller site three miles away in Church Road, Litherland. There is no central room timetabling policy and no formal measure of room usage. However, an extended teaching day minimises inefficiencies in the use of accommodation. Classrooms, furniture and general accommodation vary in quality from building to building. Most of the rooms and corridors in the Church Road, Oriel and the Balliol Road main buildings are clean, comfortable, and constitute a pleasant learning environment. Classrooms used for the care courses are stimulating and visually pleasing. Most of the rooms on the Pembroke site and the Balliol Road adult sites are in a poor state of repair and decoration. In one instance a class had to be cancelled because water was leaking through the roof. Some of the rooms in the Balliol adult buildings have a bleak, unwelcoming atmosphere. It is expected that these two buildings

will be demolished and a new building constructed by August 1997. The girder framework for the new building is already in place.

89 The specialist accommodation is suitable for the needs of most curriculum areas. The business administration centre and the hairdressing and beauty salons are equipped and furnished to industrial standards and provide realistic working environments for students. However, some of the workshops in the engineering building are unsuitable for training purposes.

90 The 135 place library in the main building provides a pleasant learning environment. It has a quiet study area but this is too small for the number of students and it is the only designated private study space in college. None of the other sites has a library, which is a particular disadvantage for students at the Church Road site.

91 The three refectory areas are suitably large and are staffed by an external catering company. The facilities are utilitarian and the designated smoking areas here, and in other areas, are poorly ventilated. There is no student common room. A large, modern, well-equipped gymnasium is used for specialist activities within the curriculum and for additional leisure and sport activities in which many students and staff participate.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

92 The college is making significant progress towards achieving its mission. Its strengths are:

- the strong, productive links with the local community, schools and higher education
- a broad range of provision with good opportunities for student progression
- successful strategies to increase flexibility of provision for adults, especially those from disadvantaged groups
- the consultative management of planning and development
- clear and effective systems for communication and accountability
- a wide range of support services for students
- good careers education and preparation for entry into higher education
- sound examination results in most GCE A level and GCSE subjects
- the high percentage of students progressing to higher education.

93 If the college is to maintain its responsiveness, achieve planned growth and improve the quality of its provision, it should address:

- the narrow basis of market research related to the college's vocational provision
- the restricted opportunities for collaboration between faculties

-
- the poor computerised management information system
 - the narrow range of teaching approaches in some programmes
 - poor attendance rates across many courses
 - the limited opportunities for students on vocational programmes to develop information technology skills
 - poor retention rates
 - the implementation of quality assurance procedures across the college.

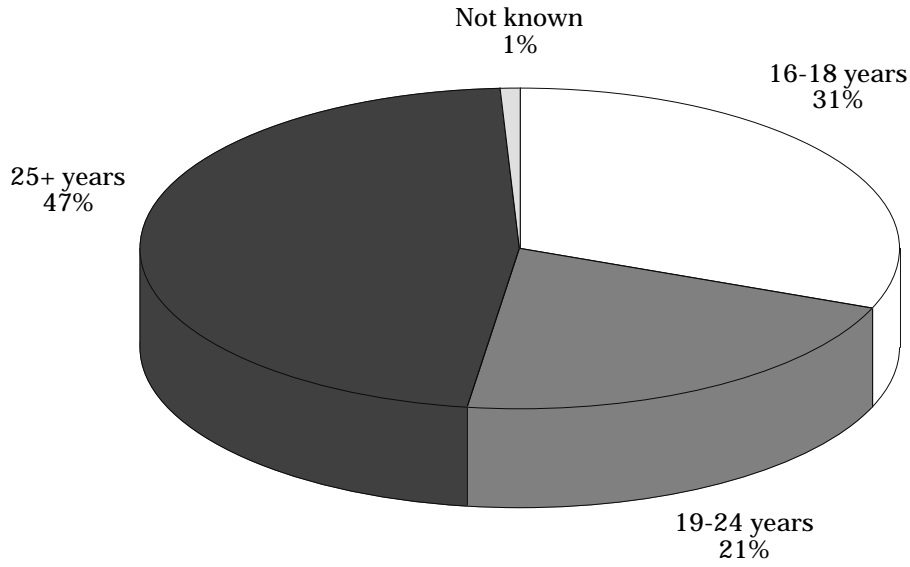
FIGURES

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| 1 | Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95) |
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| 5 | Estimated income (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

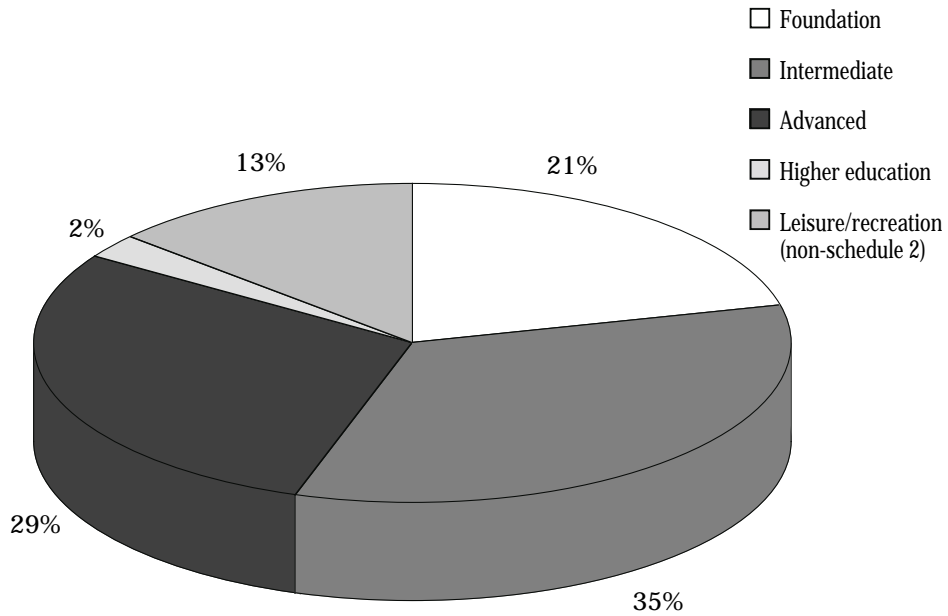
Hugh Baird College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)



Enrolments: 6,428

Figure 2

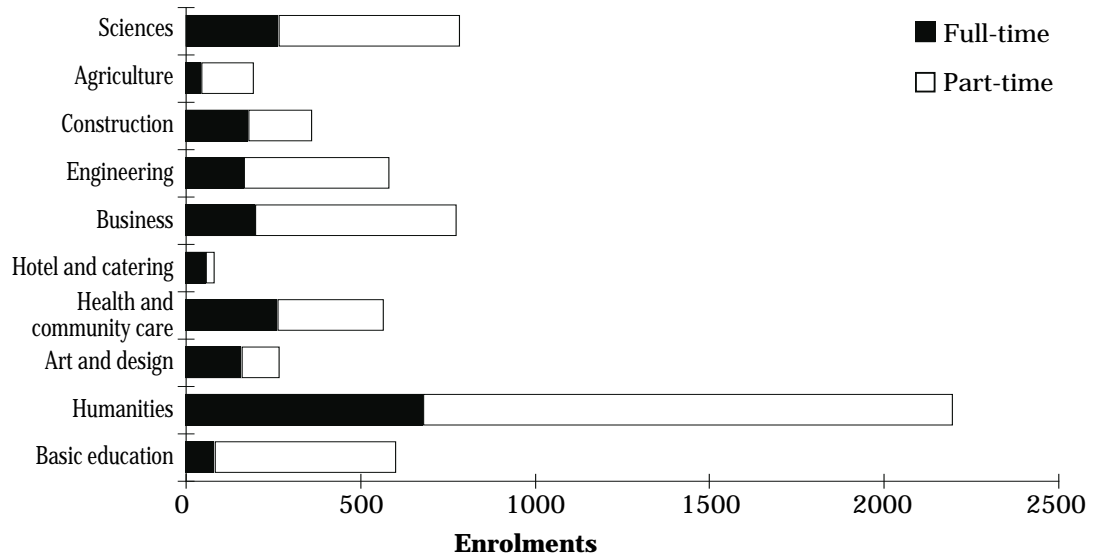
Hugh Baird College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 6,428

Figure 3

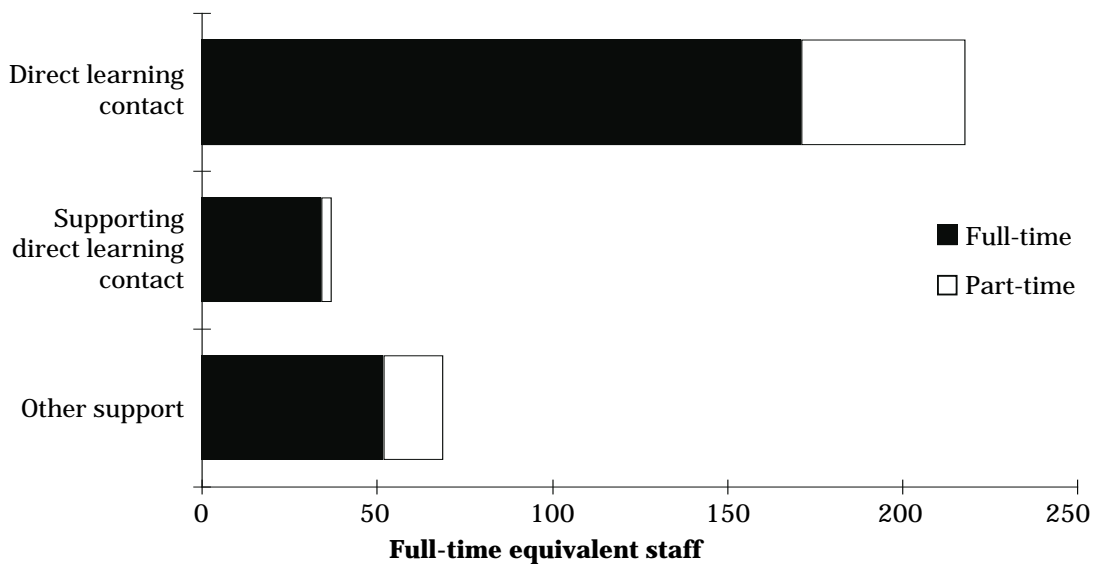
Hugh Baird College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)



Enrolments: 6,428

Figure 4

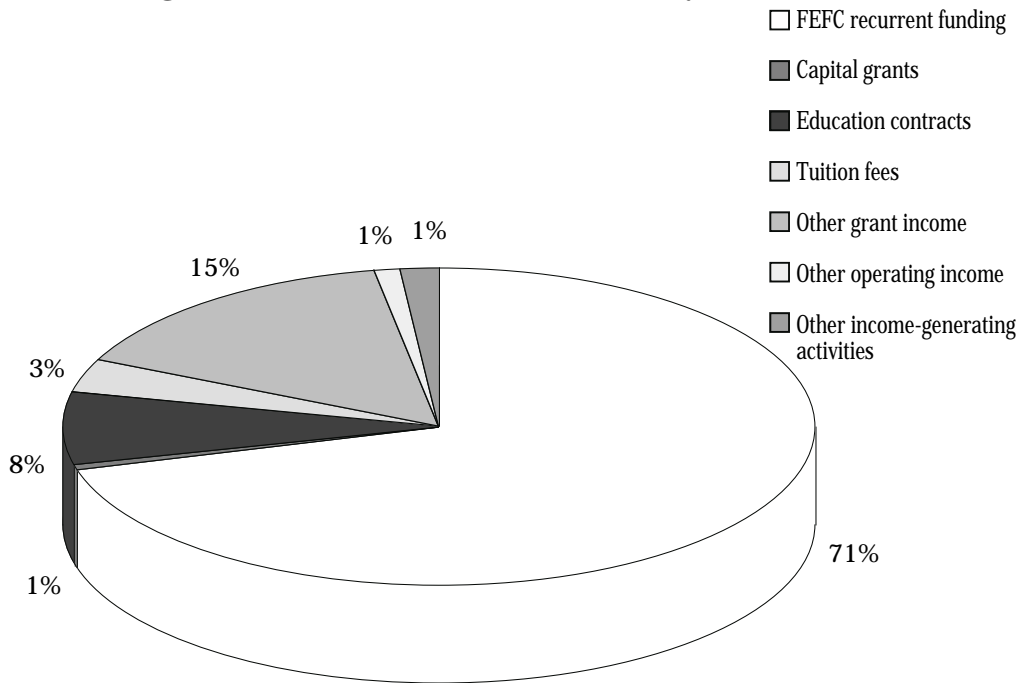
Hugh Baird College: staff profile — staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 324

Figure 5

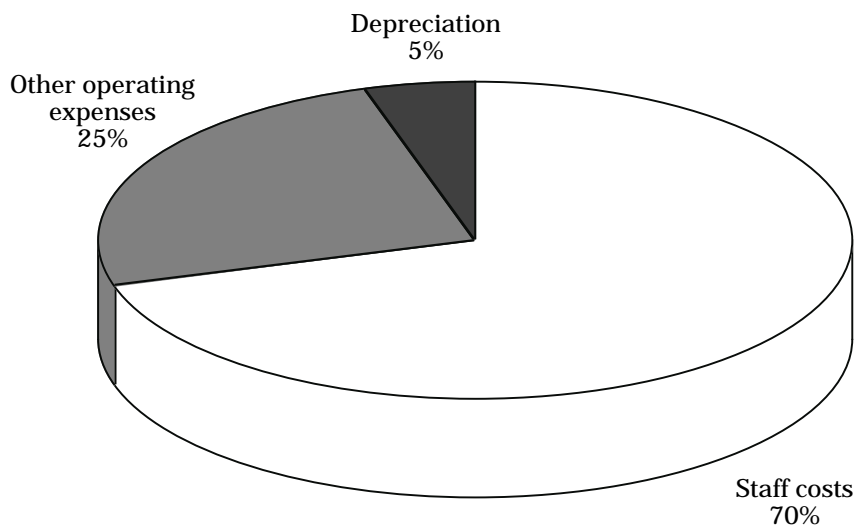
Hugh Baird College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated income: £9,392,000

Figure 6

Hugh Baird College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated expenditure: £9,068,000

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